



# Driving towards inclusion: Senior managers report

MARCH 2024



We produce this work using statistical data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Our use of ONS data does not imply their endorsement of our interpretation or analysis. It's important to note that this work uses research datasets, which might not precisely match National Statistics aggregates.



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# Chapter 1

## Executive summary and foreword

### Foreword

In the ever-evolving landscape of the automotive sector, change doesn't just happen, it needs everyone, in particular senior leaders, to be proactive to make it happen.

That's why reports such as this from the IMI are so crucial. The following serves not only as an exploration of the current state of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within senior roles, but the findings also underscore the pressing need for proactive action to bridge the existing gaps in gender, ethnicity, and disability representation.

Currently, women occupy a mere 7% of senior roles in the automotive sector, a stark contrast to the 39% representation observed in the broader population. Similarly, disability inclusion in senior roles mirrors the stagnant trend seen in the broader working population, resting at 12.1%. In the realm of ethnicity, non-White British individuals face significant underrepresentation in senior roles, comprising only 8.9% compared to their 16.9% demographic proportion. This will differ depending on different ethnicities.

This report accentuates the importance of recognising intersectionality, shedding light on the unique challenges faced by managers who are disabled women and British Black, Asian Minority Ethnic women in leadership positions. It serves as a reminder that fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity for driving innovation, enhancing financial performance, and bolstering employee satisfaction.

The insights shared also emphasise the need for a proactive approach in promoting change. DEI should not be viewed as a zero-sum game, where one group gains at the expense of another. Instead, discomfort and defensiveness should be met with a commitment to understanding diverse experiences. Taking accountability for our own learning about inequality and actively working towards creating long-term, sustainable change are vital components of this transformative journey.

Additionally, the report underscores the value of development and inclusive leadership training. An alarming 82% of managers leave their roles due to inadequate training, highlighting the urgency for the sector to invest in comprehensive training programs. It emphasises that being slow to adapt is not an option; the sector must evolve faster to meet the demands of an inclusive and forward-thinking future.

By acknowledging the current disparities within senior leadership positions and proactively engaging in meaningful initiatives, we can collectively steer the industry towards a more equitable, innovative, and resilient future.



**Jodie Williams**  
Head of Diversity and Inclusion, Sytner Group

## Summary findings

- In the automotive sector, females hold only 7% of senior roles, compared to 39% in the broader population.
- Female representation in senior roles is increasing annually by an average of 0.3%, with projections to reach 17% by 2030.
- If current trends continue, we could achieve an 18% representation of women in all roles within the automotive sector by 2032.
- Disability inclusion in senior roles stays static at 12.1%, reflecting the broader working population's trend.
- The sector needs 8,800 more individuals to have a representative 24% with disabilities in senior roles; and 3,400 to align with the 15% in the sector workforce.
- Non-White British individuals hold only 8.9% of senior roles, which is less than their 16.9% demographic proportion.
- The annual growth rate for non-White British individuals in senior roles is 0.3%, with a projection of reaching 14% by 2030.
- To balance representation, the sector needs an additional 5,200 non-White British managers in senior roles.
- Disabled female managers and non-White British females in leadership face unique challenges, highlighting intersectional diversity issues.
- Female senior managers tend to be younger than their male counterparts, and younger individuals with disabilities are underrepresented in leadership positions.
- Bridging diversity gaps in gender, ethnicity, and disability is vital for fostering innovation, improving financial performance, and enhancing employee satisfaction in the automotive sector.

# Language and definitions

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI):** We recognise that the language surrounding EDI continuously evolves. In this report, we actively strive to employ precise terminology. However, we must highlight that some of the data sources and referenced studies might use terminology considered inappropriate or outdated.

**Ethnic Background:** When discussing the ethnic background of individuals or groups, we advise prioritising specificity over broad terms. Despite this, for statistical integrity in this report, we adhere to the categorisations provided by our data sources. In analysing ethnicity within the automotive sector, we use the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 18-category ethnicity variable. The survey-based nature of the data and reliance on actual counts pose challenges in analysing specific ethnic groups within a sector or region due to potentially small sample sizes. To ensure respondent anonymity, the ONS implements strict privacy measures, including a minimum count threshold of ten for data usage, even in proportional analysis. To overcome these challenges and enable year-over-year and sector-specific analysis, we consolidate all ethnicities, except White British, into a "non-White British" category. This method allows us to analyse ethnicity as a binary variable: White British versus non-White British. We provide a more detailed analysis beyond this binary categorization in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 7, we explore apprenticeship data from the Department for Education (DfE), which categorises ethnicity into 'ethnic minorities' (excluding White minorities) and 'White.' It is acknowledged that the term 'ethnic minority' may not accurately reflect global demographics. For comprehensive information on our data sources and methodology, please refer to the data methods section.

**Gender vs. sex:** It is crucial to distinguish between the terms of 'gender' and 'sex.' Gender is based on how someone identifies, making it more fluid, and tied to one's personal experience. Sex, on the other hand, is the assignment given at birth, often referred to as natal sex. These two terms are not interchangeable. Due to constraints in available data, the analysis in this report predominantly addresses sex within the traditional binary framework of female and male. It's important to recognise that data on other gender identities is scarce or entirely absent, making it challenging to assess the representation of non-binary, transgender, agender, intersex and other gender classifications within the industry. Nonetheless, progress is being made, as illustrated by the 2021 census, which for the first time introduced optional questions regarding gender identity. This represents an important step towards collecting comprehensive official data to better understand the needs and experiences of individuals across all gender identities.

**Disabilities** – In this report, when discussing disabilities, we analyse data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which uses a derived variable to classify individuals with certain health conditions as disabled or not, in accordance with the Equality Act. It is important to note that the classification of health conditions relies on self-declaration.

**Other identities** – Our research zeroes in on three key attributes: sex, ethnicity, and disability, laying the groundwork for exploring diversity within the sector. A thorough analysis would encompass a wider range of factors, such as age, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Nonetheless, constraints in data availability have hindered our ability to delve into additional identities, including those within the LGBTQ+ community. As more comprehensive data becomes accessible, we are committed to expanding our examination to include these areas.

**Automotive sector:** Throughout this report, unless specified otherwise, the term ‘automotive sector’ refers to the entire automotive industry, including both automotive retail and automotive manufacturing.

## Overview of the automotive sector

This report explores the state of diversity and inclusion within the UK automotive sector, focusing on senior roles and highlighting areas of progress while also pointing out critical gaps and challenges. Given the landscape, a strategic and initiative-taking approach is crucial for fostering diversity in leadership.

Despite a slight upward trend, averaging a 0.3% annual increase over the past 15 years, the representation of females in senior roles within the automotive sector is notably low at 7%, contrasting sharply with their 39% representation in the broader working-age population. To address this, better recruitment and promotion practices are essential to tackle unconscious bias and systemic barriers to safeguard fair opportunities.

Disability inclusion in the sector, while aligned with the general working population at 12.1%, is stagnant for 15 years. Reaching a more representative figure of 24% needs a significant increase in individuals with disabilities in senior roles. This demands cultural and organisational changes to foster an inclusive culture that values and promotes diversity, especially in leadership.

The proportion of non-White British individuals in senior roles stands at 8.9%, significantly lower than their 16.9% representation in the wider working-age population. The modest annual growth rate of 0.3% suggests a long path to proportional representation.

Moreover, the complexities at the intersection of sex, gender, ethnicity, and disability in senior roles call for a nuanced approach to diversity. Regular monitoring and reporting of diversity metrics are vital for accountability and transparency in progress. Engagement with diverse groups in decision-making processes and organisational strategy development is also key to addressing these intersectional challenges.

The automotive sector must actively work towards reducing disparities, particularly in the inclusion of disabled females and non-White British males with disabilities. This involves policy advocacy and collaboration with policymakers and industry partners to address systemic barriers and promote best practices in diversity and inclusion.

While there have been strides in some areas, notably in disability inclusion, the UK automotive sector significantly lags in diversity with regards to sex and ethnicity in senior roles. Recognising and actively working towards bridging these gaps is critical. Embracing a versatile approach to diversity is essential not just to align with societal expectations but also to unlock new levels of innovation, financial performance, and employee satisfaction. The road ahead is challenging, but it is crucial for building a truly inclusive and dynamic automotive sector.

Given the landscape, a strategic and initiative-taking approach is crucial for fostering diversity in leadership.



## Importance of EDI in the automotive sector

The need for diversity in senior roles is increasingly recognised as a key driver of organisational success and innovation. Many reports and research studies feature the considerable benefits that diversity brings to leadership.

For instance, McKinsey & Company's report, 'Diversity Matters Even More'<sup>1</sup> finds that companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians, stressing a strong link between diverse leadership teams and better financial performance.

Likewise, the Boston Consulting Group (BCG)<sup>2</sup> finds that companies with more diverse management teams have 19% higher revenues due to innovation. This shows that diversity is not just a metric to strive for but a pivotal element of a successful business strategy, particularly in industries driven by innovation and creativity.

Gender diversity has a significant positive impact. According to a study by Credit Suisse<sup>3</sup>, organisations with higher female representation in decision-making roles generate stronger market returns and superior profits. Similarly, an analysis by the Peterson Institute for International Economics<sup>4</sup> of 21,980 firms from 91 countries finds that women in corporate leadership positions drive better company performance.

In addition to gender and ethnicity, cognitive and experiential diversity are also critical. They contribute to a more comprehensive range of perspectives, leading to better problem-solving and decision-making, as highlighted by Deloitte<sup>5</sup>.

Diversity in senior roles serves as a powerful catalyst for broader organisational change. It sets a precedent for inclusivity and equality, fostering a culture where talent from all backgrounds can thrive. Such an environment not only attracts a wider range of candidates but also contributes to higher employee satisfaction and retention. In an increasingly globalised and connected world, the value of diversity at the top levels of management cannot be overstated.

# Chapter 2

## Core EDI analysis

### Dynamics of sex in UK automotive

The importance of women's representation in senior roles in organisations is well-recognised in academic research. Women in leadership positions function as role models for other women in the organisation, reinforcing the company's commitment to diversity and inclusivity. Additionally, companies with higher gender diversity, particularly in executive teams, show better financial performance:

- McKinsey & Company<sup>1</sup> finds that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 39% more likely to outperform their respective national sector medians financially; and
- those with the greatest proportion of women on executive committees earn a 47% higher rate of return on equity than companies with no women executives.
- Credit Suis<sup>3</sup> reports that companies with higher diversity in management teams show around 4% outperformance in stock markets.
- A study published in the Harvard Business Review<sup>4</sup> finds that, for profitable firms, moving from no women in leadership to a 30% share is associated with a 15% increase in profitability.

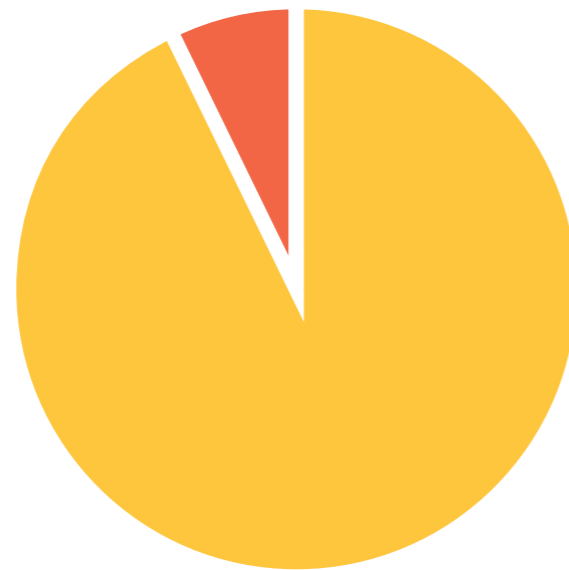
The World Economic Forum's Global Gap Report<sup>6</sup> shows another key factor: Women often reach capability more quickly than men in areas such as cognitive skills, management and engagement skills, self-efficacy, working with others, and ethics and technology.

However, the report also highlights the automotive sector ranking with aerospace as the fourth-lowest in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs, at just 15%—which may help to explain why sectors like automotive, typically have fewer women at the top.

### Current proportions of females in senior roles

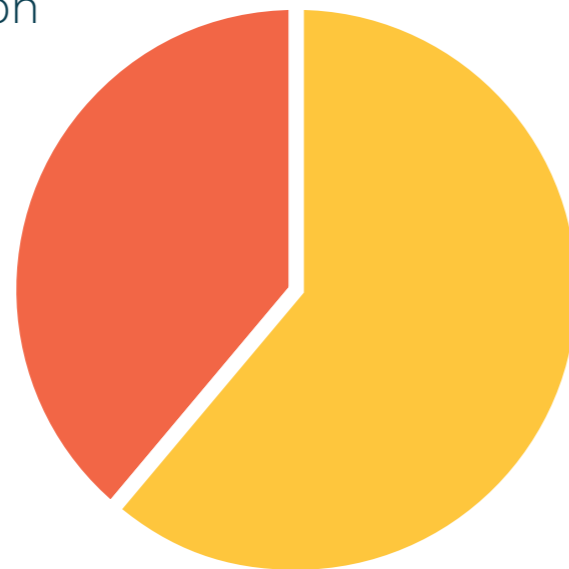
Senior roles within automotive (2022/23)

- Female = 7%
- Male = 93%



Senior roles within working age population (2022/23)

- Female = 39%
- Male = 62%



The proportion of females in senior roles within the automotive sector is 7%, significantly lower than the 39% representation in the working-age population. When considering the overall proportion of females in the automotive sector, which stands at 17.5%, this disparity is more pronounced. Chapter Three delves deeper into historical trends. Notably, there is a decrease in the number of females holding senior positions over the past year, dropping from 17% to 7%.

This is a significant 10% decrease compared to the previous year and an overall 16% decline over two years. When set against the 38.5% representation of females in the broader working-age population, this low figure raises considerable concern, showing a rapid decline in the presence of females in high-level roles in this sector. However, it's crucial to view this decline not as an isolated event, but rather as part of a broader trend.

We draw our statistics from survey data, which can be prone to substantial annual fluctuations, particularly in cases where the surveyed group is a small segment of the total population. Additionally, there is no evidence explaining the specific reasons behind this year's notable decline in female representation in senior roles.

The 2020 Deloitte<sup>5</sup> study explores the challenges and barriers to increasing female representation in senior roles within the UK automotive sector. Surveying over 100 sector professionals, the study finds that a substantial 90% believe females are underrepresented in leadership positions. The research pinpoints six major factors contributing to this underrepresentation, reflecting the systemic and cultural hurdles females face in advancing to senior roles in this sector:

- Sector bias towards men for leadership positions (23%).
- Organisational cultural norms (19%).
- Lack of mentorship/sponsorship (13%).
- Perception of the automotive sector overall (12%).
- Lack of flexible work environment (11%).
- Lack of proper management support (10%).

The report highlights that the scarcity of visible female role models in the automotive sector worsens the issue of underrepresentation. This absence leads females to think the sector lacks long-term career prospects. This is supported by the finding that 57% of females in the sector do not foresee a clear career path to reach their desired level, which is a significant barrier to professional advancement within the sector.



# Hidden and physical disabilities analysis

Like other diversity measures, there are many benefits to employing individuals with disabilities in senior roles. Some of these benefits include:

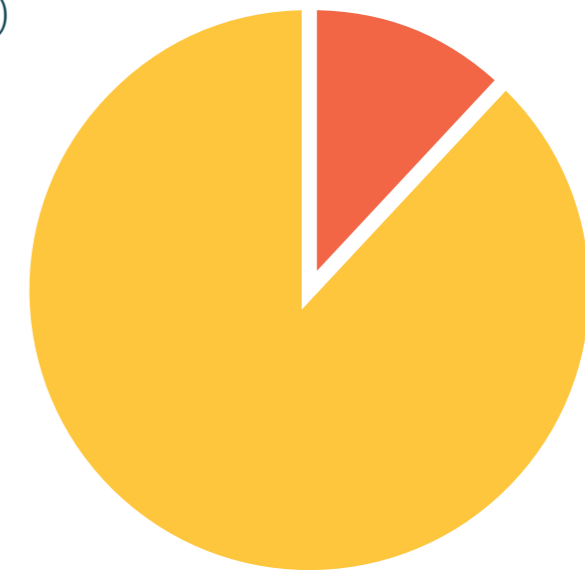
- **Enhanced critical thinking skills:** People with disabilities often find creative solutions to overcome the challenges they face, and these skills can be valuable in the workplace.
- **Increased productivity:** Employees with disabilities, when given appropriate support and accommodations, contribute significantly to productivity, introducing new perspectives and ideas in the workplace.
- **Cost savings:** Hiring individuals with disabilities reduces turnover and absenteeism, leading to savings in recruitment and training costs.

One study investigating the relationship between the employment of people with disabilities and financial performance is Accenture's 'The Disability Inclusion Imperative'<sup>7</sup>. This finds that companies with a strong commitment to disability inclusion outperform those without such commitments in terms of both revenue and net income growth.

## Proportions of those with disabilities in senior roles

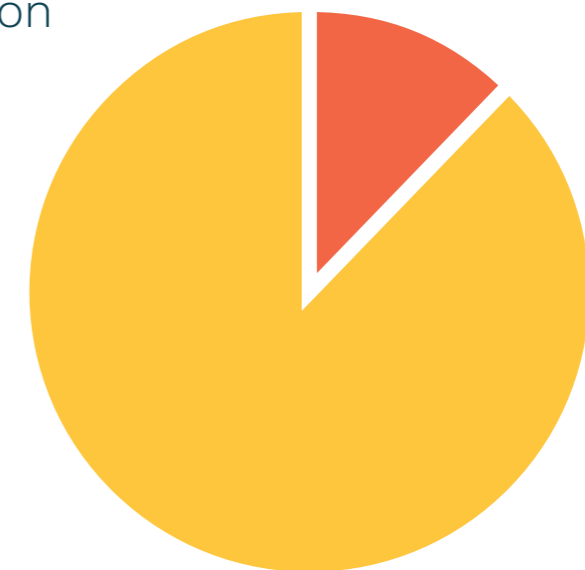
Senior roles within automotive (2022/23)

- **Equality act disabled = 12.1%**
- **Not equality act disabled = 87.9%**



Senior roles within working age population (2022/23)

- **Equality act disabled = 12.4%**
- **Not equality act disabled = 87.6%**



According to ONS data, individuals with disabilities occupy 12.1% of senior roles in the automotive sector. This aligns with the broader working population, where individuals with disabilities hold 12.4% of senior roles.

Statistical analysis implies that this slight difference is not significant and that the automotive sector's performance in employing disabled individuals in senior roles is neither better nor worse than the general working population.

In the automotive sector, people with disabilities fill 15% of all positions, regardless of job level. This can be seen as an encouraging indicator that disabilities are not a significant barrier to reaching senior positions in this field.

It's notable that there has been a slight uptick, with the proportion of individuals with disabilities in senior roles increasing marginally by 0.5% over the past year. However, it's important to be cautious in interpreting this single-year trend, as yearly data can vary and may not reflect a long-term pattern.

It's estimated that 70% to 80% of disabilities are non-visible<sup>8</sup>. This includes conditions like chronic pain, mental health disorders, autism, learning disabilities, chronic illnesses, and sensory processing issues. The automotive sector's reputation for hiring individuals with non-visible disabilities may contribute to the advancement of more individuals with disabilities into senior management roles.



## Disabled workers and bias in the workplace

The University of Exeter's Inclusivity Project<sup>8</sup>, which investigates the impact of health and inclusion in the workplace, surveyed over 1000 businesses in Cornwall, focusing on individuals with disabilities and long-term health conditions. This research uncovers a troubling trend: businesses, often unknowingly, discriminate against disabled individuals, limiting their employment and promotional prospects.

Common misconceptions fuelling this bias include beliefs about low productivity, inflated costs for workplace adaptations, and increased absenteeism. Key findings include:

- Disabled workers are notably absent from HR and hiring roles.
- People in poor health exhibit less bias against those with disabilities.
- Females show far less bias towards disabled individuals compared to males.

This last point is particularly revealing for the automotive sector. Our research indicates a severe underrepresentation of females in the automotive industry, with their numbers 66.7% below the median of the working-age population and 65.2% below those in non-automotive sectors. This imbalance suggests that increasing female participation may significantly improve inclusivity for disabled workers in the automotive sector.

The UK Parliament's 2023 report on 'Invisible Disabilities in Education and Employment'<sup>9</sup> reinforces these findings, highlighting a systemic issue: unconscious bias in recruitment processes. This bias leads to only 6% of disabled individuals occupying decision-making roles. The report outlines several challenges faced by disabled workers, including:

- Disabled workers face bias in performance management and barriers in recruitment processes, hindering their advancement.
- Many choose not to reveal their disabilities, fearing it might hinder their career progression and due to stigma, particularly when the disability is not visible.
- Disabled individuals often miss senior or managerial positions that typically offer more flexible working options – a necessity for many.

Both the University of Exeter's study and the UK Parliament's report underscore a critical issue: unconscious bias against disabled individuals in recruitment is a significant barrier to their entry into senior leadership roles.

## Race and ethnicity

In this section, we explore the vital importance of having non-White British representation in senior leadership roles, building on the many reasons outlined earlier in this report. By promoting diversity in senior roles, we address systemic inequalities and support social justice, breaking down barriers to career advancement for equal opportunities for success for all individuals.

When senior roles reflect a range of ethnic backgrounds, it enriches the organisation's knowledge of different ethnic groups, invaluable for forging and sustaining relationships with customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders from various ethnicities. It champions fairness and inclusiveness, furthering social justice by acknowledging and valuing the contributions of all ethnic communities.

Ethnic diversity  
in leadership  
is not just a  
moral imperative,  
but also a  
business one.



The business case for ethnic diversity in senior leadership is also compelling. Several studies feature the positive correlation between ethnic diversity and improved financial performance. For instance:

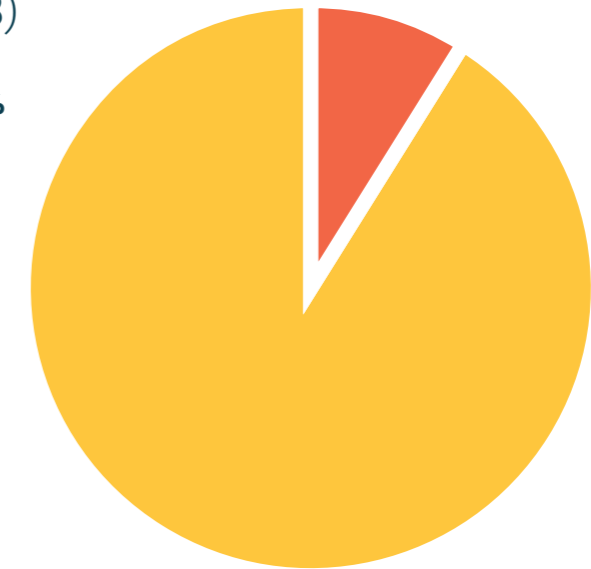
- McKinsey & Company's 'Delivering Through Diversity' (2019)<sup>10</sup> report finds that companies in the top quartile for ethnic and cultural diversity are 33% more likely to outperform financially; and
- their earlier 'Diversity Matters' (2015)<sup>11</sup> study reveals that companies with high levels of ethnic and cultural diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns above their industry median.

These findings underscore a clear message: Ethnic diversity in leadership is not just a moral imperative, but also a business one. Embracing and promoting diversity at the senior level is not only the right thing to do, but also a strategic move for organisational success.

### Proportions of non-White British individuals in senior roles

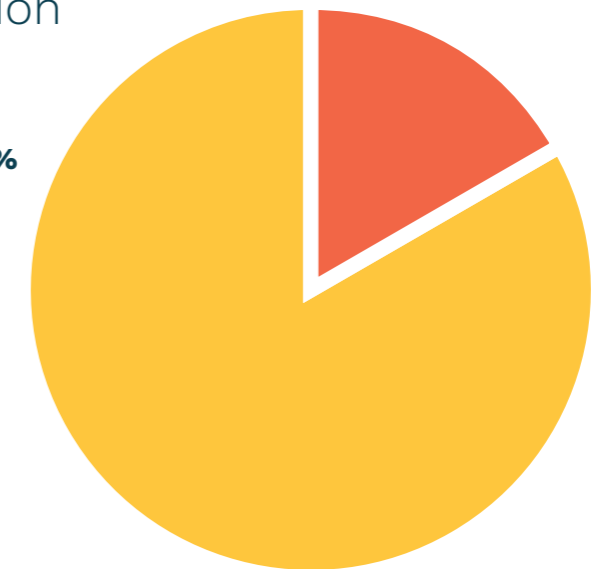
Senior roles within automotive (2022/23)

- **Non-White British = 8.9%**
- **White British = 91.1%**



Senior roles within working age population (2022/23)

- **Non-White British = 16.9%**
- **White British = 83.1%**



In the automotive sector, non-White British individuals occupy 8.9% of senior roles, which is significantly lower than their 16.9% representation in the broader working-age population. Statistical analysis highlights this gap, pointing to a clear disparity in the automotive sector compared to the broader workforce.

Examining the entire employment landscape within the automotive sector, non-White British employees hold 13% of all roles, regardless of job level. This reveals a two-fold disparity: not only is the proportion of non-White British workers in the automotive sector lower than in the general working-age population, but there is also a noticeable gap in their advancement to senior positions.

The past year observes a slight decrease of 0.4% in the representation of non-White British individuals in senior roles within this sector. While statistical tests mark this change as significant, it is important to approach this single-year trend with caution. Year-to-year fluctuations are common and do not always signify a consistent long-term pattern. For a more comprehensive understanding of these trends over time, Chapter Three offers an in-depth analysis of these evolving dynamics

## Uncovering ethnic disparities in senior employment

While not exclusive to the automotive sector, studies across various UK sectors reveal that ethnic minorities often face employment disadvantages.

In a stark reflection of ongoing inequalities, the 2021 ‘Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities’ report<sup>12</sup> offers a stark reflection of ongoing inequalities. It uncovers persistent challenges and disparities faced by ethnic minorities in the UK’s professional landscape, particularly focusing on ethnic underrepresentation in high-level professional roles.

The report reveals significant disparities in senior roles among non-White British groups. Notably, while non-White groups comprise one in eight of the working-age population, they represent only 10% of the overall workforce and a mere 6% in top management. Additionally, the study highlights that ethnic groups, often more qualified than their White colleagues, face greater barriers to promotion.

The study ‘They Created a Team of Almost Entirely the People Who Work and Are Like Them’<sup>13</sup> focusing on racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare settings, offers insights into similar biases that may exist in the automotive sector. It finds that racially and ethnically minoritised staff groups disproportionately experience and witness unconscious and conscious workplace discrimination from patients, colleagues, and managers.



Such discrimination manifests in the underrepresentation of these groups at senior levels and their overrepresentation in disciplinary proceedings. The impact of such biases extends beyond professional life, manifesting in increased depression, anxiety, somatic symptoms, lower job satisfaction, and higher rates of sickness absence.

These studies highlight the enduring challenges ethnic minorities face in UK professional sectors. To mitigate these disparities, particularly in the UK automotive sector, it is crucial to actively remove barriers to their advancement. This is not only vital for the individuals affected but also for the overall health and effectiveness of the industries.

# Chapter 3

## Longitudinal study

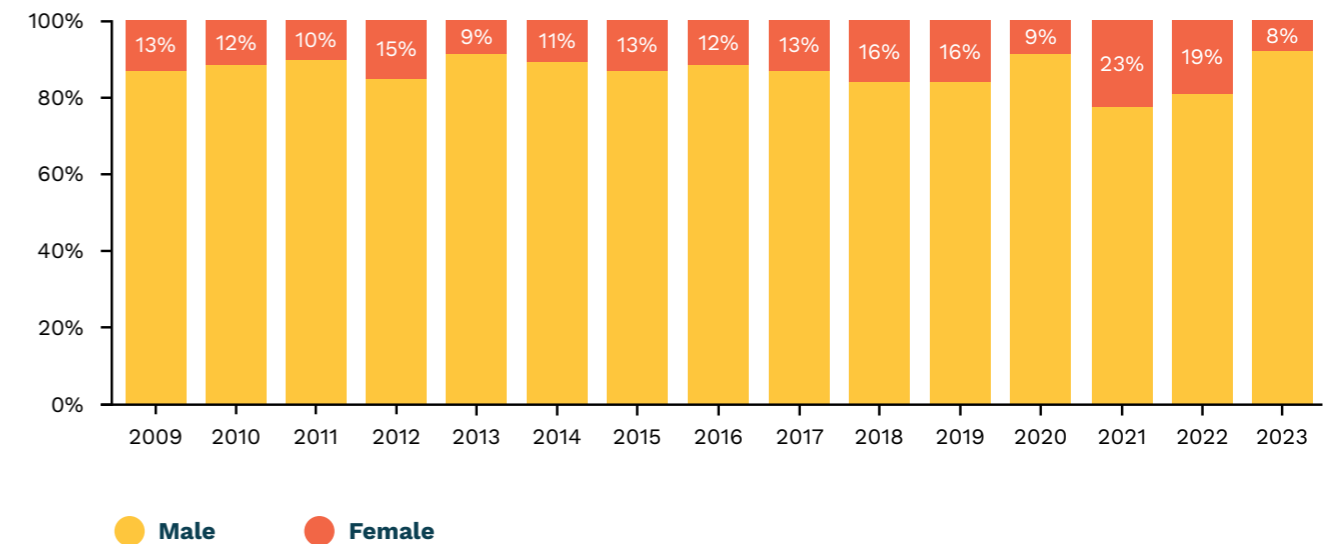
### Females in senior roles

*NB. Please refer to the language and definitions section for the difference in the terms of 'gender' and 'sex.'*

In the automotive sector, females hold only 7% of senior roles, a stark contrast to the 39% in non-automotive sectors. This discrepancy is even more pronounced in the overall proportion of females in the automotive sector, regardless of role, is 17.5%.

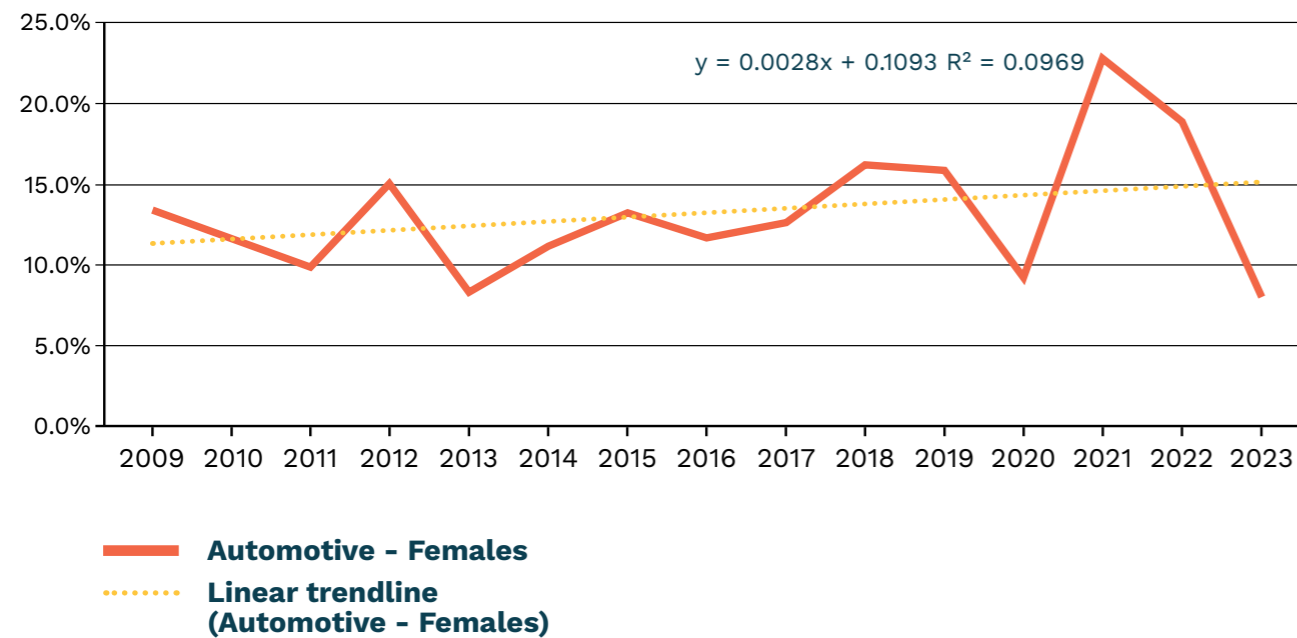
What is particularly worrying is the recent decline in the number of females in senior positions, dropping from 17% to 7% within the last year. This represents a substantial 11% decrease compared to the previous year and a 15% decline over two years. It is important to note, however, that we get these statistics from survey data, which can show annual fluctuations, especially for small segments of the total population.

Automotive - Proportion of those in senior roles by sex



Despite the recent decline, analysis over the past 15 years shows a small but increasing trend in the proportion of females in senior automotive roles. This trend reveals a gradual average increase of 0.3% per year. However, with an R-squared value of 0.097, time alone explains only a small portion of the variation. This suggests that factors beyond time may influence the number of females in senior positions.

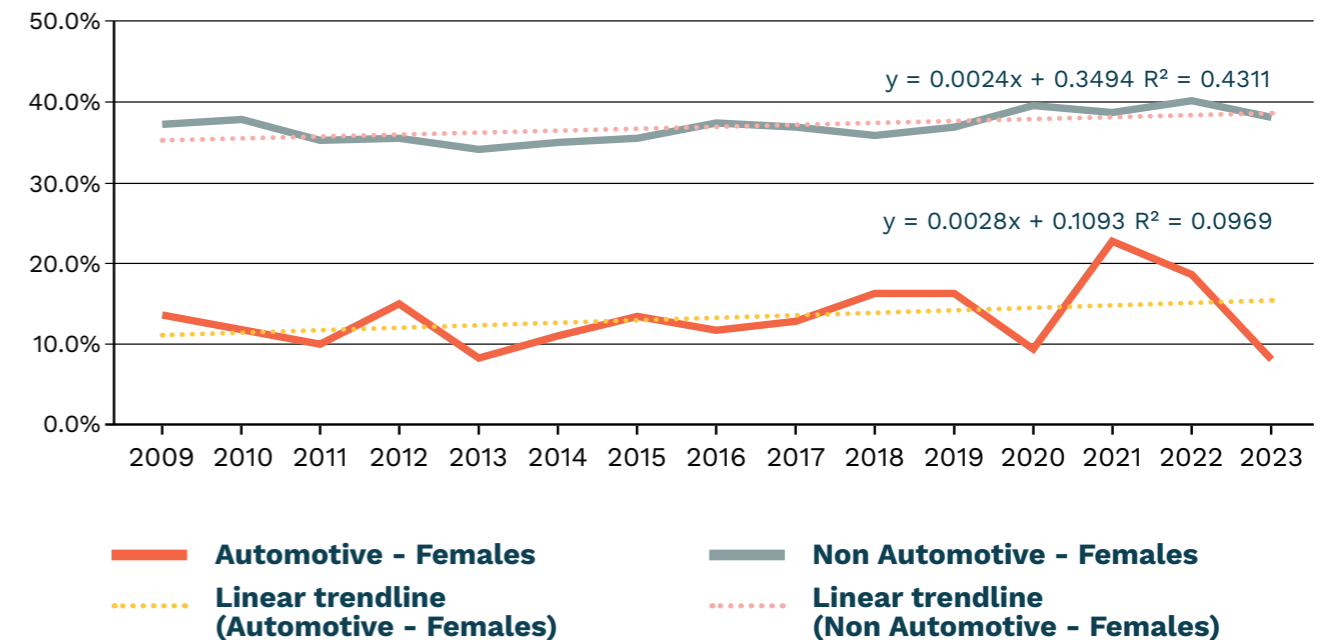
Proportion of females in senior roles in automotive 2009 - 2023



Analysis reveals the proportion of females in senior roles has shown a gradual increase of 0.3% on average each year. However, the R-squared value of 0.097 shows that time alone explains only a relatively small portion of the variation in the number of females in senior roles, despite the apparent visual trend in the data. This suggests that factors beyond the simple passage of time may be influencing the percentage of females in senior positions.

Possible explanations include that the relationship between time and the percentage of females in senior roles is not particularly strong, or it might be that other influential factors, which we did not include in our analysis, are also affecting the outcomes. We must explore this to understand why this is happening.

Proportion of females in senior roles 2009 - 2023



In non-automotive sectors, the proportion of females in senior roles has increased from 36.9% in 2009 to 38.3% in 2022, averaging a 0.2% annual increase. This is slightly slower than in the automotive sector.

We conducted a t-test to compare changes in the number of females in senior positions between sectors. The test yielded a p-value of 0.882, which is greater than 0.05. This means there is no significant difference between the two trend lines, suggesting similar rates of increase in both industries.

Over the last 15 years, the number of females in leadership roles has grown by about 0.3% each year. At this rate, by 2030, females will constitute approximately 17% of high-level positions in the sector. Currently, women occupy approximately 7.9% of these positions, amounting to around 4,800 individuals from an estimated sector population of 60,900, based on 2023 figures.

To achieve parity with the 18% female representation seen across all roles in the automotive sector, an additional 6,200 women would need to be appointed to senior positions, according to 2023 data. At the current rate of progress, reaching this level of representation is projected to take until 2032.

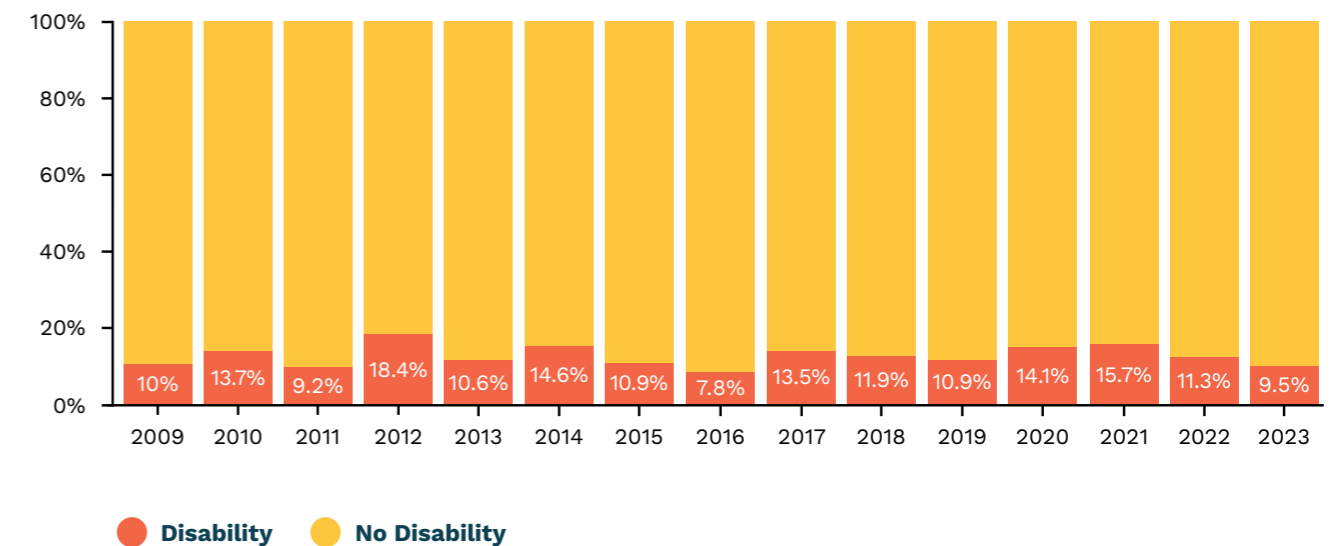
However, to get proportional representation, considering females make up 38% of the working-age population, we need to add about 18,500 female managers. At the current growth rate, it may take over 50 years to reach this goal.

*The proportions we mention in this section differ from those in Chapter Two. The reason for this difference is how we calculated them. In Chapter Two, we cumulatively calculated every quarter of the year. While this analysis focuses on a specific quarter, from January to March. Find more details in the section, Data and Methods.*

## Hidden and physical disabilities analysis

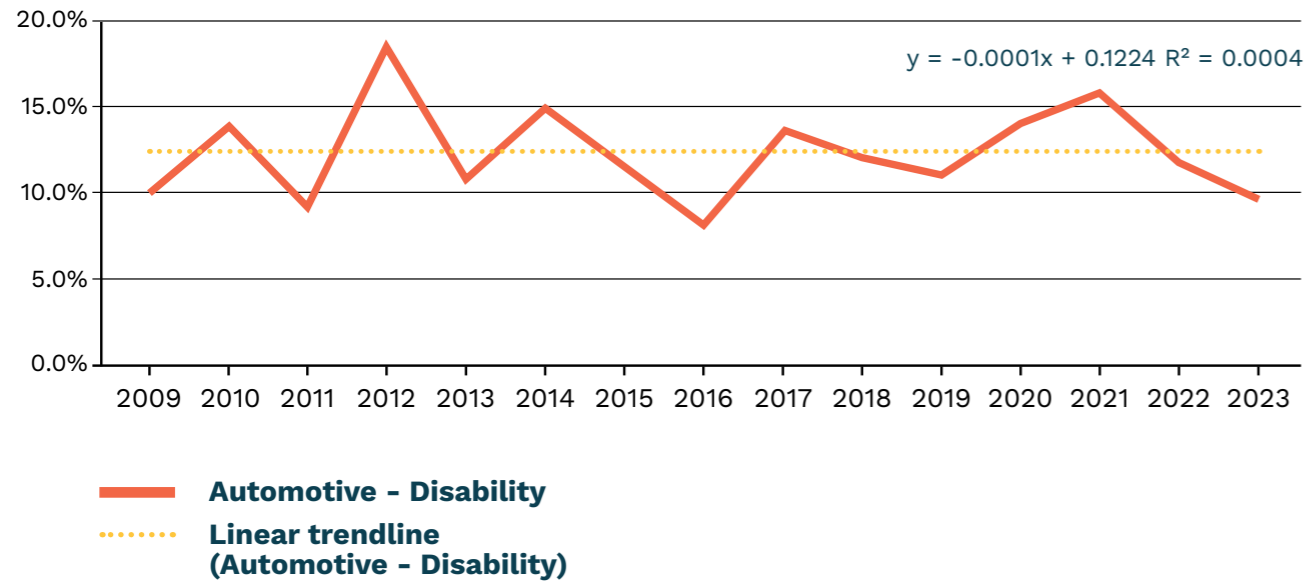
Individuals with disabilities hold 9.5% of senior roles within the automotive sector. Despite small fluctuations over the past 15 years, the general trend is consistent. The highest recorded percentage is 18% in 2012, while the lowest is 9.2% in 2011.

Automotive - Proportion of those in senior roles by disability



The proportion of individuals with disabilities in senior roles in automotive fell in the past two years. However, there is no long-term trend over the last 15 years.

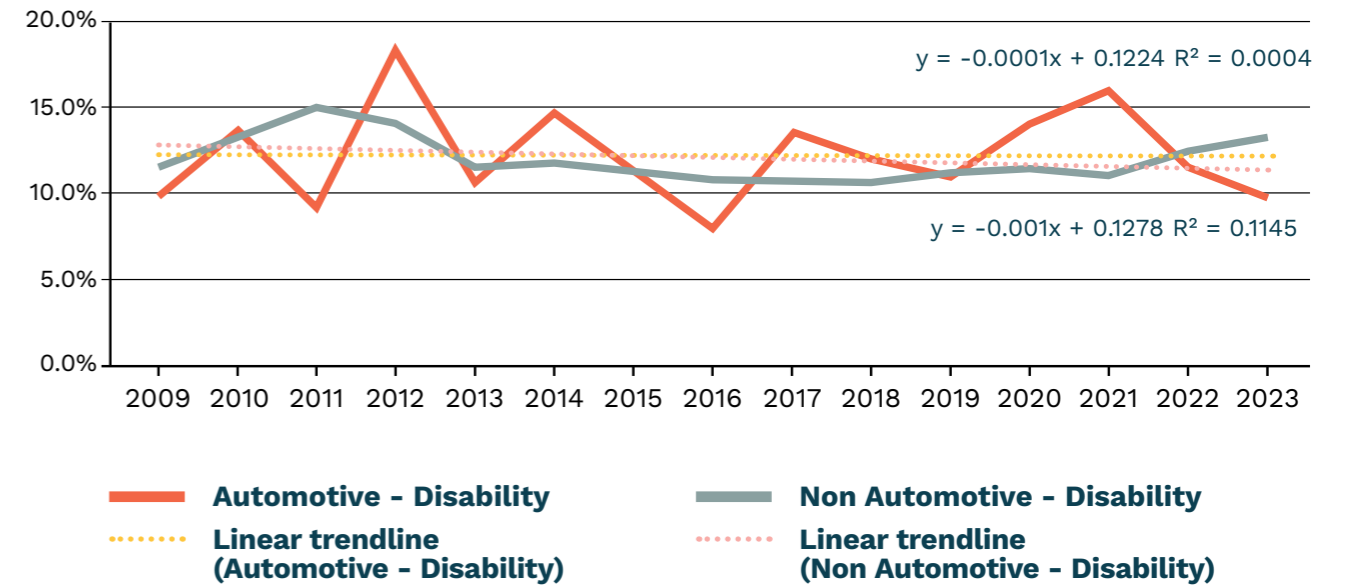
Proportion of those with disabilities in senior roles in automotive 2009 - 2023



The analysis shows a very slight, almost negligible yearly decrease (about 0.01% on average) in the proportion of individuals with disabilities in senior positions within the UK automotive sector. This suggests that factors other than time are influencing these changes.

This suggests that initiatives or policies aimed specifically at increasing the representation of people with disabilities in senior roles may not have a significant impact, or there could be other factors within the industry that are playing a more critical role in shaping these proportions.

Proportion of those with disabilities in senior roles in 2009 - 2023



In non-automotive sectors, the proportion of those with disabilities in senior roles has increased from 11.6% in 2009 to 13.2% in 2023. However, trend analysis reveals an average yearly decrease of 0.1%, a slightly faster decline than in the automotive sector.

A t-test comparing trends in the representation of disabled individuals in senior roles across automotive and non-automotive sectors yields a p-value of 0.64, above the 0.05 threshold. This shows no significant difference between the two sectors' trends. It suggests that both industries have an increase in the number of disabled workers in senior positions at similar rates.

In the automotive sector, the number of senior roles held by people with disabilities is like other industries. But this number hasn't really grown in the last 15 years. Based on 2023 data, about 5,800 people with disabilities are in these high-level jobs. To reflect the 24% of disabled people in the working-age population, we need about 8,800 more in senior roles.

To match the 15% of disabled people in all automotive jobs, we need 3,400 more in top positions, based on the current sector size. This lack of growth shows how hard it is to make this change. It's important for the automotive sector to start acting and making plans to get more people with disabilities into senior roles.

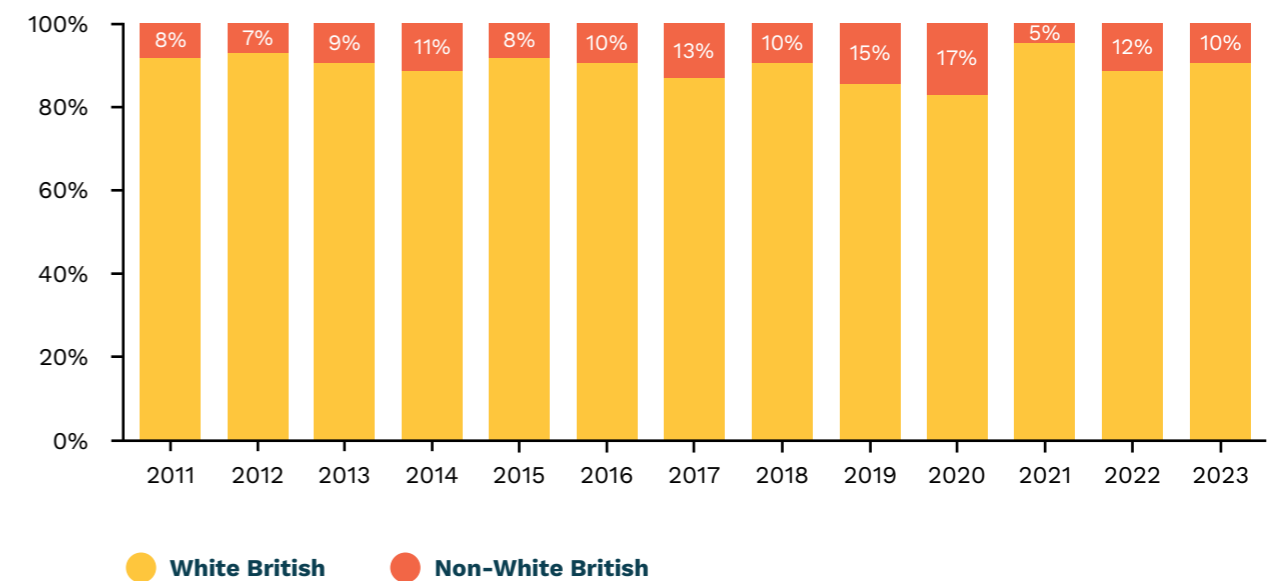
*We calculate the proportions in this section differently from those in Chapter Two. In Chapter Two, we include numbers from every quarter of the year. However, in this analysis, we focus only on one specific quarter, from January to March. For more information on our calculation methods, please refer to 'Data and Methods'.*

## Race and ethnicity

The proportion of non-White British people in senior roles within the automotive sector is 10%. This is noticeably lower than the 16.4% found in senior roles outside the automotive industry. Across all positions in the automotive sector, non-White British individuals make up 13%, highlighting a continuous disparity.

It's important to note that these proportions have decreased over the past year, but they are higher than they were two years ago. In the last 13 years, these proportions have fluctuated. The highest was 17% in 2020 and the lowest was 4.7% in 2021.

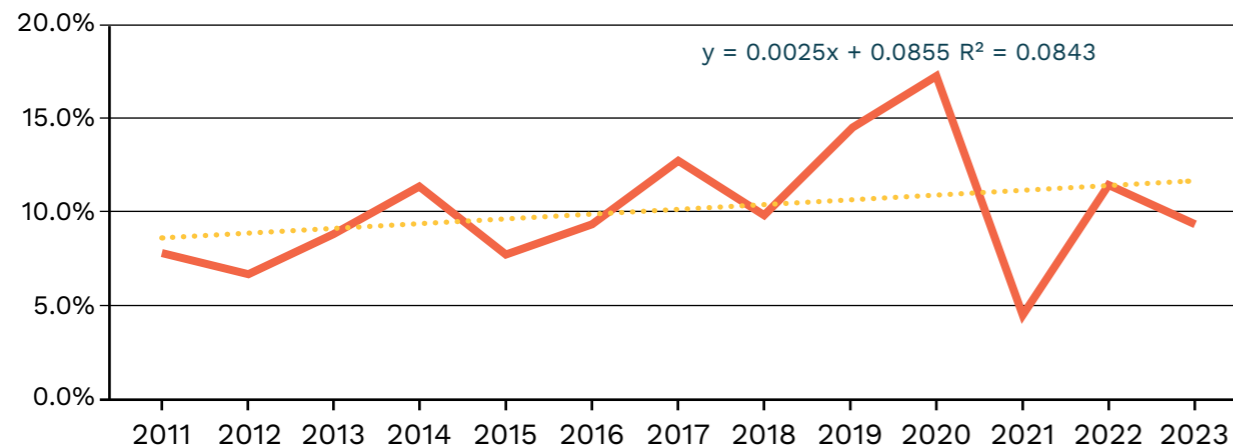
Automotive - Proportion of those in senior roles by ethnicity





Although the proportion of non-White British in senior roles dropped last year, over the past 13 years there has been a small but increasing trend.

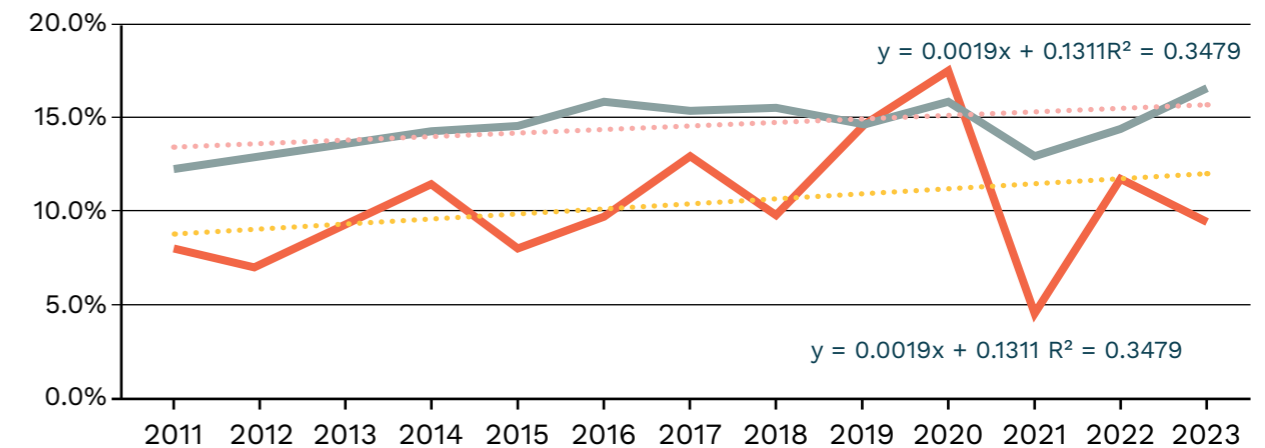
Proportion of non-White British in senior roles in automotive 2011 2023



— **Automotive - Non-White British**  
⋯ **Linear trendline (Automotive - Non-White British)**

Trend analysis shows a yearly increase of 0.3% in the proportion of non-White British individuals in senior roles on average. However, an R-squared value of 0.084 indicates that time only explains a small part of the change in this proportion. This suggests that other factors are also influencing these numbers. The relationship between time and the percentage of non-White British individuals in senior roles may not be very strong, or other unaccounted factors could be affecting the outcomes.

Proportion of non-White British in senior roles in automotive 2011 2023



— **Automotive - Non-White British**  
⋯ **Linear trendline (Automotive - Non-White British)**  
— **Non Automotive - Non-White British**  
⋯ **Linear trendline (Non Automotive - Non-White British)**

Outside the automotive sector, the representation of non-White British individuals in senior roles has increased from 12.3% in 2011 to 16.4% in 2023, growing on average by 0.2% annually. This is slightly slower than the automotive sector's growth rate. A t-test comparing these sectors gives a p-value of 0.830, which doesn't show a significant difference in the growth rates of non-White British representation in senior roles between the sectors.

# Chapter 4

## Intersectionality

Over the past 13 years, the annual growth rate for non-White British individuals in these roles averages 0.3%. If this rate continues by 2030, non-White British individuals will make up about 14% of high-level positions. Considering the whole workforce, where managers and leaders represent about 10% (60,900 people, based on 2023 data), non-White British individuals hold about 9.5% of these roles, roughly 5,800 people.

Reaching proportional representation in the automotive sector's senior roles needs decisive action. To align with the 18% presence of non-White British individuals in the working-age population, we must appoint approximately 5,200 more non-White British managers, based on 2023 data. At our current pace, we are on track to reach this milestone by 2049, a journey of 26 years.

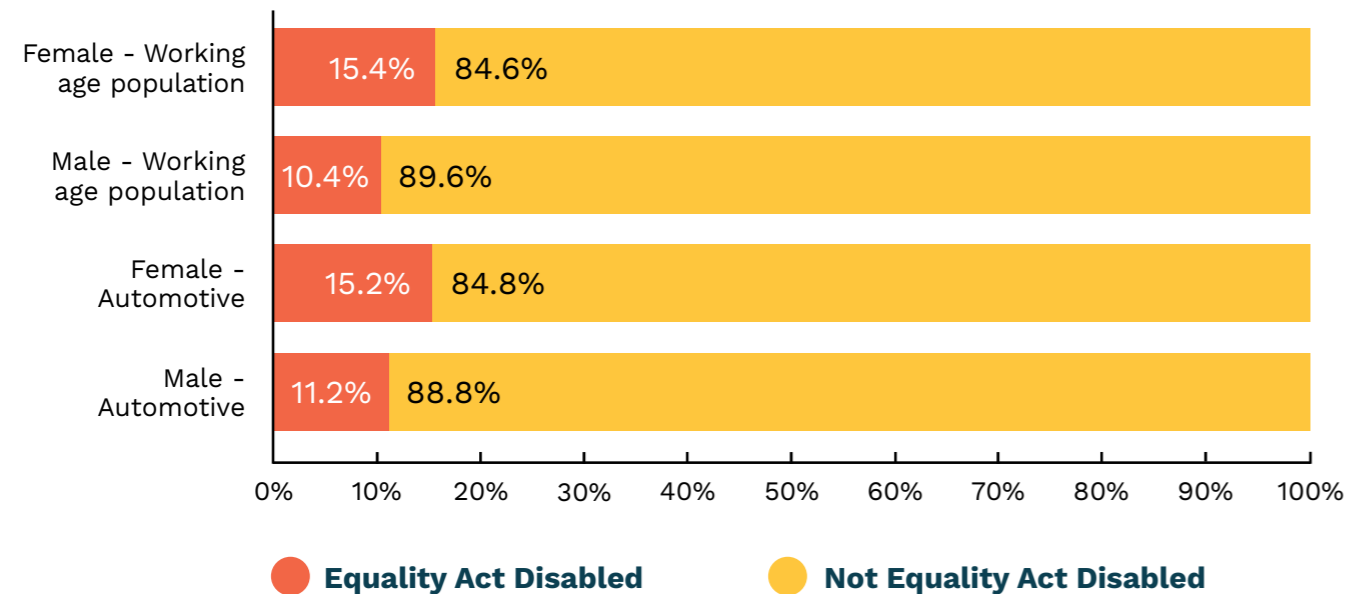
Additionally, to reflect the 13% representation of non-White British individuals across all automotive roles, we must fill about 2,100 more senior positions with these individuals. On our current path, we expect reaching this target within the next two years, marking a significant step towards inclusivity in the industry.

*The proportions used in this section vary from those in Chapter Two due to differences in our calculation methods. In Chapter Two, we calculate the figures cumulatively, using data from every quarter of the year. In contrast, this analysis uses in on a single quarter, from January to March. Please refer to the 'Data and Methods' section for a detailed explanation.*

# Intersection of diversity

## Sex and disability

Sex by Disability - % within sex within senior roles working age population & automotive



In terms of statistics, 15.2% of females in senior roles in the automotive sector are disabled, compared to 11.2% of their male counterparts. The percentage of disabled females in the sector (11.4%) is marginally lower than that in the overall working-age population in senior roles, and this figure for males is higher at 10.4%. However, neither of these differences are statistically significant.

From a distinct perspective, females are only 17% of the disabled workforce in the automotive sector. This is significantly lower than the general working population, where females make up 48% of those with disabilities. This discrepancy primarily stems from the automotive sector's notable lack of female representation.

In the UK automotive sector, particularly in higher management roles, the combination of sex and disability presents unique challenges, shaping career paths and workplace experiences differently. Senior female managers who are disabled often face specific hurdles, such as insufficient support for their disabilities and limited career advancement opportunities. These challenges are intensified by prevailing gender stereotypes and biases, leading to their increased marginalisation in this predominantly male industry.

A statistical examination of these numbers shows a clear disparity: the proportion of disabled females in the automotive sector is significantly lower compared to the general working-age population. Several factors potentially contribute to the higher prevalence of disabilities among senior female managers:

Prevalence of certain medical conditions:

- **Autoimmune diseases:** Conditions like rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis are more common in females, as shown by the American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association<sup>14</sup>.
- **Osteoporosis:** Post-menopausal females are at a particularly higher risk of developing osteoporosis<sup>15</sup>, affecting their physical capabilities in demanding roles.
- **Depression:** Females are twice as likely to experience depression<sup>16</sup>. This can affect their functional abilities in high-pressure environments.
- **Migraines:** The higher incidence of migraines in females<sup>7</sup> is debilitating and affects work performance.
- **Fibromyalgia:** This predominantly affects females, leading to chronic pain and fatigue, which can make senior roles challenging to manage<sup>18</sup>.

Historically there has been a lack of research and inadequate study of women's health issues. This lack of focused research not only perpetuates a gap in support and resources but also exacerbates systemic inequalities, further marginalising women with disabilities and hindering their full participation and advancement.



The automotive industry must continue to develop and implement strategies that encourage greater diversity in its leadership.

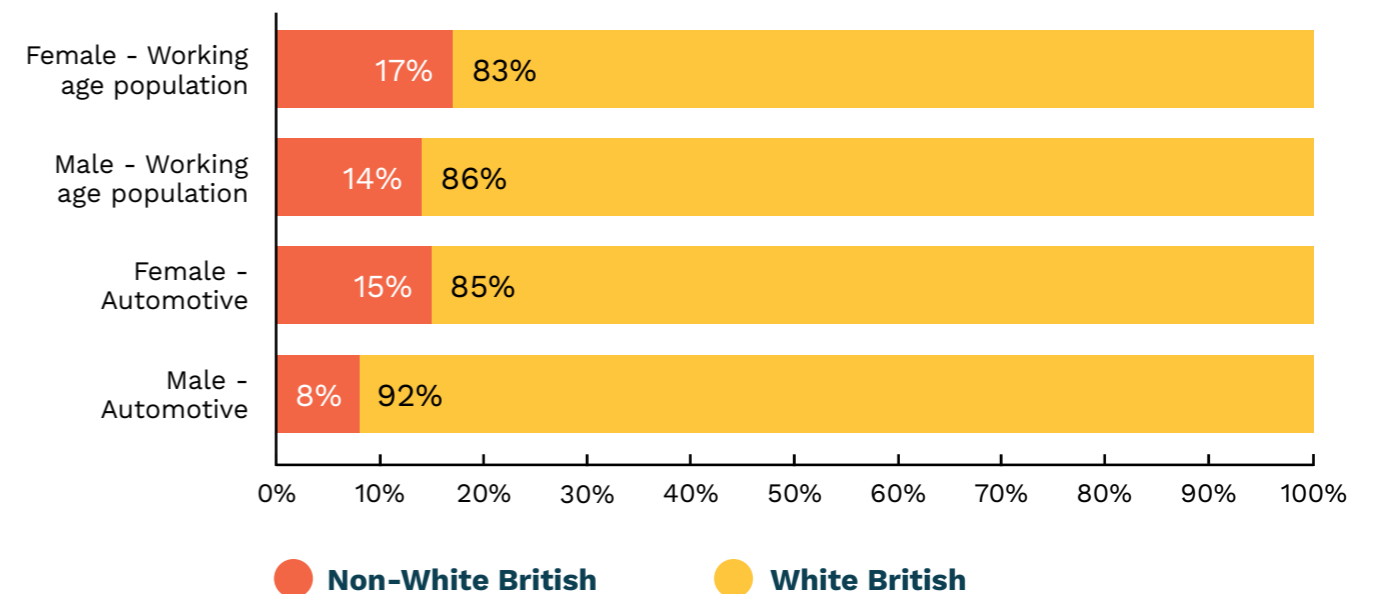
This highlights the significant health disparities females may face. Understanding and acknowledging this is crucial for developing supportive policies and practices that can help females in managing their professional responsibilities.

### Cultural and social factors

The United Nations<sup>19</sup> reports that women are more often expected to do caregiving roles, leading to stress and physical health issues. These societal expectations can amplify the challenges faced by women in senior managerial positions, especially those with disabilities.

### Sex and ethnicity in the automotive sector

Sex by Ethnicity - % within sex within senior roles working age population & automotive



In senior positions, 15% of females are of non-White British background, compared to 8% for males. The proportion of non-White British individuals in senior roles for both sexes is lower than the general working population in the UK.

Statistical analysis reveals that the difference in representation is significant only in the case of males, showing a notably lower representation of males with disabilities in senior roles within the automotive sector compared to the working-age population. Inversely, 78% of senior managers in the automotive sector who are non-White British are male.

The noticeable gap in ethnic diversity within senior positions, with 15% of females and 8% of males in senior roles being non-White British shows a gender-based disparity in the representation of non-White British at the senior level. The low representation of males with disabilities in senior roles is statistically significant compared to the general working-age population. It highlights a specific area of concern about inclusivity in the industry. Some potential reasons include:

- **Systemic biases and glass ceilings<sup>20</sup>:** Often more pronounced in traditionally male-dominated sectors like automotive.
- **Recruitment and promotion practices:** Studies show<sup>11</sup> that unconscious bias in recruitment and promotion may significantly affect diversity in leadership.
- **Cultural and organisational factors:** Research<sup>6</sup> shows that organisational culture plays a crucial role in either easing or hindering diversity in leadership.
- **Disability inclusion:** Specific challenges faced by disabled workers can explain underrepresentation of disabled males in senior roles. Research<sup>7</sup> highlights the need for more active measures in workplace adaptation and inclusive policies.
- **The intersection of sex, race, and disability:** Intersectionality theory suggests that the experiences of individuals in underrepresented groups cannot be fully understood when each factor is considered in isolation.<sup>21</sup>

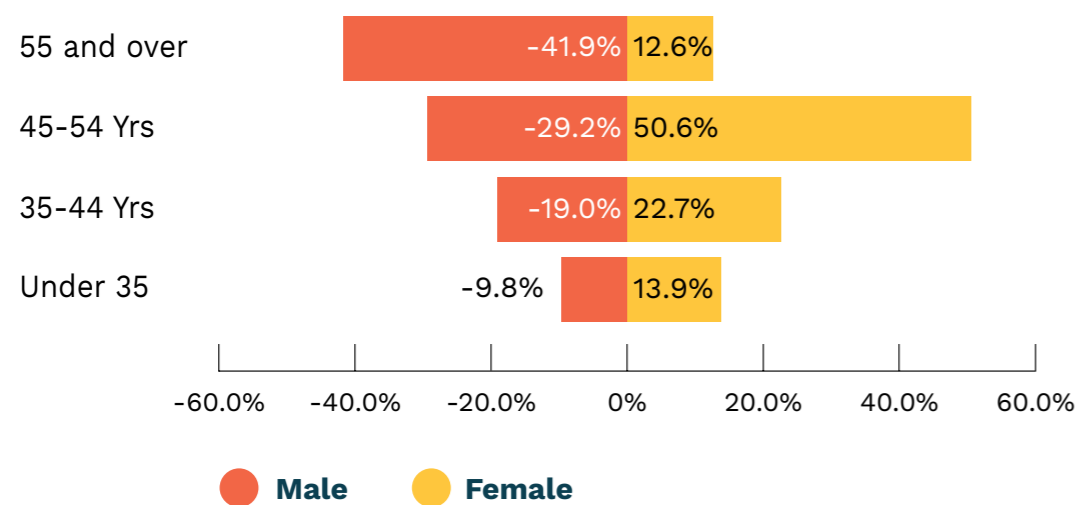
## The sex and age paradox in automotive leadership

In automotive, a unique trend paints a vivid picture of sex and age dynamics among senior managers. Rooted in statistical data, this narrative unveils a unique story. Younger females are breaking traditional barriers and reaching leadership roles at a record pace compared to other sectors.

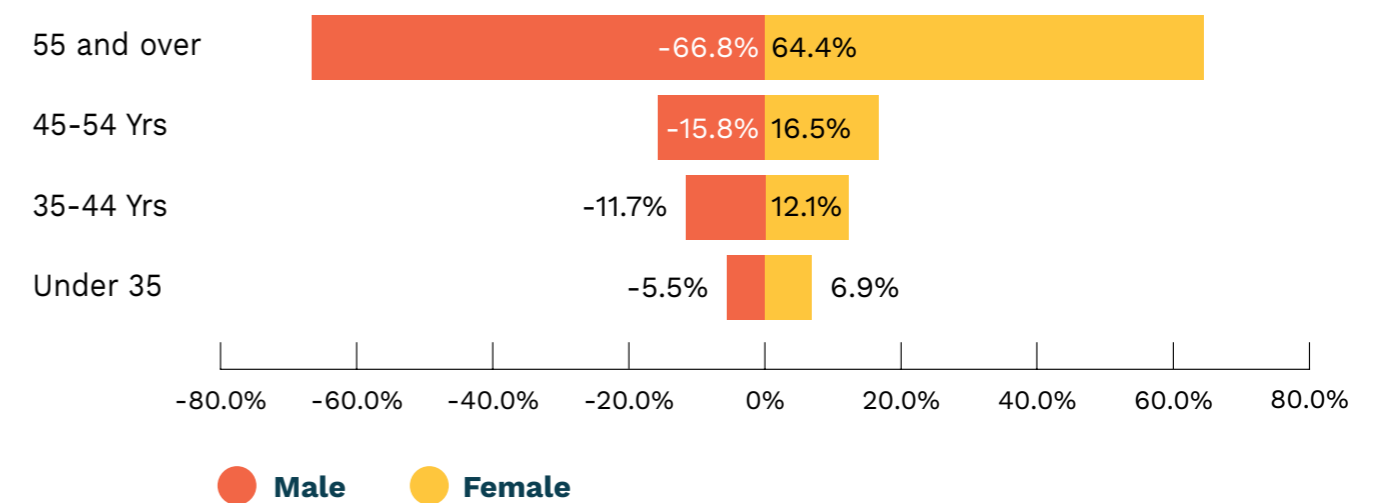
Female senior managers average 45.9 years of age, markedly younger than their male counterparts, who average 51.3 years. This statistically significant age difference stands out. In the broader workforce, female senior managers typically are 47.4 years old, slightly younger than male senior managers, who average 48.8 years.

This age difference is more than just a number; it symbolises a shift in the sector's hierarchy and challenges long-standing norms.

Age bands split by sex in Automotive



Age bands split by sex within the age population



These figures suggest a compelling narrative: In the automotive sector, younger females hold senior roles more often than in other sectors, a fact supported by statistical evidence. This trend shows that the sector is experiencing a more rapid promotion of younger females to senior positions compared to other fields.

A study using a panel of new firms and their employees<sup>22</sup> offers further insight into this phenomenon. This research investigates into the promotion opportunities for older workers within the same company. Interestingly, except for those aged 55-75, females have a higher rate of promotions than men in the general workforce. This finding is proof of the significant role that age, and sex play in career progression and promotion opportunities across many sectors.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)<sup>23</sup> also contributes to this narrative through its analysis into the nuances of age diversity in the workplace. It emphasises the need for a deep understanding of the perspectives and feelings of employees across different age groups. The study stresses the importance of strategies that support age diversity and the significance of intersectionality, especially how gender interacts with other demographic factors, in fostering a diverse and effective workplace environment.

These findings collectively reveal that, while the UK has made considerable progress in recognising and promoting age and gender diversity in leadership, there is still much work to be done. The focus is increasingly shifting towards creating more inclusive environments. These environments aim to recognise and value the unique challenges and contributions of diverse age and gender groups, paving the way for a more equitable and dynamic leadership landscape in the automotive sector and beyond.

### **Ethnicity and disability in the automotive sector**

An analysis of the intersection between ethnicity and disability within senior roles in the automotive sector is not possible due to data limitations and a lack of sufficient metrics in this area. We advise that companies gather their own data on staff diversity, particularly regarding ethnicity and disability in senior positions. By sharing this data with us, they can contribute to a future report.

### **Disability and age in the automotive leadership landscape**

Within the automotive sector, a nuanced picture appears, revealing the interplay between age, disability, and leadership roles. Central to this narrative is statistical evidence. It highlights age disparities among senior employees, separated by whether they have disabilities.

A key statistic is the average age of employees in senior roles with a disability, which stands at 52.8 years. This contrasts with those without a disability, whose average age is 50.3 years. This disparity aligns with the broader understanding that the likelihood of developing age-related conditions and disabilities increases with age. This trend mirrors the broader working-age population, where individuals with a disability average 50 years, compared to 48 years for those without a disability.

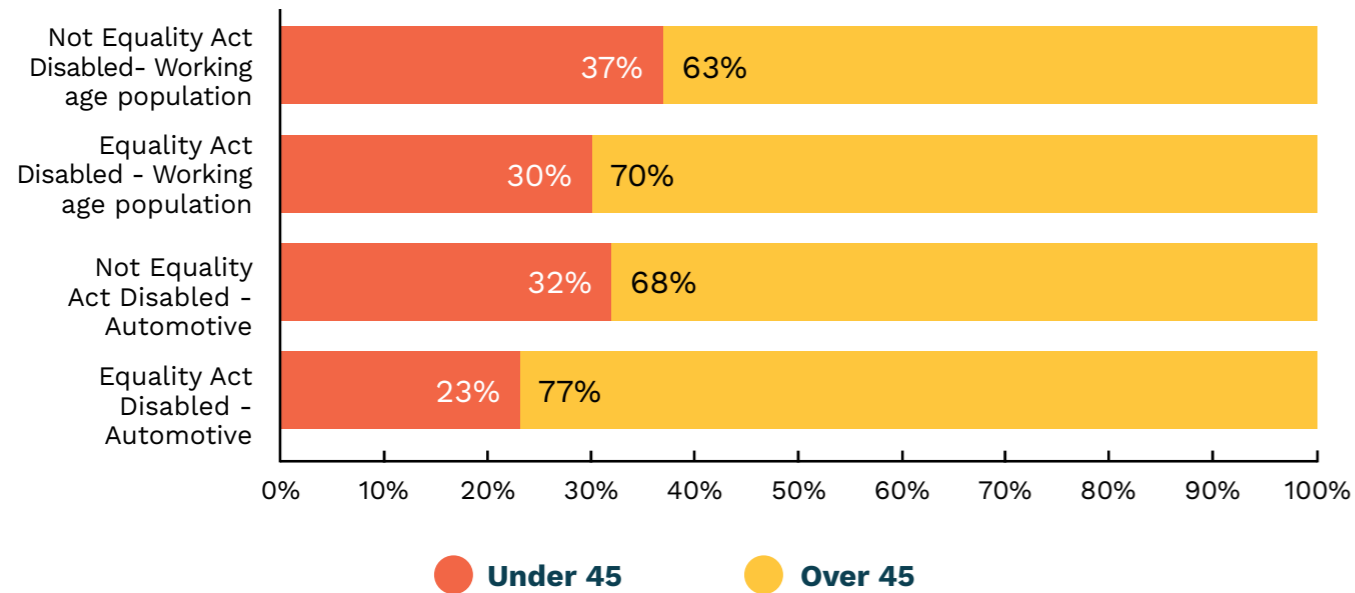
In the automotive sector, 23% of individuals in senior roles with a disability are under the age of 45, compared to 32% of those without a disability. This statistic suggests a lower representation of younger individuals with disabilities in senior positions, a trend that calls for attention for its implications on inclusivity and diversity in leadership.

Additionally, among those under 45 in senior roles in the automotive sector, only 9% have a disability. This finding could show potential barriers or challenges those younger individuals with disabilities face in rising to senior positions, highlighting a critical area for policy and practice intervention.



## Disability and Age

Disability and age- % within disability within senior roles working age population & automotive



## Unravelling disability employment in the UK

The UK Department for Work and Pensions' 2022 report<sup>24</sup> on disabled people sheds light on the intricate intersection of age and disability in employment. It highlights the need for inclusive policies and practices to adapt to the diverse needs of the workforce, including offering flexible working. It is crucial to recognise that the traditional 9-to-5 model may not be suitable for everyone, especially those with disabilities.

At the forefront of the report's findings is a significant trend: the increasing employment of disabled individuals in the UK. Between 2013 and 2022, there has been a notable rise in the number of employed people with disabilities. The report also reveals that the disability employment gap is wider among older disabled individuals and highlights a significant increase in the number of people reporting mental health conditions.

Moreover, the report draws attention to a significant increase in the number of people reporting mental health conditions. This rise is not just a number but a reflection of the evolving nature of disabilities and the importance of addressing mental health with the same rigor and sensitivity as physical disabilities.

The increasing employment rate of disabled individuals, coupled with the widening disability employment gap among older workers and the rise in reported mental health conditions, points out a critical need for more inclusive and adaptable work environments. Sectors like automotive must not only recognise but actively embrace the complex interplay between age, disability, and employment. By doing so, they can foster a more diverse, fair, and productive workforce, better equipped to navigate the evolving demands of the modern business landscape.

### Ethnicity and age in the UK automotive sector

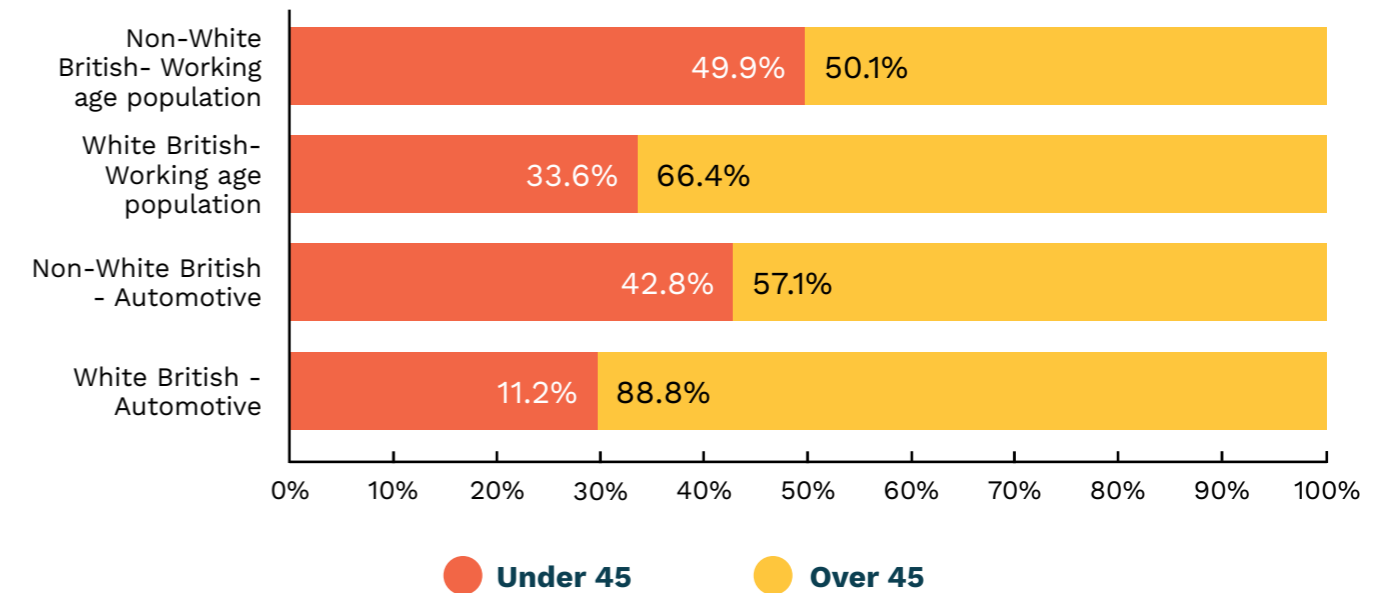
The data presented in this chapter paints a distinct picture of age and racial diversity within senior roles in the automotive industry. The average age of non-White British employees in these positions is notably younger than that of their White British counterparts, a trend that is both statistically significant and reflective of broader societal dynamics.

This younger average age among non-White British individuals in leadership roles, compared with the overall higher age average of White British individuals in similar positions, suggests a shifting landscape in the industry's approach to diversity and inclusion.

There is a notable proportion of non-White British individuals under the age of 45 in senior roles in the automotive sector, which is distinct when compared to their White British counterparts. Although these percentages are lower than those in the broader working-age population, they still are an important aspect of the state of diversity in leadership roles.

### Ethnicity and Age

Ethnicity and age- % within ethnicity within senior roles working age population & automotive



Additionally, the fact that only 13% of those under 45 in senior roles are non-White British highlights a significant area for potential growth and development within the sector. It shows the need for continued efforts to enhance diversity and inclusion, not just in terms of racial representation but also in terms of age demographics.

A study by McKinsey<sup>25</sup> highlights that Black, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani (BBP) women aged 16 to 25 are securing more higher-paying jobs than a decade ago, including in the fields of management, education, and health professions. This trend includes factors like higher educational ability and access to social capital. However, the study also shows that these women may face challenges in navigating the job search process, including biases and discrimination.

The Centre for Ageing Better, along with IPPR and UCL<sup>26</sup>, reveals ethnic inequalities among people aged between 50 and 70. It finds that Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic individuals in this age group are likely to be in the poorest fifth of the population than White people. They note that Black men and women in their 50s and 60s are more likely to be working, often in lower-paid jobs or with less access to other sources of income. It points out the need for targeted measures to address these disparities.

Additionally, a survey by the International Longevity Centre UK (ILC)<sup>27</sup> finds that organisations with a greater proportion of workers aged over 55 have more inclusive and diverse practices. Interestingly, these organisations often have more senior officers serving as mentors to underrepresented talent and more staff dedicated exclusively to diversity, equity, and inclusion activities. This shows a positive impact of older workers on organisational inclusivity.

These findings stress the importance of cultivating a diverse and inclusive environment within the automotive sector. Such an environment not only reflects the broader composition of society but also improves how the industry adapts to changing demographics and evolving global trends. The automotive industry must continue to develop and implement strategies that encourage greater diversity in its leadership, so it represents the diverse population it serves.

Highlights in this analysis include:

#### Disability in senior roles

- There are fewer female senior managers in the automotive sector with a disability (11.2%) than with male senior managers (15.2%).
- In the automotive sector, females constitute only 17% of the disabled workforce, which is significantly lower than the 48% in the general working population.

#### Ethnic diversity in senior management

- 15% of senior female managers are of non-White British background, compared to 8% for senior male managers.
- The representation of non-White British males with disabilities in senior roles is notably lower than in the general working-age population.

### Age disparities in leadership

- Female senior managers in the automotive sector have an average age of 45.9 years, which is younger than their male counterparts, who average 51.3 years.
- Younger individuals with disabilities are underrepresented in senior positions; only 9% of those under 45 in senior roles are individuals with a disability.
- Non-White British individuals in senior roles are younger and average 44.4 years, compared to White British individuals at 51.3 years. 43% of them are under 45 years old.

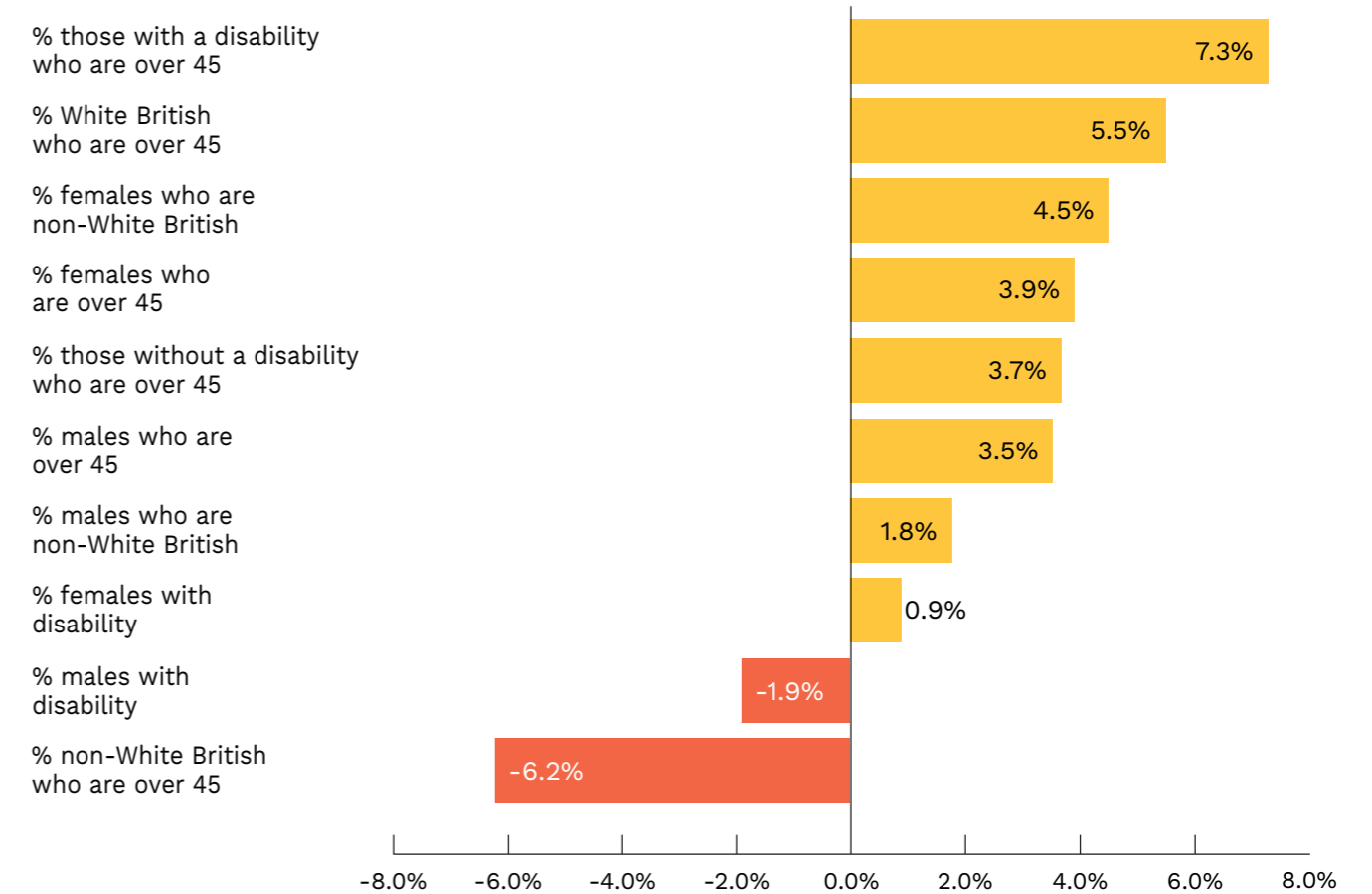
## Trends and the intersection of diversity

### Shifts in demographics among senior roles

Demographics among senior roles are shifting. The proportion of non-White British individuals over 45 in senior automotive roles stands at 6.2%, while the percentage of males with disabilities in these roles has dropped to 1.9%.

Conversely, other demographics are experiencing notable increases. Over 45s with a disability are seeing a 7.3% rise, White British over 45s are increasing by 5.5%, and females who are non-White British are witnessing a 4.5% upturn.

### Change in past year of diversity intersections in senior managers in automotive

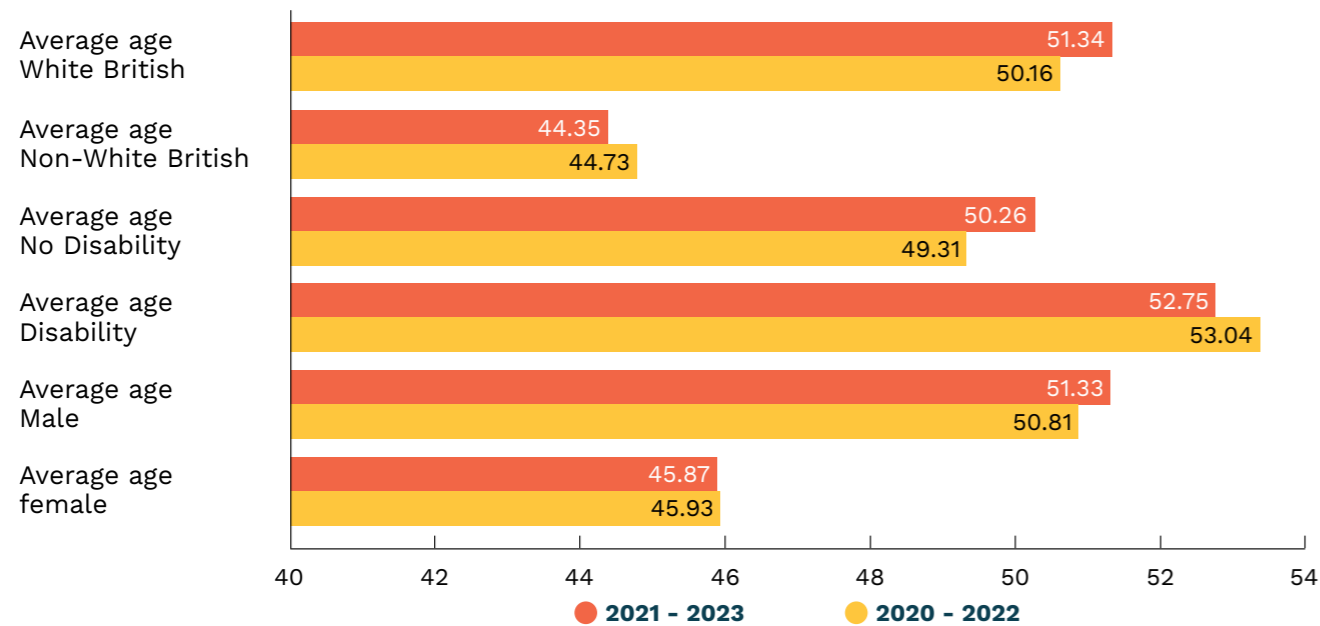


### Average age dynamics

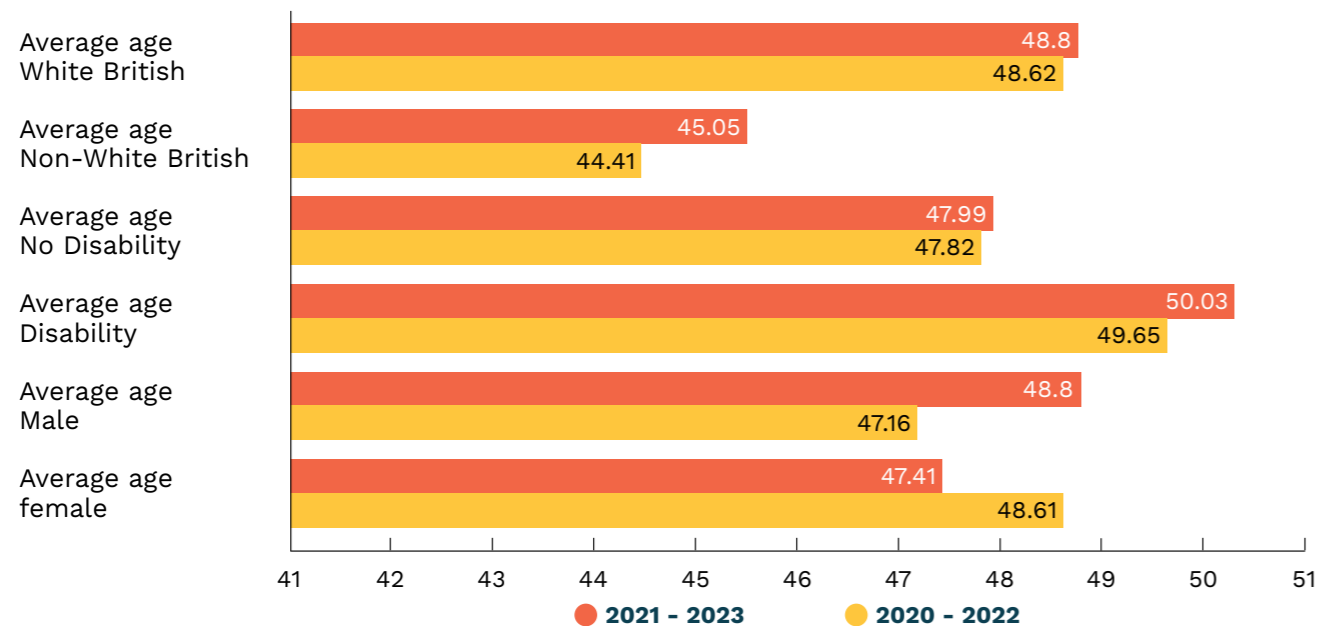
The average ages of females, individuals with disabilities, and non-White British in senior roles have increased, with non-White British showing the largest age increase of 0.4 years (0.8%).

On the other hand, the average ages of males, those without disabilities, and White British individuals are decreasing. The most significant decrease is in White British individuals, with a decline of 1.2 years (2.4%).

## Average age of different diversity groups - automotive



## Average age of different diversity groups - working age population



## Comparison with the working-age population

These trends differ from the broader working-age population, where all groups except females have increased in age.

- The average age of females in senior roles decreased by 1.2 years (2.5%), from 48.6 to 47.4.
- The largest increase in age is among males in senior roles, from 47.2 to 48.8, a change of 1.64 years (3.5%).

## Additional insights and research context

The decrease in average age among senior females indicates a shift towards younger females reaching leadership roles, reflecting changing attitudes towards females in leadership and efforts to promote balance of the sexes.

The increasing average age among senior males can be attributed to longer career spans and delayed retirements, a trend since the financial crisis.

The decline in the presence of non-White British individuals over 45 in senior roles points to potential challenges in progression opportunities for ethnic minorities as they age, possibly linked to systemic biases or industry-specific cultural factors. These shifts emphasise the continued need for promoting diversity and inclusivity in the industry and addressing potential disparities faced by underrepresented groups.

# Chapter 5

## Other discussion points

### Attrition in senior management

#### Decoding senior management attrition trends

With a scarcity of precise data on senior management attrition in the UK automotive sector, we rely on sector reports and pertinent studies to determine crucial trends. The 'Great Attrition' is reshaping the workforce landscape globally, and the UK automotive sector is part of this change. By examining broader workforce attrition rates, we can start to construct a picture of how these trends impact senior managers in the automotive sector, drawing parallels from the findings in our sector report.

#### Key trends in senior management

General attrition rates in the automotive sector fall from 12.7% in 2022 to 10.9% in 2023. It's likely that senior management is following this trend, possibly due to recovery efforts after the Pandemic and changing work cultures. Yet senior roles have their unique challenges, including more responsibility and a need for personal skills, which may affect attrition rates differently than the wider workforce.

In a 2023 report, the Chartered Managers Institute<sup>28</sup> conducted a nationwide study into the state of UK management and leadership. They highlight the crucial role of effective management in organisational success and societal well-being. Key findings include:

- One in three managers and workers left jobs because of a negative work culture—with a third of all managers likely to leave their job in the next year.
- 31% of managers left a job due to a negative relationship with their manager.
- 82% of managers who enter management positions have not had proper management and leadership training.

On the last point, the report finds that only 27% of workers assessed their manager as highly effective. Those with ineffective managers reported lower job satisfaction, feeling less valued and respected, and were less motivated to do a good job. This contrast between workers with effective and ineffective managers starkly illustrates the impact of management quality on employee attitudes and potential attrition.

In chapter six of our Sector report, we reference a McKinsey study on the nature of the Great Attrition and what's driving it<sup>29</sup>. It reveals that 54% of the global workforce considers changing jobs due to feeling undervalued. Additionally, a 2023 Boston Consulting Group (BCG) survey<sup>30</sup> of 11,000 global workers found that 25% are at risk of leaving their jobs, with emotional factors outweighing pay. In the UK, this risk is even higher at 32%.

These studies emphasise that employees seek appreciation, development opportunities, work-life balance, and alignment with company values. Understanding these factors is vital for keeping a strong, diverse workforce. In industries like automotive, where skilled workers are essential, reevaluating employee engagement and recognition strategies is crucial for success.

In the next sections, we explore these trends in specific relation to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), giving a clear picture of how attrition affects senior management in the UK automotive sector, using insights from different reports and studies.



### Sex dynamics in the senior workforce

As discussed in earlier sections, the presence of females in senior automotive positions is notably scarce, standing at merely 7.8%, with disabled females and non-White British females each constituting only 1.2%. This starkly contrasts with the broader statistics, where females hold 39% of senior roles in the working-age population, with 6% of these positions filled by women with disabilities and 7% by non-White British females. These figures highlight a concerning trend regarding the involvement of females in leadership roles within the automotive industry.

On the flip side, females tend to leave their jobs less than males<sup>31</sup>, showcasing a small but noteworthy difference in retention. At higher job levels, females often have unique obstacles. The prevalent 'glass ceiling' effect and entrenched gender biases can significantly impact their decisions to continue or depart from these positions. Studies highlight a preference for men in leadership roles, which could influence female senior managers' decisions to stay or leave.

One such paper, 'Trust in Leaders During the Coronavirus Pandemic'<sup>32</sup> reveals a marked difference in how female and male citizens in the United States perceive leaders; finding females generally place their trust in leaders they view as empathetic, whereas males tend to base their trust on apparent competence.



Adding to this, 'Think Leader-Think (Immoral, Power-Hungry) Man'<sup>33</sup>, probes the stereotypes linked to gender and leadership, particularly focusing on how differently people view males and females in leadership roles. The research aims to explore how stereotypes about leaders, males, and female converge or diverge.

It presents an intriguing paradox in the perception of leadership traits. While people often label male leaders with negative stereotypes, such as being power-hungry and controlling, they view female leaders as more competent and ethical. However, in a surprising twist, the research attributes their alleged lesser suitability for leadership to the absence of these same 'male' traits.

This contradiction points to a complex dynamic where the qualities traditionally associated with effective leadership are also those that can cast male leaders in a negative light, yet their absence in female leaders is seen as a detriment to their leadership fit.

The paper finds this pattern of stereotyping is especially pronounced among lower-level managers and in male-dominated industries like the automotive sector. This stark difference in how we perceive, and value leadership traits based on gender highlights the continuing biases that challenge gender equality in leadership roles.

### Disability considerations

Employees with disabilities tend to leave their jobs less often in the general workforce<sup>34</sup>, suggesting the automotive sector might be a supportive environment. This support probably includes accommodations and inclusive policies, important for keeping workers in senior roles too.

Yet, we're not sure how many disabled people hold senior positions, and this uncertainty could greatly affect how often they leave these roles.

The 2017 study, 'Disability Management and Organisational Culture'<sup>35</sup>, identifies how the culture in Australian and Canadian organisations affects disability programs and the retention of disabled employees, especially in higher positions. Their findings show that a workplace culture that supports and values disability inclusion is key to not only attracting but also keeping disabled talent in senior roles.

This suggests that the automotive sector could benefit from promoting a culture that supports disability at all levels, particularly in senior management, to reduce staff turnover and increase diversity.

### Challenges in attrition related to ethnicity

Research in British organisations shows that non-White British employees face specific challenges in senior management roles. A 2013 study<sup>36</sup> reveals that leadership in these organisations is mainly White. Unconscious biases and racial hierarchies block ethnic workers from getting senior positions.

In the general workforce, non-White British employees experience a higher attrition rate. This troubling trend raises questions about inclusivity and barriers to career progression, which are likely more acute in senior roles. It reflects the broader issue of non-White British individuals facing challenges in securing high-quality jobs. The situation in senior management echoes this trend, indicating potential problems with diversity and inclusion at higher levels of organisations.

The said Chartered Managers Institute's study<sup>28</sup> on UK management and leadership offers critical insights into these disparities. Their findings show that 81% of White British managers' report getting fair and respectful treatment from their superiors. In contrast, this perception significantly drops among non-White British managers. This data highlights a notable gap in how managers of different ethnic backgrounds experience their workplace interactions and the level of respect and fairness they get from those in higher positions, and this may have a significant impact on attrition in senior automotive roles.

The 'Great Attrition' is reshaping the workforce landscape globally, and the UK automotive sector is part of this change.

The report illuminates the impact of management quality on employee satisfaction, motivation, and retention. It suggests that poor management practices significantly contribute to high attrition rates, a concern that likely extends to senior positions. Given the less fair treatment and respect non-White British managers get, it's likely that more ethnic minority workers in senior roles are leaving their jobs.

The 'Race in the Workplace: The McGregor-Smith Review'<sup>37</sup> takes an in-depth look at the challenges faced by ethnic groups, uncovering several critical issues:

- **Higher qualifications, lower promotion rates:**  
Ethnic minorities are often more qualified than their White British counterparts, yet they face lower chances of promotion. This gap shows a systemic problem in how ethnic minority employees' qualifications are recognised and rewarded.
- **Perceived barriers to promotion:**  
Many ethnic minority employees feel they are passed over for promotions because of their ethnicity. Regrettably, as detailed throughout this report, the problem of racial bias affecting career advancement opportunities is not merely perceived but a substantiated reality.
- **Lack of networking opportunities:**  
A striking 71% of respondents attribute their lack of career progression to not having connections with the 'right people'. This suggests that networking, which is key for moving up in a career, is harder for ethnic minority workers to access.

### The glass ceiling in ethnic diversity

These findings together suggest that there is a 'glass ceiling' for ethnic minority workers in senior roles. This barrier comes not only from direct discrimination but also from systemic issues like unequal access to networking opportunities and biases in promotion practices. These factors likely cause more ethnic minority employees to leave senior management roles. This situation calls for immediate action to remove these barriers and create a more equal and inclusive workplace, particularly at the top of management.

# Focus on ethnicity

## Exploring diversity and senior leadership

This chapter builds on the intricate patterns of attrition in senior roles discussed earlier, shifting focus to the broader aspect of diversity in the workplace, especially in senior management roles. We examine the stark disparities in promotion rates, barriers to career advancement, and the importance of networking opportunities. Our goal is to uncover the 'glass ceiling' many ethnic workers face, particularly in senior positions within industries like the automotive sector.

## Why diversity in senior roles matter

Diversity in senior leadership isn't just a buzzword; it's a key driver of corporate success. This notion is backed by a 2020 study<sup>38</sup> involving 318 senior managers from Nigerian multinational companies. The paper investigates diversity management and its correlation with corporate efficiency, specifically focusing on productivity, profitability, and innovation. The results were telling: There is a clear, positive link between the management of diversity and enhanced company performance.

Additionally, McKinsey & Company investigated the business case for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity<sup>39</sup>, and finds that the case in corporate leadership is stronger than ever. Their investigation reveals some compelling insights:

Companies with diverse executive teams are more likely to achieve above-average profitability.

A similar positive trend with ethnic and cultural diversity. Top-quartile companies outperformed those in the fourth quartile by 36% in terms of profitability.

Despite these findings, progress in diversity remains slow. Many companies still lack any women on their executive teams, and the representation of ethnic minorities in executive roles remains insufficient.

These findings cement the argument that effective diversity management is not just a token gesture but a strategic business tool. While the benefits of such diversity are clear, the slow rate of progress indicates that we need more focused and consistent efforts to develop more inclusive and diverse leadership structures.

## Leadership diversity in the automotive sector

In a 2021 study, Calabrese and Manello<sup>40</sup> place the spotlight on the automotive supply chain, specifically examining the dimensions of gender, age, and nationality diversity within boards of directors and executive leadership.

The study's findings reveal a compelling and robust positive effect linked to women's representation on boards. This positive influence extended to firm performance, with significant improvements in terms of both profitability and firm risk. The context of the supply chain, the type of ownership structure, and the nationality of the final owner play pivotal roles in determining the extent of diversity's influence.

### Cross-sector senior attrition rates

The influence of organisational culture on senior retention is a pivotal aspect of modern corporate dynamics. In examining this, it becomes clear that a variety of factors play a role in shaping the ability of companies to keep senior talent.

A 2016<sup>41</sup> study explores the relationship between gender diversity in senior corporate positions and financial performance across two million European companies. Their findings reveal a significant and positive association between corporate return on assets and the representation of women in senior roles. Interestingly, this correlation is more pronounced in sectors characterised by a higher proportion of women in the workforce and in high-tech and knowledge-intensive industries, stressing the interplay between diversity and financial performance.

Additionally, a 2017<sup>42</sup> study delves into the critical role of organisational culture in influencing employee commitment and engagement, both of which are paramount for senior employee retention. The alignment between an organisation's culture and the value preferences of its employees appears as a crucial predictor of senior employee retention. This holds particular significance as it suggests that fostering a culture that resonates with senior staff's values can be a potent strategy for keeping these valuable assets.

These studies offer valuable insights into the intricate relationship between diversity, culture, and retention. As organisations strive to keep their senior talent, they must recognise the significance of cultivating a culture that not only supports diversity but also aligns with the values and preferences of their senior employees. This comprehensive approach to talent retention can be a defining factor in a company's long-term success.

### Automotive senior attrition and other sectors

Senior employee attrition and retention are universal challenges, each sector grappling with its unique dynamics. In 2017, an analytical study focused on attrition and retention within Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) companies<sup>43</sup>. This research sheds light on the high attrition rates in senior roles in the BPO sector—mirroring those in the automotive industry—stress, limited career growth opportunities, and irregular working hours appear as key contributors.

These findings feature the shared challenges faced by sectors like BPO and automotive, highlighting the critical importance of addressing retention issues to sustain organisational performance. They serve as compelling reminders of the critical need for a strategic focus on senior employee retention. These challenges cannot be ignored, as they affect organisational performance and competitiveness in the market.

# Chapter 6

## Conclusions

### Summary of key findings

This report presents a complex yet enlightening overview of inclusion in this crucial industry. We highlight key findings and emphasise the vital need to enhance diversity across multiple dimensions—gender, disability, and ethnicity—in senior roles.

#### **Female diversity: A critical shortfall**

The automotive sector faces a significant female diversity gap, with females holding only 7% of senior roles, far below their 39% representation in the wider working-age population. This disparity contradicts research supporting gender diversity in leadership.

Despite a recent decline, the last 15 years have seen a gradual increase in female representation in these roles, averaging an annual growth of 0.3%. This highlights the critical need for more effective strategies to enhance female leadership in the sector.

#### **Disability inclusion: Stagnant growth**

The automotive sector employs individuals with disabilities in 12.1% of its senior roles, aligning with the broader working population. Despite this, the rate is stagnant over the last 15 years, a trend common across industries.

Currently, the sector employs 5,800 individuals with disabilities in senior positions. To match the 24% representation in the working-age population, the sector must increase this to about 8,800 people. Additionally,

for a 15% representation within its entire workforce, the sector needs 3,400 more disabled individuals in senior roles.

These figures highlight the need for proactive action, as the lack of growth over the past fifteen years poses a significant challenge in achieving inclusion targets in leadership positions.

### **Ethnic diversity: Lagging behind**

The automotive sector employs 8.9% of senior roles as non-White British individuals, falling short of their 16.9% representation in the wider working-age population. Non-White British individuals have an annual growth rate of just 0.3% in these positions, expecting to reach 14% by 2030.

To align with the 18% representation of non-White British people in the working-age population, the sector needs to add about 5,200 such managers to senior roles. At the current growth pace, the sector will likely take about 26 years, until 2049, to reach this level. Additionally, the sector needs approximately 2,100 more non-White British individuals in senior positions to match their 13% representation across all roles.

Following the trends, the sector might achieve this within the next two years. Actively addressing this disparity is crucial for the sector to reflect societal demographics accurately and to harness the benefits of ethnic diversity in decision-making and innovation.

We highlight key findings and emphasise the vital need to enhance diversity across multiple dimensions—sex, disability, and ethnicity—in senior roles.

## Intersection challenges

The report delves into the intersection of sex, ethnicity, and disability within senior roles in the automotive sector, emphasising the unique challenges for underrepresented groups, such as disabled female managers and non-White British females in leadership. It advocates for a comprehensive diversity approach, addressing the compounded barriers of these intersecting identities.

Key findings include a higher disability rate among female senior managers (15.2%) than males (11.2%), with females forming only 17% of the disabled workforce in the sector, compared to their 48% representation in the general working population. Additionally, 15% of senior female managers are non-White British, above the 8% among male managers. However, less represented than in the wider working-age population are non-White British males with disabilities in senior roles.

The report also reveals age disparities: Female senior managers average 45.9 years, younger than male managers at 51.3 years. Both young individuals with disabilities and non-White British senior managers are underrepresented, the latter averaging 44.4 years with 43% under 45, illustrating diverse age dynamics within female leadership.

## Embracing diversity for a brighter future

The UK automotive sector stands at a pivotal moment. Notable progress is being made in disability inclusion, but the glaring disparities in sex and ethnic diversity in senior roles demand urgent attention. To thrive in today's evolving landscape, the industry must wholeheartedly embrace diversity, unlocking innovation, financial success, and employee satisfaction.

The journey ahead is challenging but essential. By committing to diversity and inclusivity, the UK automotive sector can redefine itself, setting a powerful example for the UK industry. Now is the time for action, and together, we can drive change and build a more inclusive and dynamic future for the automotive sector.



# Strategies for improving diversity in the automotive sector

- 1. Enhanced recruitment and promotion practices:**  
Tackle unconscious bias and systemic barriers to give fair opportunities to women, disabled individuals, and ethnic minorities.
- 2. Cultural and organisational change:**  
Foster an inclusive culture that values and promotes diversity at all levels, especially in leadership.
- 3. Targeted development programs:**  
Implement mentorship and sponsorship programs, particularly for underrepresented groups, to prepare them for leadership roles.
- 4. Regular monitoring and reporting:**  
Continuously track and report on diversity metrics for accountability and transparency in progress.
- 5. Engagement with diverse groups:**  
Actively involve employees from diverse backgrounds in decision-making processes and organisational strategy development.
- 6. Policy advocacy and collaboration:**  
Work alongside policymakers and industry partners to address systemic barriers and promote best practices in diversity and inclusion.

# Appendix

# Data and Methods

This report uses various data sources, primarily ONS data, especially from the Labour Force Survey. We also combine public sources like census data and apprenticeship data from the Department of Education.

## The Labour Force Survey (LFS)

The LFS is a survey of UK households at private addresses, aimed at offering labour market information to develop, manage, evaluate, and report on labour market policies. The Social Surveys division of the ONS manages this survey, conducting it quarterly and producing three-month estimates monthly.

Office for National Statistics, released 19 December 2022, ONS SRS Metadata Catalogue, dataset, Labour Force Survey Person - UK, 10.57906/ns1n-5z24

## Measuring core diversity measures

We use data from these time periods:

1. (Oct\_Dec 2022, Jan\_Mar 2023, Apr\_Jun 2023) combined to form a 2022/2023 data set.
2. (Oct\_Dec 2021, Jan\_Mar 2022, Apr\_Jun 2022, Jul\_Sept 2022) combined to form a 2021/2022 data set.
3. (Oct\_Dec 2020, Jan\_Mar 2021, Apr\_Jun 2021, Jul\_Sept 2021) combined to form a 2020/21 data set.

## Examining three core diversity measures

1. Sex (Male / Female)
2. Disabilities (With a disability / without a disability)
3. Ethnicity (White British / Non-White British)

We use these variables as indicators of diversity, analysing them as proportions within automotive industries (SIC) and specifically within managerial occupation codes (SOC), focusing on SOC hierarchy level One. Our approach involves basic descriptive statistics to examine proportions across different sectors and occupations. We then compare and test data from two years to identify any significant changes.

## Longitudinal study

In this study, we analyse the proportions of core diversity measures - Sex, Disability, Race, and Ethnicity - in senior roles within both the automotive and non-automotive sectors. We examine these trends over time, from 2009 (where data is available) to 2023.

We review data from both automotive and non-automotive perspectives. Our approach involves using regression analysis and correlation statistical tests to compare and determine if there are significant differences between these sectors.

## Intersectionality

Intersectionality recognises that individuals often have multiple overlapping social categories, like gender, ethnicity, and disability, leading to unique experiences and challenges. This approach is essential for going beyond simple single-factor analysis, offering deeper insights into how different forms of inequality and privilege interact in the workplace. However, it's crucial to understand that analysing intersectionality is complex, both in execution and interpretation.

Our analysis focuses on the intersection of three diversity measures – sex, ethnicity, and disability status. This is just an initial step, as true intersectionality covers a wider range of characteristics, including age, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background. By limiting our scope, we might miss key interactions and their impact on individuals in the workforce. So, while our current analysis offers valuable insights, it represents only a part of the larger picture in understanding diversity fully. Even so, acknowledging these limitations, our approach is as follows:

To allow for small counts, we made two-year datasets using the following method:

1. Combined seven quarters (Oct\_Dec 2021, Jan\_Mar 2022, Apr\_Jun 2022, Jul\_Sept 2022, Oct\_Dec 2022, Jan\_Mar 2023, Apr\_Jun 2023,) to form a 2021 to 2023 data set.
2. Combined eight quarters (Oct\_Dec 2020, Jan\_Mar 2021, Apr\_Jun 2021, Jul\_Sept 2021, Oct\_Dec 2021, Jan\_Mar 2022, Apr\_Jun 2022, Jul\_Sept 2022) to form a 2020 to 2022 data set.

## Examining four core diversity measures

1. Sex (Male / Female)
2. Disabilities (With a disability / without a disability)
3. Ethnicity (White British / Non-White British)
4. Age (Over / Under 45)

Along with these measures, we also review the general age profile. We analyse the data from both an automotive sector and a general working-age population perspective.

## Language

Being specific and precise with language is important, especially as the terminology around Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is evolving. In this report, we use data sources and referenced studies that might use terminology now considered inappropriate.

It is advised to be as specific as possible when discussing ethnic background. However, our reliance on external data sources sometimes limits this. For instance, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) categorises 'non-White British,' and the Department for Education (DfE) uses 'ethnic minorities' (excluding White minorities) and 'White.' From a global perspective, the term 'ethnic minority' may not be accurate.

It's crucial to distinguish between 'gender' and 'sex.' Gender reflects individual self-perception, while sex, assigned at birth, is termed natal sex. In this report, we often categorise data by sex as either female or male, following the data's classification basis. However, we also use terms like 'women' and 'men' to respect gender identity diversity. This approach makes our language inclusive and precise, recognising the distinction between gender and sex, and aligns with our commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

## Testing for significance

We perform Chi Square tests to determine the statistical significance of differences. In these tests, we assess significance by comparing the calculated test statistic to a critical value from a chi-square distribution, which depends on the degrees of freedom. The degrees of freedom typically relate to the number of categories in the variables compared.

A larger sample size or fewer degrees of freedom can increase the test's power, making it easier to detect statistically significant differences. So, we may identify a variable with a 2% increase as significant more readily than one with a 2% decrease, especially if it has a larger sample size or fewer degrees of freedom.

However, it's important to note that statistical significance does not always imply practical significance. Just because a result is statistically significant doesn't always mean it is meaningful or relevant in real-world scenarios. So, we must consider the context and practical implications of the results alongside their statistical significance.

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