



THE STATE OF THE PROFESSION SURVEY 2022

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The environment and sustainability profession is diversifying as younger people enter the sector, and most IEMA members agree that membership has had a positive impact on their careers.

That is according to findings from the IEMA State of the Profession Survey 2022, which provides a comprehensive snapshot of the career paths, salaries and barriers currently experienced by members.

Although 40% of respondents felt that progression in sustainability and environmental roles was fair, 25% disagreed. And while more still needs to be done, the findings also suggest that the gender pay gap has narrowed significantly, down from 14.1% in 2018 to 8.75% this year.

The average full-time salary in 2022 was £47,570, up 7% from £44,439 in 2018 and far above the UK's mean full-time salary of £31,447. Encouragingly, 72% of IEMA members had received a pay rise this year – up from 67% in 2018 – but most did not take cost-of-living changes into account.

This year's edition of the survey also includes insights into members' perceptions of current IEMA strategies. Respondents felt that climate change and net zero were key issues for IEMA to focus on in terms of the changing policy and regulatory landscape.

The majority of members responding to the survey had joined IEMA within the last five years and tended not to be members of other organisations.

FULL-TIME SALARIES AVERAGED

£47,570
UP **7%** THIS YEAR,
FROM £44,439 IN 2018



THE GENDER
PAY GAP WAS

8.75%
DOWN FROM
14.1%
IN 2018

This is considerably higher than the UK's mean full-time salary for workers across all sectors, which the latest ONS figures show is £31,447



THE HIGHEST SALARIES GO TO MEMBERS IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, WITH AN AVERAGE SALARY OF

£52,456
UP 10.5% FROM
£47,404 IN 2018



MEMBERS REPORTED THAT **CLIMATE CHANGE AND NET ZERO** ARE THE ISSUES THAT IEMA SHOULD FOCUS ON WITH REGARD TO THE CHANGING POLICY AND REGULATORY LANDSCAPE, AND **INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT POLICY**

WHILE **72%** OF IEMA MEMBERS RECEIVED A PAY RISE IN THE LAST YEAR – UP FROM 67% IN 2017 –



13% ONLY HAD RECEIVED A REAL PAY RISE TAKING THE COST OF LIVING INTO ACCOUNT



40% felt that progression in roles was fair, but

25% of women experienced gender discrimination as a barrier, and

25% of people from an ethnic minority background experienced racial discrimination as a barrier



SALARIES BY INDUSTRY AND SECTOR

Full-time gross salaries in 2022 averaged £47,570 – up 7% from £44,439 in 2018 – while part-time salaries averaged £37,147. The UK's mean full-time salary for workers across all sectors was £31,447, according to the Office for National Statistics.

Salaries varied considerably by membership level, with Fellows who work full time taking home an average of £79,369, compared with full members on £58,656, practitioners on £49,614, affiliates on £45,898 and associates on £40,989. Students working full time were on average gross salaries of £34,497, while graduates were on £30,547.

The top 5% of **IEMA Fellows** (95th percentile) had an average gross annual salary of £115,000. The top 25% had an average gross salary of £94,000, and the top 75% £54,182.

For full members, the top 5% had an average gross annual salary of £93,000. The top 25% had an average gross annual salary of £67,500, and the top 75% £44,950.

For practitioners, the top 5% had an average gross annual salary of £75,000, while the top 25% earned £54,000 and the top 75% £35,000.

For associates: Top 5% £71,000, top 25%: £47,000, top 75%: £30,000.

For graduates: Top 5%: £50,000, top 25%: £34,500, top 75%: £25,000.

For affiliates: Top 5%: £75,000, top 25%: £49,000, top 75%: £30,000.

For students: Top 5%: £73,000, top 25%: £45,000, top 75%: £22,000.

IEMA salaries across all sectors were somewhat higher than salaries nationally, but there was variation between types of role, with chief

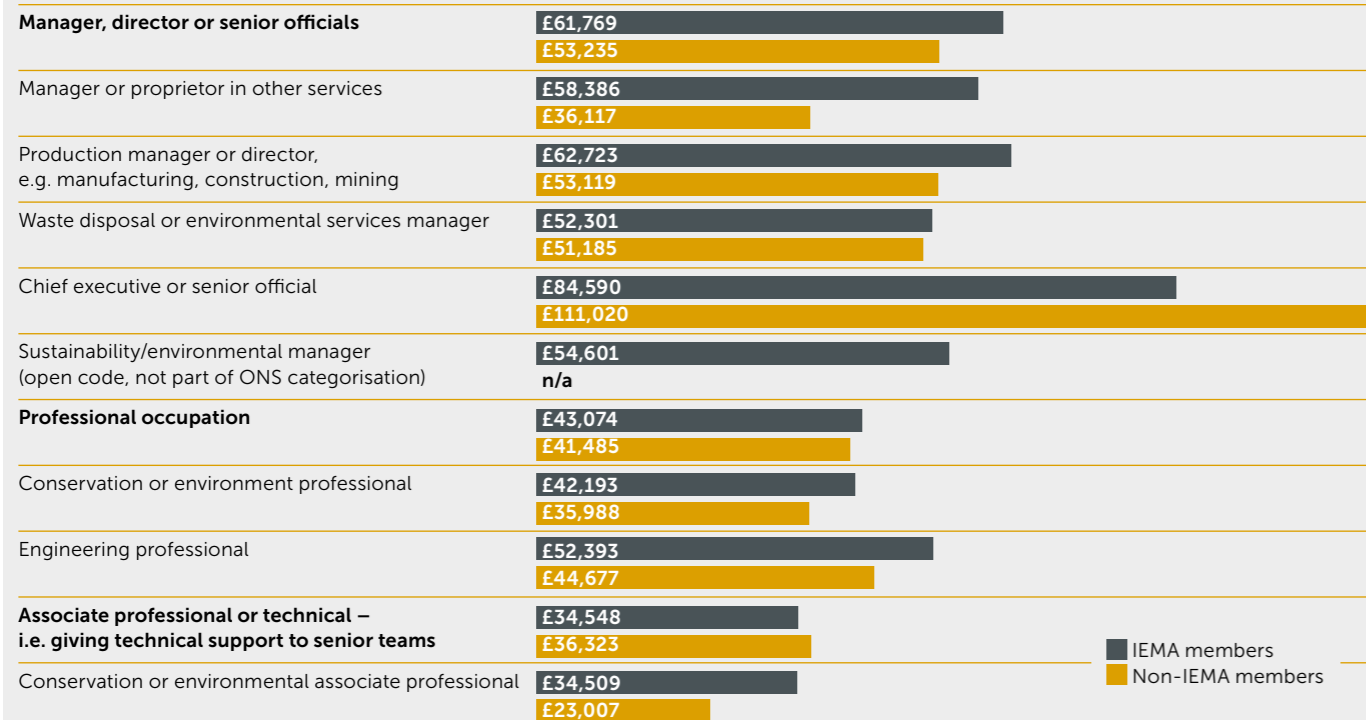
executives or senior officials typically paid less than non-members in these roles, and engineering professionals and production managers paid more.

Overall, the highest salaries go to members working in business and industry, who can expect to earn an average gross salary of £52,456 – up 10.5% from £47,404 in 2018. This is followed by members working in the built environment and in energy and utilities, who can expect to earn average gross salaries of £51,178 and £51,443, respectively.

Those with a CEnv earned an average of £56,837 – significantly more than members who are not CEnv registered. The salary uplift for this group was particularly pronounced in the 21–30 age group, but could be seen across all ages.

IEMA and non-IEMA members' salaries across roles and sectors

There was again variation between role types here, with chief executives or senior officials paid less than the average and engineering professionals and production managers paid more.



Base n = 946, asked only of employed, self-employed and semi-retired. Those occupations with 40+ IEMA survey responses shown. Includes FT & PT. Benchmarking data from ONS earnings and hours worked, 2021 provisional dataset. Data only shown for ONS estimates deemed at least 'reasonably precise'.

PAY RISES AND CAREER PROGRESSION

While 72% of IEMA members had received a pay rise in the last year, only 13% received a real

pay rise when taking the cost of living into account. This compares with 64% who got a pay rise in 2017.

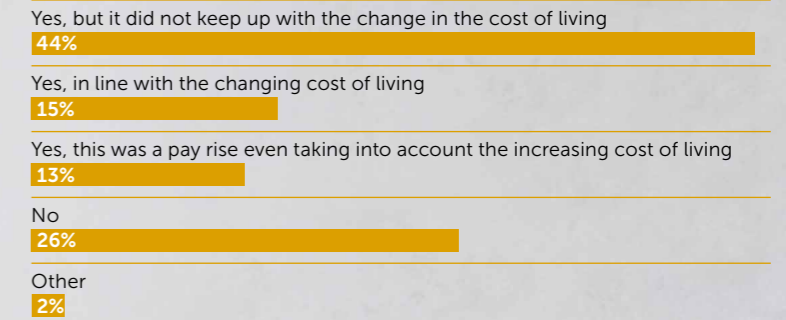
The findings also show that only 4% of those working in public sector organisations had received a pay rise that kept pace with the cost of living, compared to 18% of those in consultancy roles. Meanwhile, 22% of those working in organisations in the built environment sector had been given an above-inflation pay rise, compared to 4% of those at NGOs.

Although real pay rises were uncommon, 19% of respondents had been promoted during the past year, compared with 13% in 2017.

Of those working in business and industry, 14% had been promoted this year, compared with 26% of those in consultancy organisations. The findings also show that 27% of members working in the built environment sector had been promoted, compared to 13% of those doing charity and voluntary work.

Have you received a pay rise in the last year, while still in the same role?

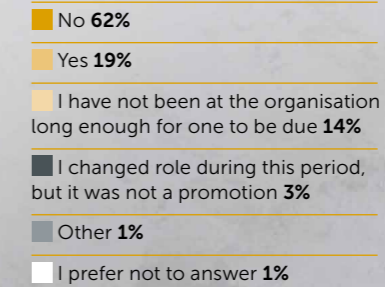
% of respondents



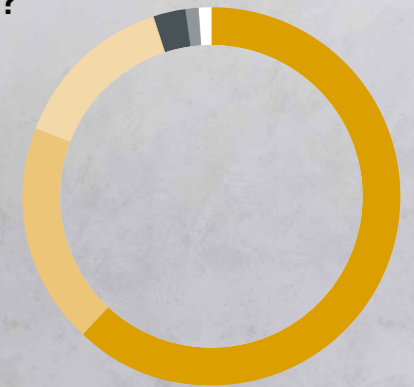
Base n = 829, asked only of employed, self-employed and semi-retired. Those who had moved role during the past year or were in their job for an insufficient time to merit a pay rise removed.

Have you been promoted during the last year?

% of respondents



Base n = 1,030, asked only of employed, self-employed and semi-retired.



While 72% had received a pay rise in the last year, only 13% of those who might have expected one had received a real pay rise that took the cost of living into account

A DIVERSIFYING PROFESSION

There were some interesting findings regarding members' individual characteristics, which may indicate that the profession is changing. While 94% of members aged 41+ described themselves as white, this was true of only 84% of those aged 21–30 and 85% of those aged 31–40.

Of those describing themselves as postgraduate students, only 44% described themselves as white.

Furthermore, 27% of the members surveyed were 21–30-year-olds, making this the most common age

group. This was followed by 31–40-year-olds on 26%, 41–50-year-olds on 23%, 51–60-year-olds on 17%, and 61–70-year-olds on 5%.

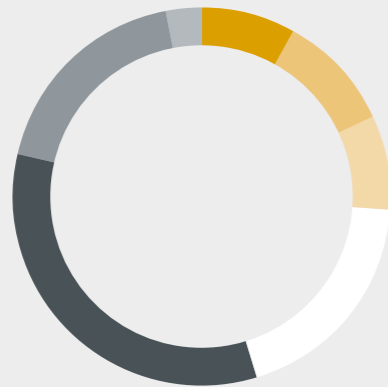
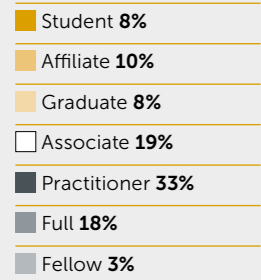
At the same time, 52% of members had only been members for between one and five years, and 80% of members from minority ethnic backgrounds had joined within the past five years, suggesting that the profession is diversifying.

Of the 1,190 members who responded to the survey, 53% identified as women and 44% as men. Women were also significantly more likely to report that they were sustainability and environmental specialists, on 61%, compared with 42% of men.

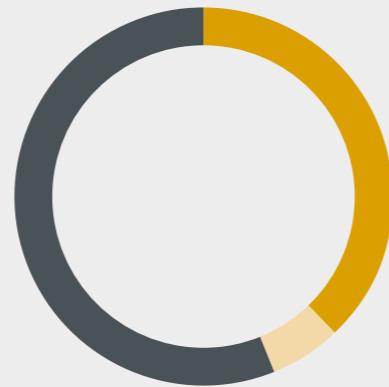
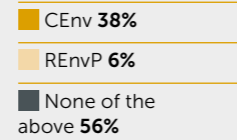
This suggests that the sustainability and environmental profession might be becoming more woman-dominated. However, this is perhaps a new trend, as women were more likely to be graduate members and to have been in the profession for one to five years, while men were more likely to be Fellows.

All IEMA members surveyed were based in the UK, with 86% based in England, 10% in Scotland, 3% in Wales and 1% in Northern Ireland. Practitioners comprised 33% of the membership surveyed, with associates representing 19% and full members 18%. Affiliates, graduates, students and Fellows made up 10%, 8%, 8% and 3%, respectively.

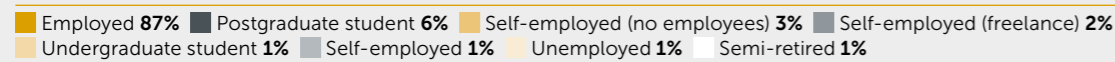
Member type



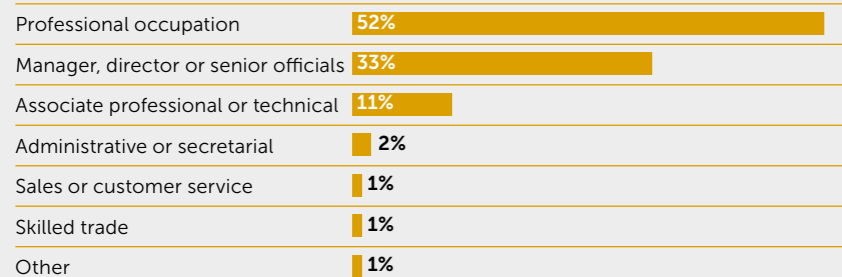
Practitioner status



Work status

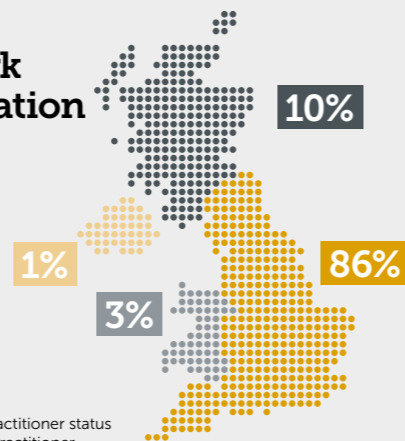


Role category

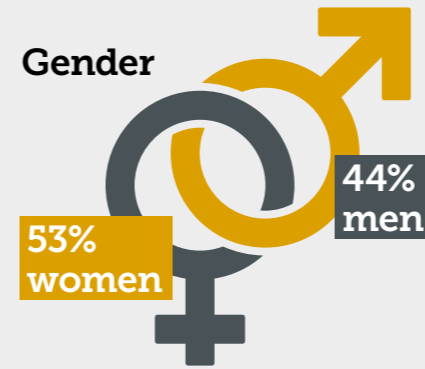


Base n = 1,190 (Member type, Work status); base n = 1,104 (Role category, Work location); Member and work status = asked to all; Practitioner status = asked only if Full, Fellow or Practitioner member. Note: CEnv = Chartered Environmentalist; REnVP = Registered Environmentalist Practitioner.

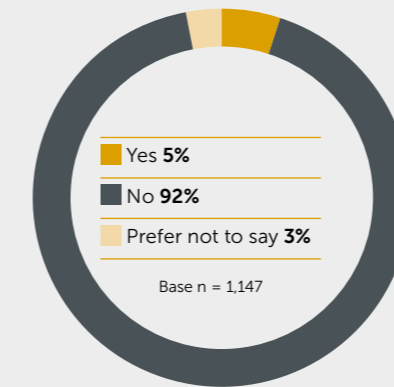
Work Location



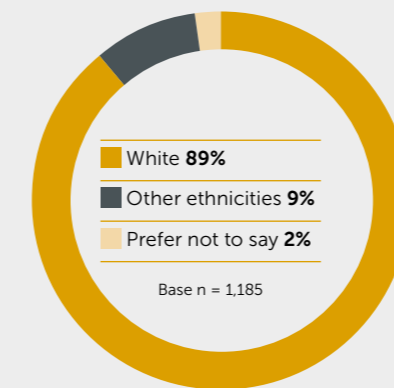
Gender



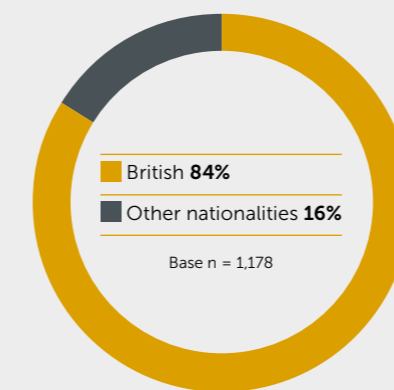
Living with disability



Ethnicity



Nationality



GENDER PAY GAP

Women earned an average of £43,410, compared to an average of £49,591 for men. However, this was largely accounted for by the differences in the age profiles of the genders, with women often being younger. Women were also more likely to work part time.

The average gross hourly salary by gender was:

- Men (including trans men) – £25.86
- Women (including trans women) – £23.60

The overall gender pay gap was therefore 8.75% – down sharply from 14.1% in 2018.

Of survey respondents, 35% of women were aged 21–30, compared with just 18% of men. Conversely, 23% of men were aged 51–60, compared to just 12% of women, and 9% of men were aged 61–70, compared with only 2% of women.

Women were more likely to work part time, with 19% working part time compared to 7% of men. Stripping out part-time data, the average full-time salary for members was 44,858 for women and 50,216 for men.

Looking at full members only – so stripping out practitioners, associates, affiliates, graduates, students and Fellows – the average full-time salaries were 57,901 for women and 58,591 for men, indicating a far narrower gender gap.



BARRIERS TO PROGRESSION

While 40% of survey respondents felt that progression in sustainability and environmental roles was fair, 25% disagreed.

There was a significant gender divide, with 62% of men reporting fairness in progression, compared to 35% of women. Furthermore, 25% of women reported experiencing gender discrimination, versus 2% of men; this peaked at 33% for the 31–40 age group.

A quarter of members from an ethnic minority had experienced racial discrimination as a barrier to their career progression, while 11% had also experienced class-based discrimination. Overall, 54% of members from an ethnic minority background had experienced “many barriers” in developing their careers, compared to 32% of white members. This difference was even more stark for those aged 21–30 (62% versus 31%), and for black men (63%).

The findings also show that 18–20-year-olds were most likely to report age discrimination, on 40%, compared to 13% overall. Those aged under 30 were particularly likely to report barriers due to lack of training opportunities, lack of career advice and too much competition for positions (22%).

Looking at workplace bullying, 22% of those living with a disability said they had faced this barrier – compared with 9% overall – while 6% had experienced disability or health discrimination.

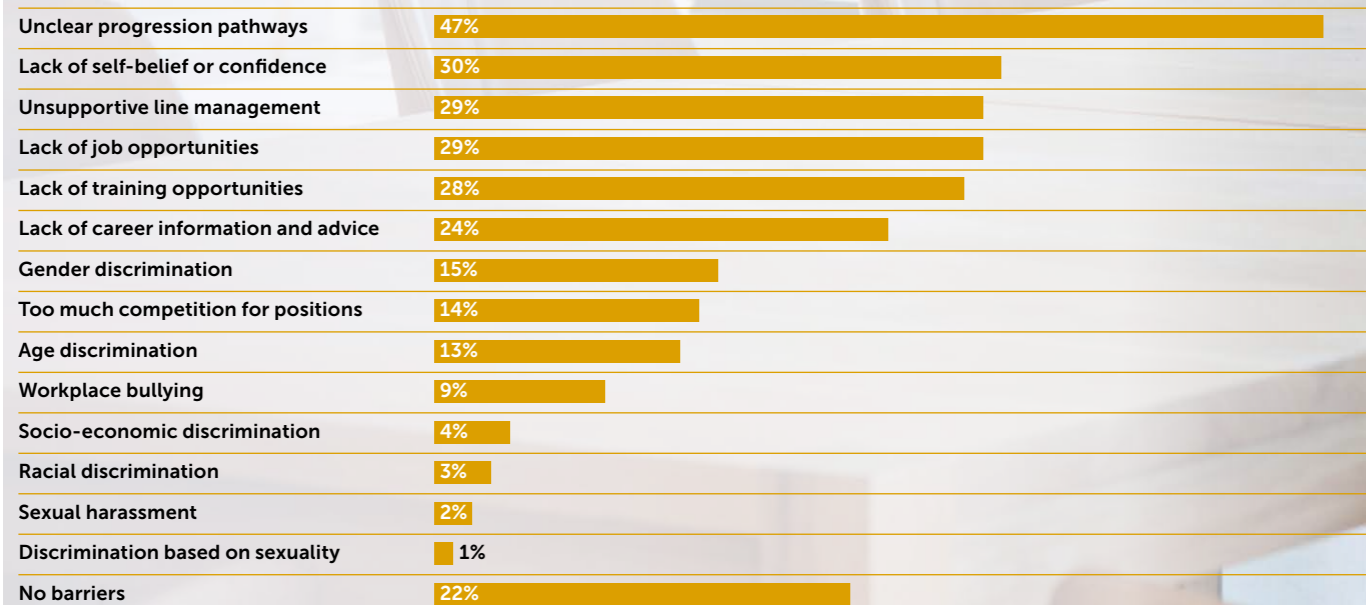
Unclear progression pathways was the key barrier experienced by IEMA members in their careers, but a lack of confidence was also key, particularly among women. While 52% of women had experienced unclear progression pathways, only 42% of men reported the same.

The findings also show that 40% of women reported a lack of self-confidence as a barrier, compared to 19% of men; this was true even accounting for age.

40% of women reported a lack of self-confidence as a barrier, compared to 19% of men; this was true even accounting for age

What barriers have you experienced progressing in your career in sustainability and the environment to date?

% of respondents



Base n = 1,190. Asked to all.

PERCEPTIONS OF IEMA

Full members were most likely to strongly agree that IEMA membership had had a positive impact on their career opportunities. They were also most likely to agree and strongly agree with the impact on salary statements, which aligns with them seeing value in the recognition of their expertise via membership or the suffix.

Continuing professional development, learning and development opportunities were the most highly valued benefits of IEMA membership. Webinars, recognition of expertise via membership or the suffix, publications, news and resources, and *Transform* magazine completed the top five most highly valued benefits.

Climate change and energy aligned with the majority of members' professional interests, and was also the area in which they wanted more resources and coverage. Environmental management was the second-most

aligned, and third in terms of further coverage.

When members were asked the open question: 'In its work helping members to understand the changing policy and regulatory landscape, what is the single most important issue that IEMA should focus on?', the top issues cited were:

- Climate change
- Net zero and decarbonisation
- General legislation changes and how to implement these
- New environmental bills
- Mandatory reporting and its requirements
- Corporate sustainability
- Biodiversity.

When asked: 'In its work to influence government policy, what is the single most important issue that IEMA should focus on?', the top issues were:

- Climate change
- Net zero and decarbonisation
- Biodiversity
- Circular economy.

Members agreed that IEMA membership had a positive impact on their career opportunities and skills, but not salary

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Membership of the IEMA has had a positive impact on the career opportunities available to me



Membership of the IEMA has had a positive impact on my salary



Membership of the IEMA has had a positive impact on my skills



Legend: Strongly agree (yellow), Somewhat agree (dark grey), Neither agree nor disagree (orange), Somewhat disagree (light grey), Strongly disagree (dark grey), Not applicable (light orange), Don't know (white)

Base n = 1,190.



CONCLUSIONS

The sustainability profession appears to be woman-dominated, but many IEMA members are just starting their careers, so fewer are Fellows and some seem unclear about how to progress within IEMA.

Compared to those in similar roles in other sectors, IEMA members are well-paid, with an average salary of £46,292. CEnv also boosts salary. However, members do not feel membership impacts on salary.

Unclear progression pathways were the main barrier for IEMA members, particularly women. Confidence is also an issue, as is discrimination for women and for ethnic minority members.

Many members saw themselves staying in roles with environmental and sustainability responsibilities, but finding opportunities was a barrier to progression.

Members valued continuing professional development (CPD), learning and development opportunities, with webinars a close second. However, many more junior members had issues with affordability.

Members reported climate change and net zero as important policy factors, with a focus on achieving the 2050 net-zero emissions target.

Provide more membership guidance: Respondents wanted to see more guidance on when and how to move between membership grades, and what evidence is needed for this.

Create a salary guide: This was mentioned by respondents when asked what tools and resources would be helpful. Publicise the findings around salary to boost prestige for IEMA and the CEnv.

Share examples of career pathways: Respondents seemed unaware of the current skills map. **Address confidence** via courses and webinars. **Engage** directly with the membership around discrimination issues.

Advertise job opportunities in sustainability across the website and on social media, e.g. LinkedIn.

Continue to provide CPD opportunities and advertise these well, particularly to more recent sustainability professionals. Consider how these can be made more affordable for less well-paid members.

Provide businesses with support on how to achieve net-zero emissions targets, so that these can be implemented by members in their organisations.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by Shift Insight on behalf of IEMA to look at the professional state of its members.

The aim of the work overall was to gain a full understanding of career paths and salary options in the sector, as well as to provide an evidence base around members' perceptions of current IEMA strategies.

The study also provided insights into the barriers that people face in the sector. This was designed to help IEMA build an understanding around further action that could be taken to encourage more diversity within the sector.

Profile of respondents

TYPE OF ORGANISATION

Business and industry	43%
Consultancy	28%
Public sector	18%
Education / academia / research	6%
Third sector	2%
Other	2%

SIZE OF EMPLOYER

Micro business (1-9)	5%
Medium business (10-249)	12%
Large business (250-20,000+)	80%

SECTOR

Environmental consulting	45%
Energy and utilities	16%
Local government	10%
Education	9%
Public services	6%
Food production and processing	4%
Science and pharmaceuticals	3%
Charity and voluntary work	2%
Retail and sales	2%
Accounting, legal and business services	2%
Creative services, marketing and media	1%

IEMA Transforming the world to sustainability

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