



What people think,
feel and do



Opinium Thought Leadership

Gender Stereotypes & Equality





Key Points

- One in five UK adults are concerned about gender equality and stereotypes
- Three in five have personally experienced gender stereotyping
- Women and LGBTQ+ adults are most likely to have experienced gender stereotyping
- Women are described as emotional, sensitive, and vulnerable whilst men are thought of as dominant and strong
- A fifth of Brits are more likely to use a company if they have adopted a gender-neutral uniform policy

A fifth of UK adults are concerned about gender equality and stereotypes

When faced with a list of pertinent social issues, one in five (20%) UK adults indicated that they were concerned about gender equality / stereotypes. Women in particular find the issue concerning, with around a quarter selecting it from the list (24%), whilst only 16% of men similarly found the issue concerning.



Age also had an effect on the proportion of respondents concerned with the issue, proving more pertinent with the younger generation. Three in ten (30%) 18-34 year olds said they are concerned about gender stereotypes / equality, two in ten (21%) 35-54 year olds and around one in ten (13%) 55+ year olds. Additionally, gender equality / stereotypes are significantly more of a concern for Gay or Lesbian (48%), or Bisexual (48%) adults.

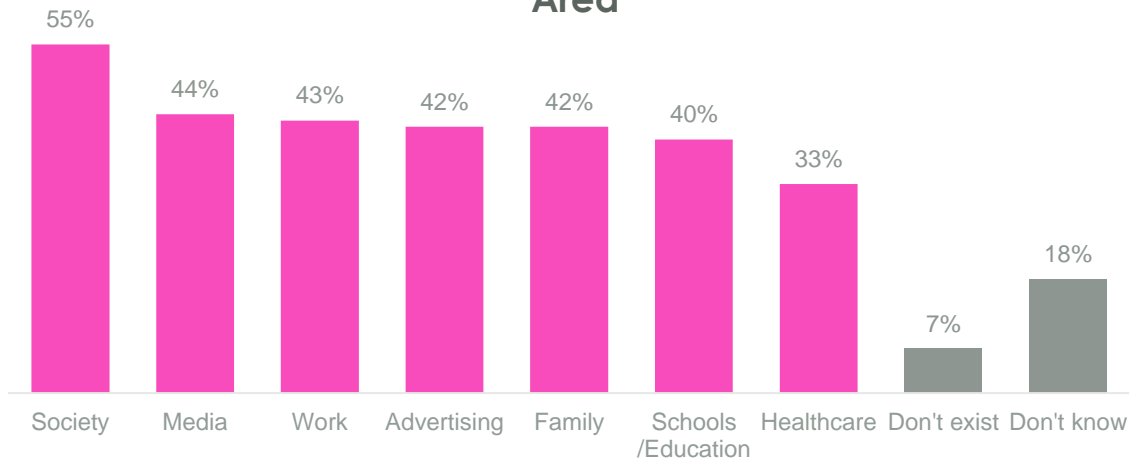
Gender stereotypes have a widespread impact

Over half of UK adults believe gender stereotypes exist in society

Defined as preconceived, usually generalized views about how members of a certain gender do or should behave, or which traits they do or should have, gender stereotypes can appear in a number of areas of life. Over half of UK adults (53%) believe gender stereotypes exist within society. Other areas where gender stereotypes are believed to be the most prevalent are media (44%), work (43%), advertising (42%), family (42%) and schools/education (40%). A third (33%) of respondents also believe gender stereotypes exist in healthcare. However, almost a fifth of UK adults (18%) don't know if gender stereotypes exist in any of these areas and 7% don't think they exist at all.

A greater proportion of women, younger people and LGBTQ+ individuals responded that gender stereotypes exist in the aforementioned areas in comparison to men, older respondents and heterosexual respondents, respectively. Interestingly, bisexual people are most likely to believe gender stereotypes exist in each of the areas, with over two thirds selecting each one.

% Who Believe Gender Stereotypes Exist In Each Area



Three in five of those who believe they exist say they have personally experienced gender stereotyping

Three in ten (30%) Brits who believe gender stereotypes exist say they have experienced stereotyping within the workplace and similar proportions say they have experienced stereotyping in society (29%) or within their family (27%). Additionally, a quarter say they experienced gender stereotyping in schools/education (26%). Around one in five have experienced stereotyping either media (22%), advertising (20%) or healthcare (18%).

Over a third (35%) say they haven't experienced stereotyping at all and around one in twenty (6%) weren't sure.

Women and LGBTQ+ adults are most likely to have experienced gender stereotyping

Women are significantly more likely to have experienced gender stereotyping in work, society, their family, schools/education or healthcare than men.

LGBTQ+ individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or another sexual orientation are significantly more likely to have experienced gender stereotyping across all areas than heterosexual/straight counterparts.

Differences exist in the language used to describe men and women

Women are described as emotional, sensitive, and vulnerable

Over four in five Brits (83%) think that the word ‘emotional’ is more frequently used to describe women and a similar proportion (79%) think women are described as ‘sensitive’. Around three quarters (74%) think women are more frequently described as ‘vulnerable’ and two thirds (68%) think women are ‘kind’. Half (50%) think women are described as ‘independent’.

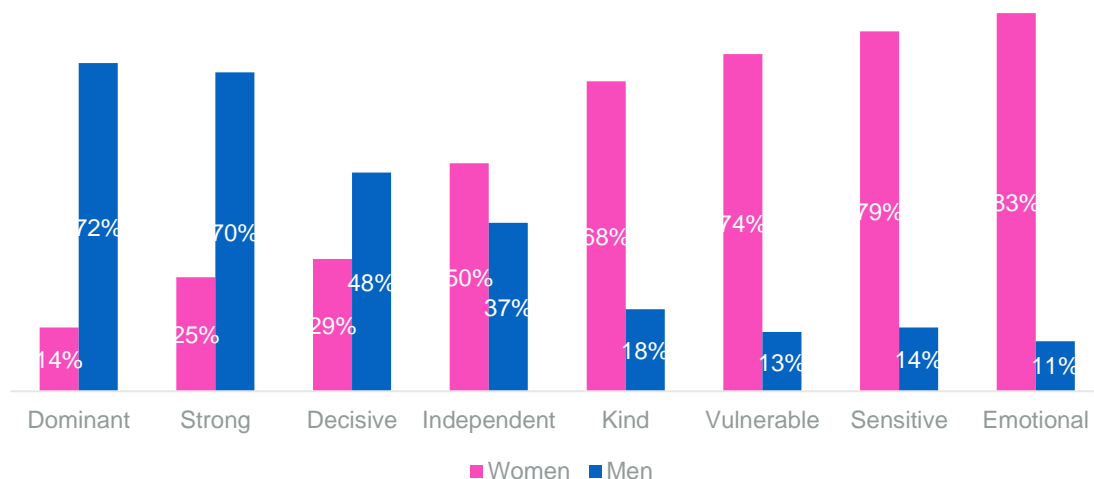
However, less than three in ten (29%) think women are described as ‘decisive’ and a quarter as ‘strong’. Women are least likely to be thought of as ‘dominant’ with just 14% of Brits thinking the word is more frequently used to describe them.

Men are more frequently thought of as dominant and strong

Around seven in ten think that men are ‘dominant’ (72%) and ‘strong’ (70%). Almost half (48%), and the majority of Brits, believe men are more frequently described as ‘decisive’. Over a third (37%) think that men are described as ‘independent’, however the majority think this word is more commonly used to describe women (50%).

Men are less frequently thought of as being ‘kind’ (18%), ‘vulnerable’ (13%), ‘sensitive’ (14%) and ‘emotional’ (11%).

% Who believe the word is more frequently used to describe one gender



Attitudes towards gender stereotypes

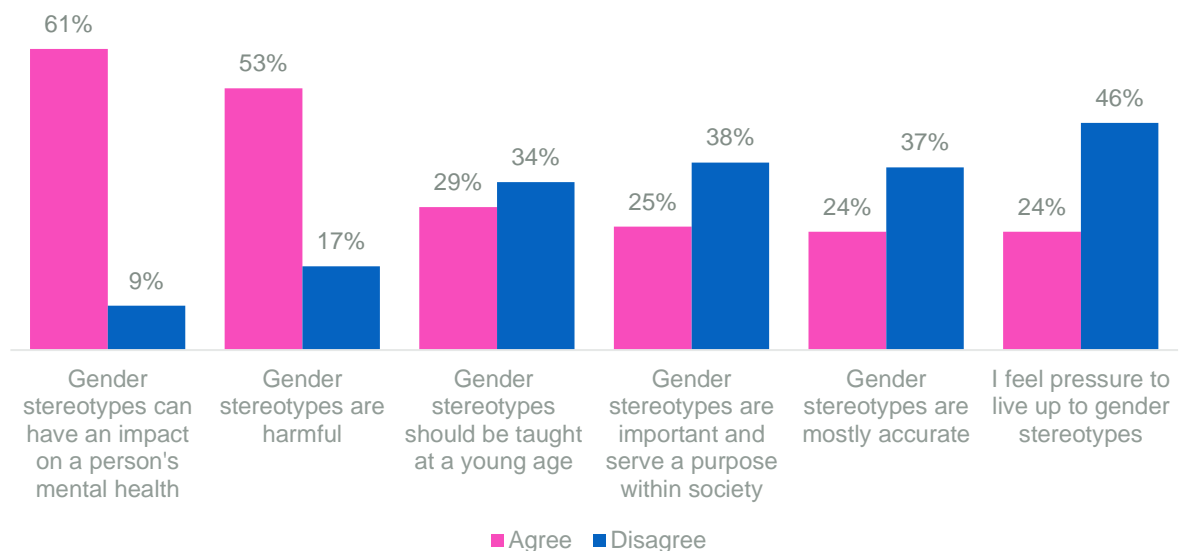
Three in five Brits think gender stereotypes can impact mental health

Over half of UK adults believe that gender stereotypes are harmful (53%) and over three in five (61%) believe they can have an impact on a person's mental health. However, just one in four (24%) say that they feel pressure to live up to gender stereotypes.

Over a third disagree that gender stereotypes are mostly accurate (37%) or that they are important and serve a purpose within society (38%). However, around a quarter believe the opposite and support gender stereotypes, with 24% agreeing that stereotypes are accurate and 25% agreeing that they are important and serve a purpose within society.

There appears to be conflict over whether gender stereotypes should be taught to children at a young age, with 29% agreeing that they should and 34% disagreeing.

Attitudes towards gender stereotypes



More Brits believe that gender stereotypes impact women than they do men

Over a third of Brits agree that gender stereotypes impact women more than they impact men (37%), however a fifth (20%) disagree with the statement. Conversely, only a fifth (20%) agree that gender stereotypes impact men more than they impact women, and over a third (37%) disagree with the statement.

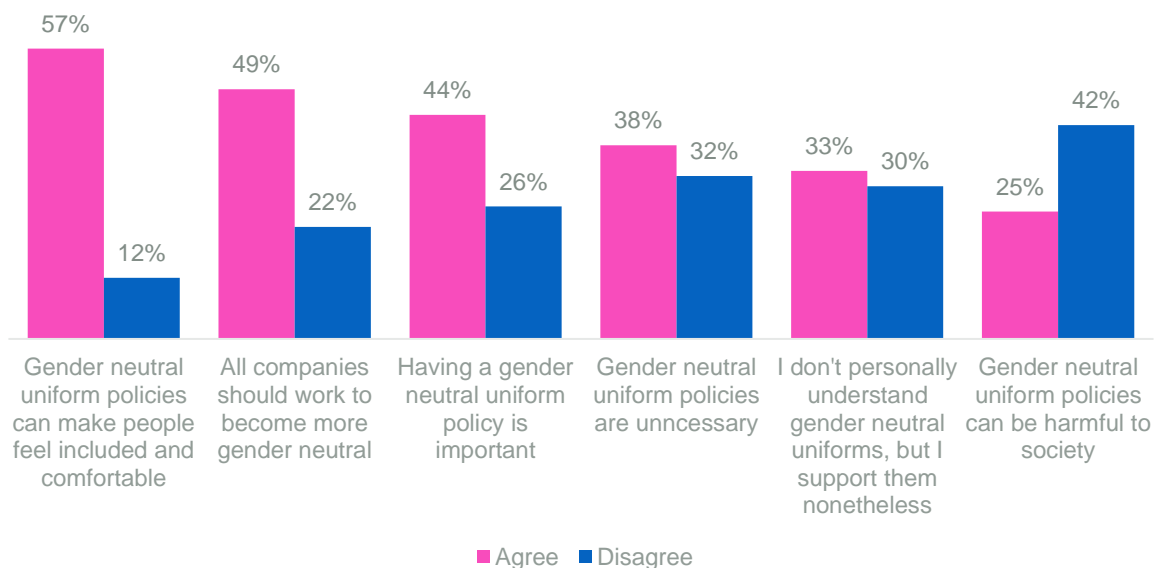
Gender neutral uniform

The majority of Brits support companies' adoption of gender neutral uniform policies

Over half of Brits (57%) agree that gender neutral uniform policies can make people feel included and comfortable and around half (49%) agree that all companies should work to become more gender neutral. Additionally, over two in five (44%) agree that having a gender-neutral policy is important and a third (33%) agree that they support them despite not fully understanding them. Over two in five disagree (42%) that gender neutral uniform policies can be harmful to society.

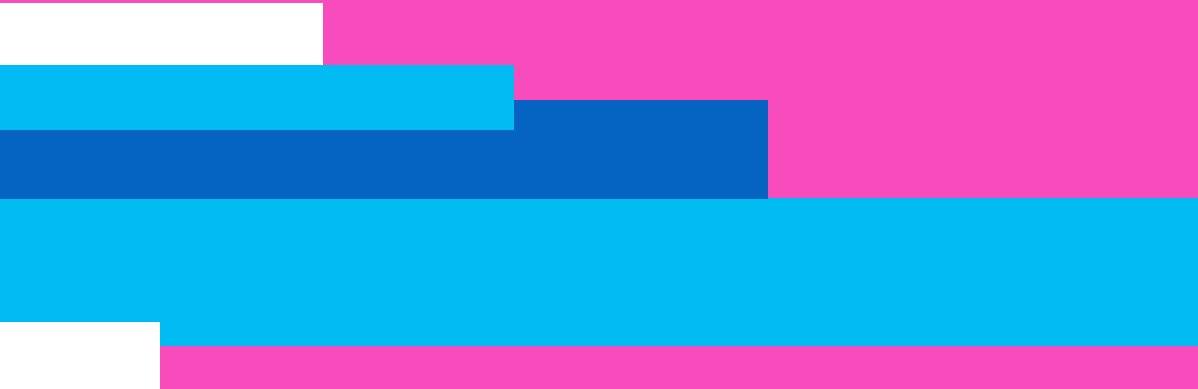
However, there is resistance towards gender neutral policies and uniform. Two in five (38%) believe gender neutral uniform policies are unnecessary and a quarter (25%) agree that they could be harmful to society. Around a quarter disagree that having gender neutral uniform policies is important (26%) or that all companies should work towards becoming more gender neutral (22%).

Attitudes towards gender neutral uniforms



A fifth of Brits are more likely to use a company if they have adopted a gender-neutral uniform policy

Over a fifth (22%) of Brits say they are more likely to use a company's service if that company has adopted a gender-neutral uniform policy, in comparison to 11% who said they would be less likely. However, three in five (61%) said they would be neither more or less likely to use a company based on a gender neutral uniform policy.



OPINIUM is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people **think, feel** and **do**. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

www.opinium.com | helloUK@opinium.com | 0207 566 3190

