Introduction

Taylor Wimpey is one of the largest homebuilders in the UK with over 5,000 employees operating from 24 regional offices across England, Scotland and Wales. We strongly value diversity in the widest sense and aim to be an inclusive employer - to attract, retain and promote employees from all backgrounds. We believe that this is key to fostering creativity and innovation in our workforce to better reflect our customer base and improve our decision-making.

Taylor Wimpey has for some time recognised the need to encourage more women into the housebuilding sector - both the societal benefits but also those to the company in achieving this. Overall at Taylor Wimpey there is not a significant gap in gender pay. In fact, we are encouraged by the comparability of our mean and median gender pay, with gaps of 1% and -2% respectively, which are significantly lower than the current UK national average.

Our approach

Our figures are encouraging overall, however, with a total of 32% female employees across the business, we know that there is more work to be done. Taylor Wimpey is looking to go as far as it can as an employer to help tackle broader social issues. Attracting more women into the industry is a key initiative.

Our open approach to recruitment means that we have looked outside traditional recruitment channels to enable change. We look beyond our sector for experienced talent and engage with universities and colleges, sourcing early entry future talent beyond the traditional academic disciplines that are customarily male, such as technical and engineering students.

We have created ‘academies’ that train and equip our employees to reach their full potential whether in historically male careers such as production, or historically female careers such as sales, to an equal level.

We also design reward programmes that make sure variable pay elements are consistent in their balance between achievability and stretch and set at levels which achieve equal and fair overall remuneration. Where appropriate variable pay elements contain the same performance metrics adapted to the role and are fully transparent. The design of these reward programmes is reviewed annually through a governance process that includes senior management and ultimately CEO approval.

We work with technical colleges to understand how we can encourage more women to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Our apprentice and trainee programmes look to understand how we can support women to pursue careers in more male-dominated roles within our organisation.

We consider our culture to be another key focus area, facilitating better access to flexible working opportunities, and the need for greater shared parental responsibility.

Encouraging further change

Certainly, the requirement to submit Gender Pay data has encouraged companies to consider the steps they are taking to reduce gender inequality. The publishing of the current data is a positive catalyst for change and we at Taylor Wimpey are not pessimistic about early results.

When considering possible further requirements on companies addressing Gender Pay Gaps, it is however difficult to see how enforcing these would be possible given the variations on gap levels and
the range of reasons for this. Complexity would arise around timeframes and wider social reasons that exist. The requirements would likely become open to mitigating circumstances that could be wide ranging and complex. Perhaps instead specific measures could be introduced obliging organisations to publish their annual pay increase distribution data.

Gender Pay Gap reports must be maintained on the company’s website for a period of three years and we would question whether this is sufficient time for sustainable progress to be made. An extension in the requirement to six years might be more appropriate to track change.

One of the key challenges within the workforce is the gender imbalance within specific career disciplines. To combat this, organisations should be encouraged to address this specifically, regardless of the data. Practically the most achievable option is to require a mandatory narrative that includes narrative as well as an action plan, addressing a set of principles set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

With regard to ensuring compliance and accurate information of Gender Pay reporting, this is the responsibility of “a senior figure within the organisation” and this should be sufficient. However, Tri-annual third party ‘audits’ should also be considered. Reputational risk for non-compliance should be sufficient for most employers but where this is not sufficient the EHRC should have the power of enforcement and that power needs to be clarified.

Consideration should also be given to widening the reach of the regulations to organisations with fewer than 250 employees. This should include equity partners (including LLP members) and other related parties who benefit substantially from income generated by the organisation. The ability of organisations to avoid reporting obligations through structure should be addressed.

**Conclusion**

Requirements on Gender Pay Gap reporting have undoubtedly pushed companies to consider more carefully the steps they are taking to ensure gender equal pay. Some further reporting requirements could reasonably encourage additional progress. Taylor Wimpey takes this obligation very seriously and we will continue to take active steps to reframe some of the perceptions about gender within the construction industry.

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