



A study of the UK information workforce

Mapping the Library, Archives, Records, Information Management and Knowledge Management and related professions

Executive Summary

Introduction:

This report presents the findings of a study to map the Library, Archives, Records, Information Management, and Knowledge Management professions in the UK. It was commissioned in 2014 by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and the Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland) (ARA) and completed in 2015.

Key findings:

Estimated 86,376 people in the workforce: The survey estimates the size of the workforce at 86,376. Libraries employ the highest proportion of workers (59.4%). The two largest workforce sectors are higher education (21.6%) and public libraries (12.6%).

Significant gender pay gap: Men in the sector earn more than women. Of those working more than 22 hours a week and earning £30,000 or more annually, 47% are men but only 37.3% women.

Women dominate the workforce: The overall gender split of the workforce is 78.1% female, 21.9% male. The gender split of the UK workforce as a whole is 50.1% female, 49.9% male.

Women under-represented in senior management: Male workers more likely to occupy management roles than their female peers. The 10.2% of men in senior management roles is almost double that of female workers (5.9%).

Highly-qualified workforce: The workforce is academically well-qualified: 61.4% have a postgraduate qualification. The highest qualification of most of the UK general population is A-level or equivalent.

High-earners are more likely to hold professional qualifications than low-earners: 64.8% of the workforce earning £40,000 or more hold a professional qualification.

An ageing workforce: The highest proportion of the workforce falls in the 45 to 55 age band. 55.3% are over 45 years of age; the equivalent figure for the UK as a whole is 41.1%.

Low ethnic diversity: 96.7% of the workforce identify as 'white' compared to 87.5% identifying as 'white' in UK Labour Force Survey statistics.

A significant, perhaps unparalleled, study:

This study is important for a number of reasons. It may be the first national workforce mapping study of the Library, Archives, Records, Information Management, and Knowledge Management domains ever conducted in any country. This is also the first workforce mapping study produced for any of the individual domains since the 2011 closure of Lifelong Learning UK. The last (remotely relevant) research was the 2012 *Library, archive, records and information management services* workforce survey (produced by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, 2012).

The findings of this report are drawn from a data set of 10,628 survey responses, a statistically significant proportion of the estimated 86,376ⁱ workforce and perhaps an unprecedented survey sample. This makes the findings even more robust than those used in the national UK Labour Force Survey and gives CILIP and ARA (and the wider sector) a strong evidence-base for their future advocacy work.

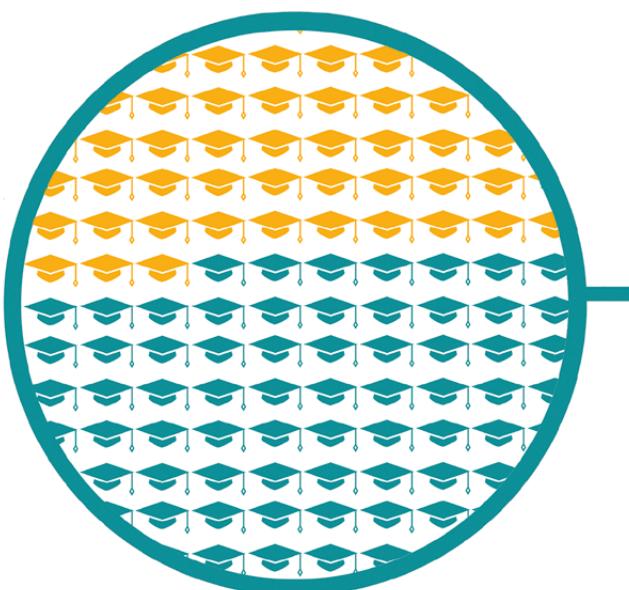
Other notable findings:

Workforce size and distribution across domains and sectors: The mean number of employees in a single organisation is 30 in England, 35 in Scotland, and 50 in both Wales and Northern Ireland.

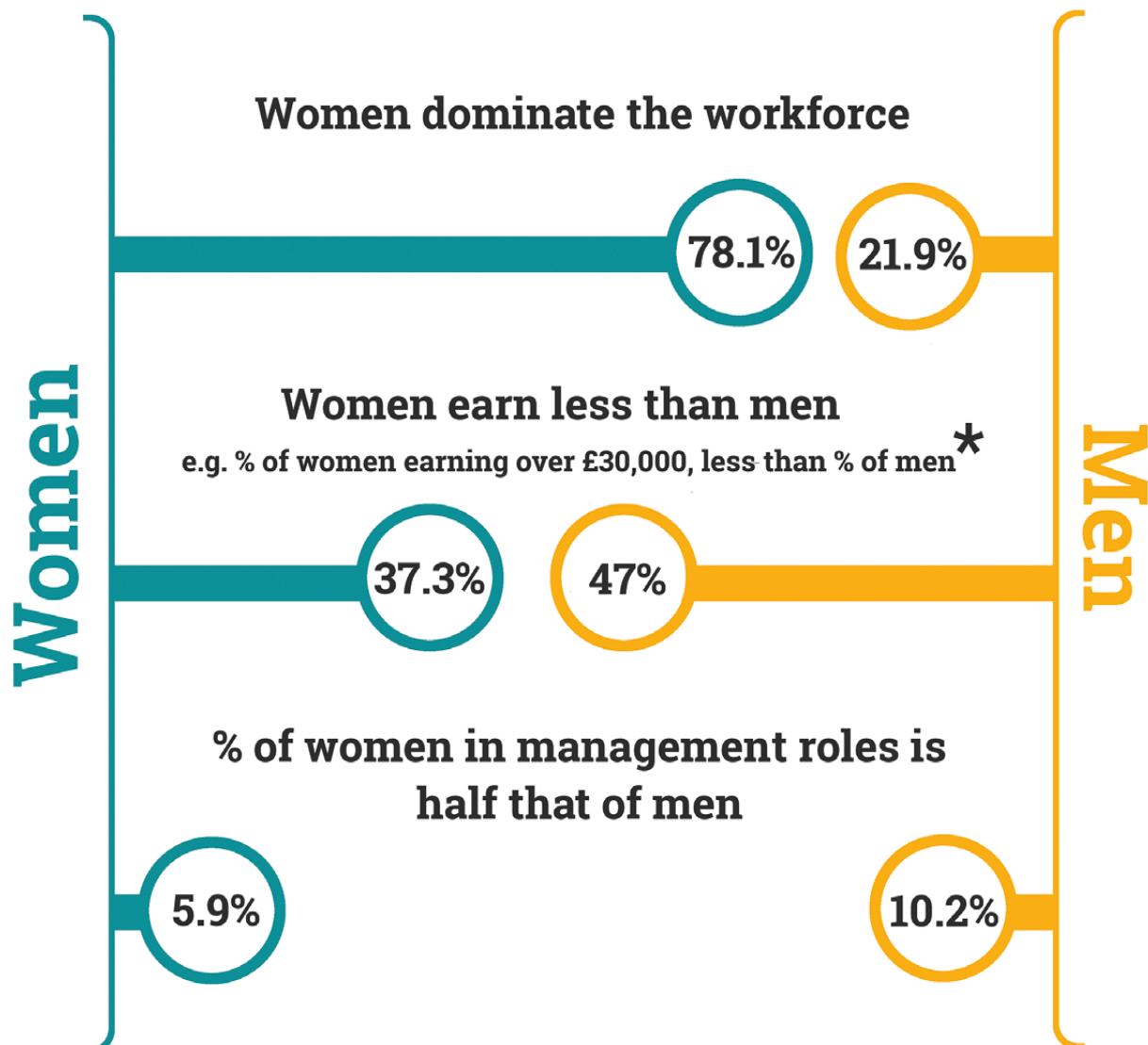
Workforce diversity: Over two thirds of the workforce are married or cohabit with a partner (71.6%). This is higher than the UK population as a whole (57.5%ⁱⁱ). Most workers are either Christian (46%) or have no religion (49.6%), similar to the wider UK population (48% and 42% respectivelyⁱⁱⁱ).

The highest proportion of the workforce with dependent children are in Information Management (23.2%) and Libraries (21.6%). Workers are more likely to combine work with caring than members of the general population: this ranges from 12.2% in the Archives domain to 15.9% in Knowledge Management. The headline UK figure is 11%^{iv}.

Qualifications and professional memberships: 57.2% of the workforce have professional qualifications. Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (MCLIP) is the most common (26.6%). Most of the workforce hold professional memberships (53.6%), but this is more prevalent amongst older, senior, and more established workers (54.5% of this category are over 45 years of age). The 'top' four professional membership bodies are ARA, CILIP, the Gurteen Knowledge Community, and the Information and Records Management Society (IRMS).



61.4% of the workforce hold postgraduate qualifications



* based on those who work more than 22 hours per week

Health and well-being: 15.9% of the workforce suffers from long-term health issues (the equivalent figure for the UK population as a whole is 18%), and over a third say that their illness affects their work. However, the responses suggest that health issues do not seem to affect career progression negatively.

Career status: A large proportion of the workforce holds front-line posts (38.8%). Those working in Information Management and Knowledge Management have greater responsibilities for staff and budgetary management than those in the other three domains.

Pay: The workforce might – in one sense – be regarded as generally well-paid. Over 50% earn more than £25,000 per annum, compared to UK national figures that show average gross pay at £26,500. However, high proportions of workers who are very well-qualified, and/or have long service, are relatively low paid. For example, 23.6% of those who have worked in the Libraries domain for over 20 years, and work more than 22 hours per week, earn less than £20,000 per annum (along with 92.2% of the population at large).

The highest proportion of workers who work 22 hours a week or more, and earn over £30,000 annually, are in Information Management, Knowledge Management, and Records. The lowest proportion of workers who work 22 hours a week or more and earn over £30,000 per annum

are in Libraries and Archives. There is no apparent association between pay and care-giving, nor between pay and long-term health issues. Those in commerce and business, higher education, national libraries and law are amongst the best paid workers.

Working hours: Most (84.3%) members of the workforce work more than 22 hours a week, with part-time working more common amongst females. This contrasts with an equivalent figure of 58.4% for the UK working population as a whole. There is an association between working hours and care giving in the workforce. Care giving is more common for those working fewer hours.

Contracts: Most members of the workforce (86.9%) hold permanent paid posts, although permanent contracts are less common amongst part-time workers. The equivalent figure for the UK working population as a whole is 93.8%. In general, there is no association between contract type and care giving, nor is there any association between contract type and long-term health issues.

Regions: In broad terms, the regional distribution of the workforce reflects that of the UK working population in general, as reported in the Labour Force Survey. For example, most (78.4%) of the workforce is located in England (the figure for the working population as a whole is 84%), and most members of the workforce in England are located in London (22.6%) and the South East (19.4%) (the regions with the highest figures for the population as a whole, at 13.5% in both cases).

The distribution of the workforce across the five domains is similar in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. A higher proportion of senior roles are found in England (8%) than in Northern Ireland (3%), Scotland (7.3%) and Wales (7.5%). In London there is a greater spread of the workforce across sectors than elsewhere.

Conclusions:

This report establishes a long-needed data baseline. It is our intention to repeat this study on a regular basis so that trends may be identified, and that associated work on similar themes could be carried out by sub-groups within the domains.

ARA and CILIP will now consider how they will address the issues arising from this report, for example through targeted programmes and partnership working. However, if government is serious about the UK becoming a knowledge economy, it should match this effort and pay more attention to the trends, gaps and challenges facing the sector; in effective partnership with the main professional bodies (ARA and CILIP).

For more information:

www.archives.org.uk/workforce

www.cilip.org.uk/workforce

References

i 9,103 usable survey returns from a total response rate of 10,628

ii http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp/171776_356002.pdf

iii <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/893167/religious-affiliation-british-social-attitudes.pdf>

iv <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/facts-about-carers-2014>

v <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-and-quick-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-the-united-kingdom---part-1/stb-key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-the-uk.html>