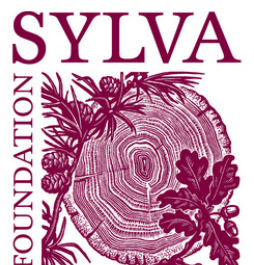


2024

WOODWORKING AND GENDER SECTOR SURVEY

*Exploring gender and equality in the UK heritage
woodworking and furniture making industries.*

Poppensieker, C., Bray, J., and Hemery, G.



Executive Summary

The 2024 Woodworking and Gender Survey, conducted by Sylva Foundation, gathered insights from 106 respondents across the UK furniture and woodworking industries. This included employers, employees, sole traders, educators, and students, providing a broad perspective on gender representation in the industry. Respondents were evenly split by gender, with 50 women, 51 men, and 5 non-binary individuals, reflecting an engaged but likely progressive segment of the industry.

The survey was conducted online using a structured questionnaire with tailored pathways based on respondents' roles in the sector. It built on the 2023 employer-only survey, expanding to capture the experiences of individuals working and training in the industry.

Employers generally rated their workplaces as inclusive, with many reporting efforts to improve gender diversity through recruitment, mentorship, and workplace culture initiatives. However, women and non-binary employees described persistent barriers, suggesting a disconnect between employer perceptions and employee experiences. While 17% of manufacturing roles were held by women and non-binary individuals, this is likely higher than the industry average due to the survey's reach within businesses already engaged in diversity efforts.

Many employees experienced challenges related to gender identity, including limited access to training and career progression, and exclusion from leadership roles. Workplace culture issues, such as sexist language, lack of appropriate PPE, and inadequate facilities, were commonly cited. However, some employees reported positive experiences in companies that have actively worked to foster inclusivity, highlighting that change is possible when businesses take meaningful action.

Educators emphasised the lack of visibility and accessibility of careers for marginalised genders. They highlighted financial barriers, limited early exposure to woodworking, and a lack of diverse role models as key obstacles. Many stressed the need for stronger industry partnerships, apprenticeships, and targeted outreach, particularly for young women, trans, and non-binary students who may not otherwise consider furniture making as a viable career path.

Students reported a mix of excitement for the craft and frustration with structural barriers. Many women and non-binary students described feeling isolated in male-dominated learning environments, and some had struggled to access hands-on training. Those returning to education as career changers found rigid course structures and financial constraints limiting their ability to retrain. Most students expressed a strong desire to balance both making and design in their future careers yet were uncertain about job security and industry pathways.

The survey reaffirmed that working with industry to create more inclusive workplaces is a top priority, particularly as women, non-binary people, and educators rated 'working with industry' as the most critical area for change. While education remains a key factor in shaping access to the industry, the findings show that training alone is not enough. Evidently, students need an industry that welcomes them, values their skills, and offers clear career progression.

The Woodworking and Gender Project will focus on working directly with businesses to support inclusivity and equitable career development while continuing to strengthen connections with education providers to ensure a diverse influx of talent. The insights from this survey will shape our initiatives, ensuring that gender diversity in woodworking moves beyond conversation and into real, lasting change.

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

Table of contents

Introduction	3
About the Woodworking and Gender Project	3
Purpose of the Survey	3
Survey Method	4
Results	5
Survey population	5
The Workplace	6
Training and Education	17
Shaping the future of the Woodworking and Gender Project	23
Discussion and Conclusions	25
Comparisons between surveys (2023 and 2024)	25
The Workplace	26
Training and Education	27
Priorities of the Woodworking and Gender Project	28

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Introduction

About the Woodworking and Gender Project

The Woodworking and Gender project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Conran Foundation, The Mila Charitable Trust, Benchmark Furniture Ltd, Vastern Timber Ltd. The project is dedicated to addressing the gender imbalance in the heritage woodworking and furniture making sector. In 2023, our survey revealed that only 8.5% of manufacturing roles are held by women, highlighting the need for change. With 'make-focussed' courses in decline, fewer young people—especially those from marginalised genders—have clear pathways into industry.

Our mission is to inspire and support individuals by providing training, promoting diverse role models, partnering with employers, and working with educational institutions to build inclusive entry points into a sustainable and fulfilling career in the furniture making sector. We are also working with industry partners to ensure respectful, equitable work environments, leaving outdated practices behind.

Together, we aim to create a future that embraces diversity, supports sustainability, and fosters a truly inclusive industry culture.

Purpose of the Survey

Building on the 2023 survey which focused solely on employers, in 2024 we recognised the need to hear from a much wider audience across the furniture industry. In 2024, we reached out to educators, students, sole traders, furniture makers, and those not currently working in the sector to better understand gender representation from multiple perspectives. By capturing these diverse experiences and comparing them to the views of male peers and employers, we aimed to uncover key insights into the barriers and opportunities in the furniture making industry. The feedback gathered will directly inform how the Woodworking and Gender Project engages with industry and education, ensuring that our work drives meaningful and lasting change.

Survey Method

In 2024, an online sector survey was designed by Sylva Foundation as part of the Woodworking and Gender Project. Building on the findings from the 2023 survey, the new survey aimed to gather broader insights into gender representation across the furniture industry. The survey was structured into sections to collect targeted feedback from different demographics, including employers and employees, educators and students, and those working as self-employed in the sector. It was presented as a Google Form with a mix of mandatory predefined options and limited free-text responses, allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences.

In conducting this type of survey research, there are a number of considerations and limitations to take into account when interpreting the findings (Box 1).

BOX 1: LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

The main considerations are:

1. The data reflects the views only of those who participated in the survey. We recognise that there are always those who do not or cannot engage.
2. The survey was only available to those willing to respond online.
3. We recognise the possibility of respondent-bias.
4. The results analysed are those received from respondents; no attempt was made to verify data reported.

The survey was introduced with the following text:

This survey is run by Sylva Foundation, an environmental and education charity. We are seeking to understand the current nature of gender equality in the UK heritage and furniture industry (primarily wood) from the perspectives of industry, individuals and the education sector.

The survey has been designed to allow businesses, individuals, educational institutes and students to complete a tailored range of questions. We use routing in the survey to present questions best suited to your circumstances. The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. Thank you for your support.

The survey consisted of 11 sections, beginning with questions concerning respondent gender and age. To ensure targeted insights, the survey was designed with routing based on connections to the UK heritage woodworking and furniture-making sectors. Respondents first selected either the Education or Industry pathway, which then guided them to tailored questions. Those in the Education pathway were asked to identify as either educators or students, while those in the Industry pathway chose between employer or individual (*i.e.* employee, sole trader). This structured approach allowed us to compare experiences across different roles and settings, identifying key challenges and opportunities in the industry.

Results

Survey population

In total, 106 people responded to the 2024 Gender Survey. There was broadly an even distribution between Female (50) and Male (51) respondents, while 5 were Non-binary (Figure 1). No respondents identified as Transgender, while none elected to withhold gender information.

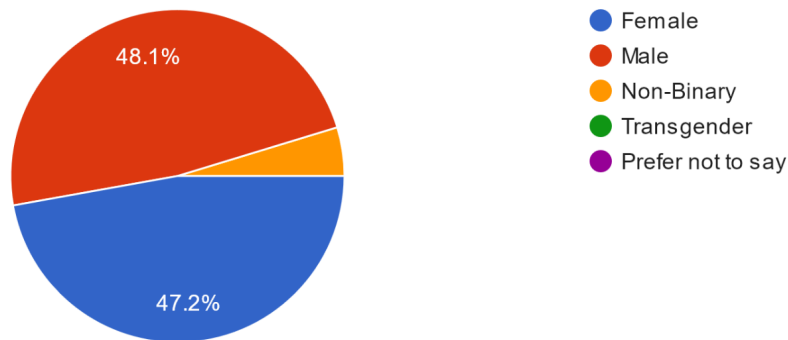


Figure 1 Distribution of respondents by gender. No respondents identified as Transgender or Preferred not to say.

Overall, most respondents (31%) were aged between 25-34 years, as were most female and non-binary respondents (Figure 2). Among male respondents, there was an even distribution between this group and older groups: 35-49 and 50-64 years. There were twice as many males as females in the 50-64 age group, and no females aged 65 years or over. Among the small population of non-binary respondents, none were aged 50 years or over.

We provided two main routes through the survey for 'industry' respondents, either: (1) as a respondent representing a business with two or more employees, or; (2) as an individual (including employees, sole traders, apprentices etc.). Two-thirds of respondents were individuals.

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

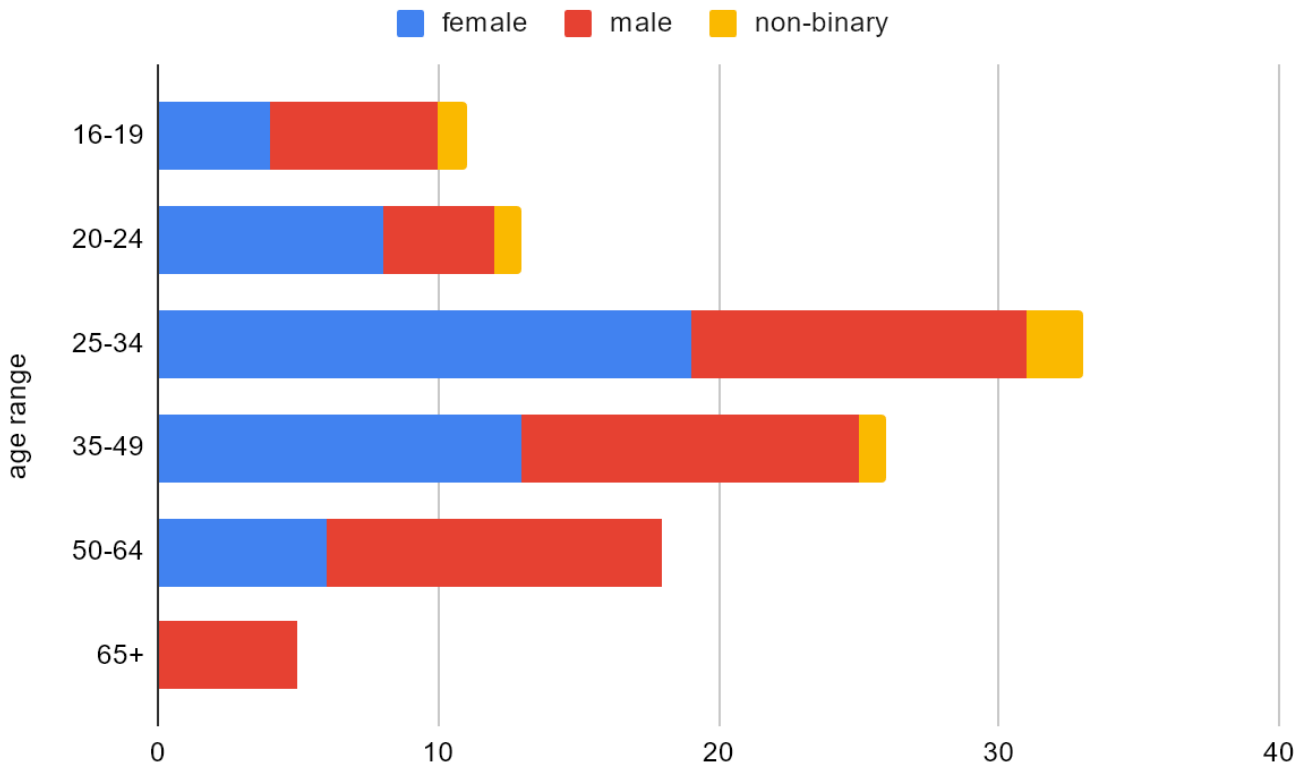


Figure 2 Distribution of respondents by age and gender.

The Workplace

Individuals section

Understanding individuals' employment, roles and pathways into the industry

Forty respondents provided information about their occupation. Most respondents (50%) were *Employed*, while 30% were *Sole traders* (30%), with a range of other occupations described (Figure 3).

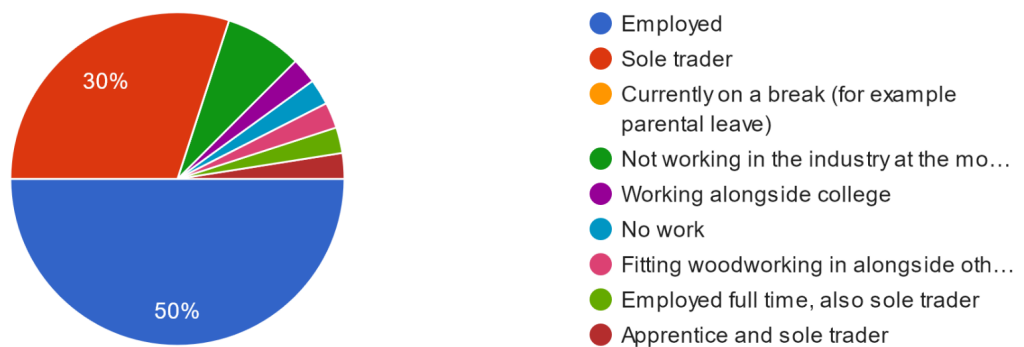


Figure 3 Distribution of occupations among respondents.

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

Among female respondents, more than twice as many were *Employed* compared to working as a *Sole trader*, while among male respondents there was a more even distribution (Figure 4).

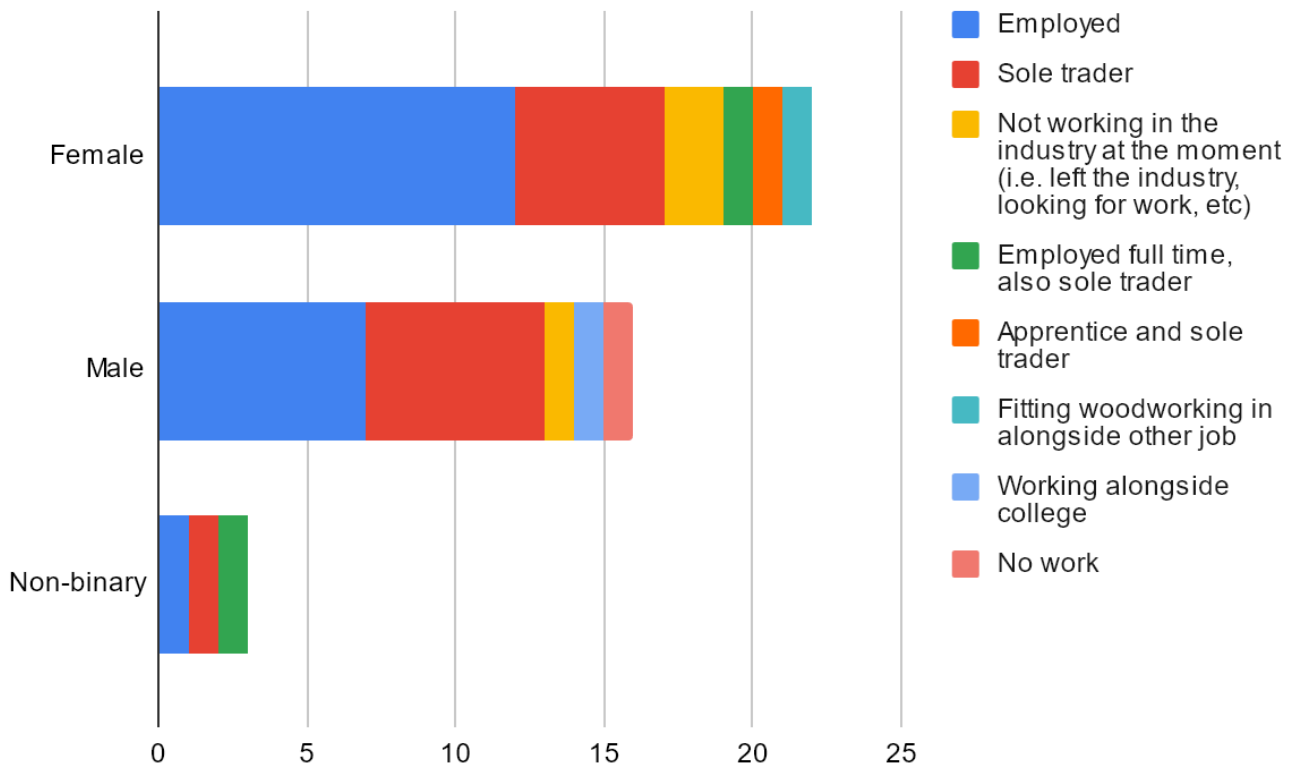


Figure 4 Distribution of respondents by gender across occupations.

Among employed respondents, most had been in employment with their current employer for *less than 1 year* (Figure 5), with the next highest category *1-2 years*.

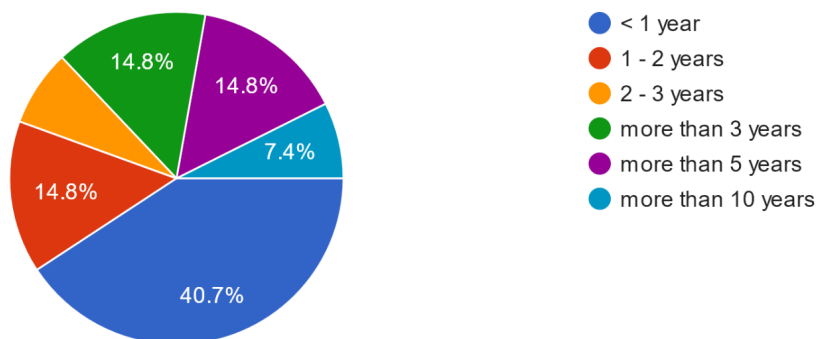


Figure 5 Distribution of respondents by length of time in employment.

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

We asked respondents how they had entered the industry. Among 40 respondents, a *Furniture course at university* was the most common route overall, with 9 respondents (6 female and 3 male), while a range of other routes were provided (Figure 6). Exploring genders further, for males *Further education* was the most common route for 4 respondents, while for females *Career switch/self-taught* was equally common to a *Furniture course at university* (both 6).

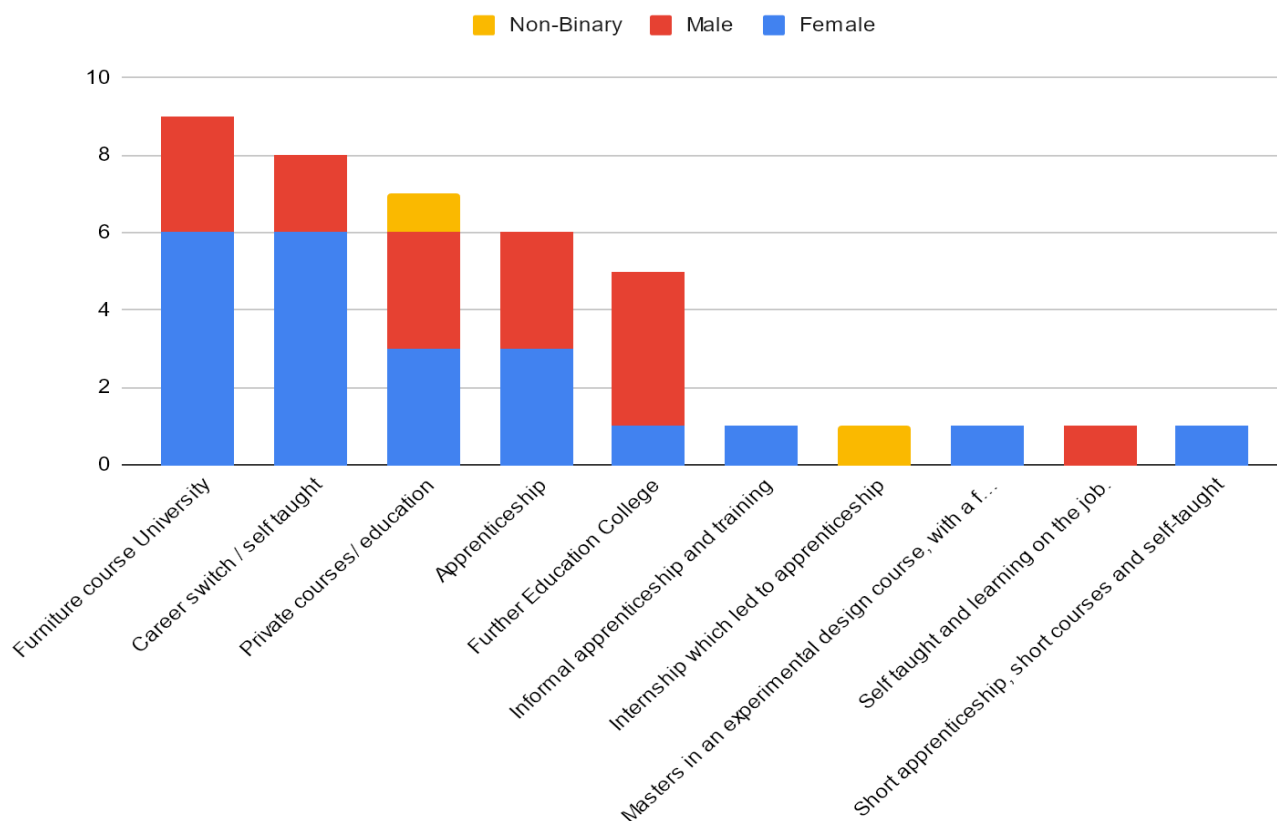


Figure 6 Entry routes to the industry by gender (counts).

We asked those working in industry how well they felt they were prepared by their education for their career in woodworking and the furniture industry. Among 40 respondents, the median score was 3, where 1=Poorly and 5=Excellent. There was no difference between male and female genders, but the median score for non-binary respondents was 3.5 suggesting they felt mildly better prepared (but note the number of non-binary respondents was very small). There was also little discernible difference between respondents with different roles in the industry with a median score of 3 overall, although *Apprentice/sole traders* scored 4, and those *Not working in the industry at the moment* scored 2.

The majority (76%) of respondents worked full-time (5 days per week) in the heritage woodworking/furniture manufacturing sector, whilst the second largest cohort worked only one day per week.

A wide range of roles were described by respondents, as shown in Figure 7, with the most frequent occupation being *Furniture Maker / Cabinet Maker* (23%), followed by *Designer* and *Finishing* (both 12%). In terms of distribution of occupation by gender, among females *Furniture Maker / Cabinet Maker* was the most frequent occupation (28%), followed by *Finishing* (17%) and *Designer* (12%). Among

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

males, after *Furniture Maker / Cabinet Maker* (19%), *Designer* (14%) was the next most frequent occupation, with *Project Management* and *Bench Joiner* equally third-most frequent (both 9%). Only two female respondents (3%) were occupied in *Project Management*.

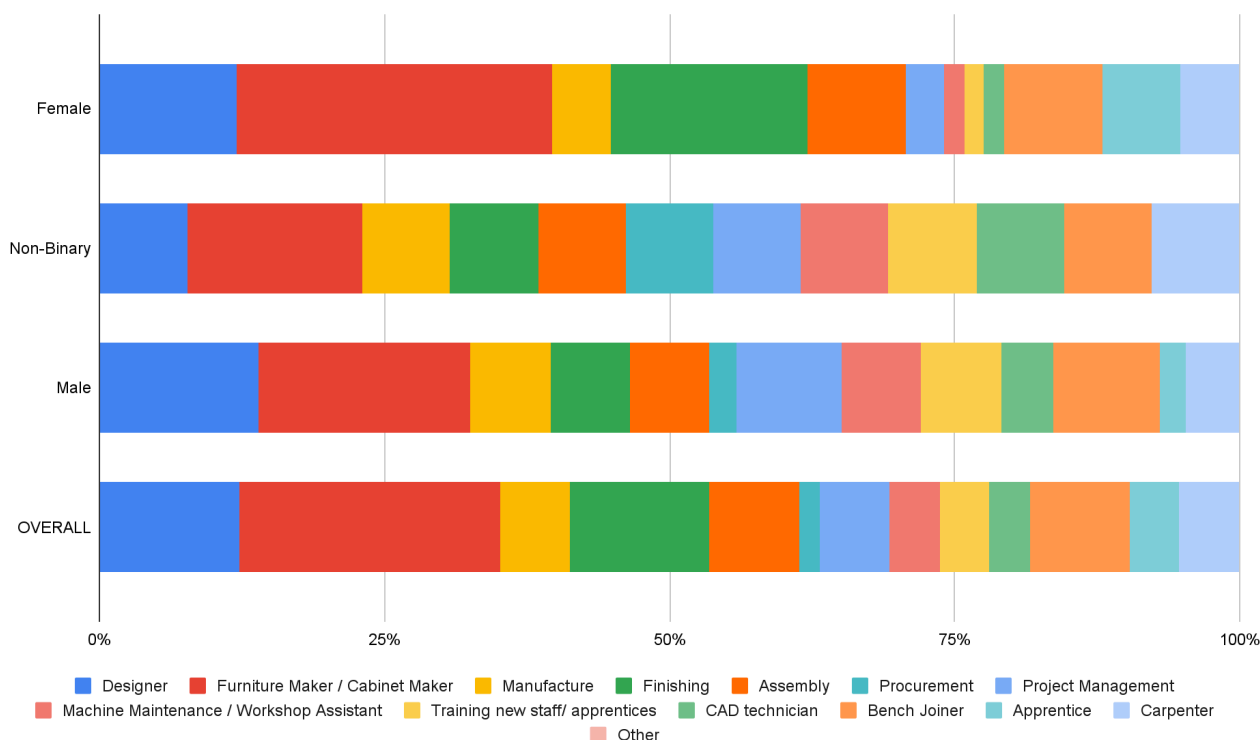


Figure 7 Proportions (%) of roles fulfilled of respondents by gender and overall. Respondents were able to select multiple roles as required.

Workplace inclusivity and gender-related challenges

We asked employees to rate their workplace culture for inclusivity, from 1 star (poor) to 5 stars (excellent). Among the 15 responses (12 male/3 female), the median was 4 (range 2-5), meaning that most rated their employer culture as *Good* (Figure 7). Two respondents (*i.e.* a minority) rated their businesses less favourably (scoring 2), one of whom was a male respondent, the other female. The median rating was different between males and females, with males scoring a median of (4) or good, and females a median of (5) excellent.

We asked employees whether they had experienced challenges in the workplace relating to gender identity. Among 40 responses, the median score was 3, where 1 was *No challenges* and 5 was *Significant challenges*. Median scores for females and non-binary were both 3 (moderate challenges), but for males the median score was 1 (no challenges).

Women and non-binary individuals in making roles reported facing a range of challenges, many of which stem from environments and practices that have historically been designed with men in mind. Access to correctly-sized personal protective equipment (PPE) was a common issue, as gloves, masks, and clothing are often ill-fitting, leading to discomfort and reduced safety. Similarly, tools, machinery, and workbenches are typically designed for male proportions, making them harder to use efficiently.

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

The physical workspace itself was sometimes found to be unaccommodating. Some respondents reported that workshops lacked essential facilities such as gender-neutral or female toilets, sanitary disposal, and accommodations for menstrual health. In addition, workplace culture often fostered exclusion, with sexist jokes, inappropriate comments, and even the display of sexualised imagery contributing to an unwelcoming environment.

Bias and stereotypes further complicate the experience. Women frequently reported being underestimated, subjected to "mansplaining," or assumed to be less capable—particularly in physically demanding tasks. Mistakes may be judged more harshly, reinforcing confirmation bias that questions their skills. Social exclusion was another common issue, with women struggling to integrate into male-dominated teams, being overlooked for promotions, or feeling isolated due to dismissive or belittling remarks from colleagues, visitors, and managers. In more severe cases, explicit sexism and harassment—particularly on-site—create an intimidating atmosphere.

Many women felt that they must prove their competence to be taken seriously, often receiving less recognition for their expertise than their male counterparts. Structural challenges, such as inflexible working hours, limited lifting aids, and workplace policies that fail to consider their needs, further exacerbated difficulties.

Despite these challenges, some individuals reported positive experiences in supportive workplaces. Clear instructions, encouragement, and inclusive practices made a significant difference, demonstrating that cultural and structural shifts help create a more equitable and welcoming environment.

Factors influencing perceptions of inclusivity in male-dominated workshops

We asked respondents to comment about any specific practices or behaviours that made them feel more or less welcome, for example a inclusivity policy, mentorship opportunities or representation. Feedback revealed that experiences of inclusivity in male-dominated workshops vary widely, with workplace culture, mentorship, and representation playing key roles in shaping how welcome individuals feel. Many respondents highlighted the importance of mentorship, equitable practices, and a supportive environment in fostering a sense of belonging, while others pointed to structural and cultural barriers that reinforce exclusion.

One of the most significant positive factors reported was in representation—seeing other marginalised genders in workshops creates a sense of belonging and normalises diversity within the industry. A supportive culture, access to mentorship, regular check-ins, open communication, and equitable task distribution, can make a meaningful difference. Workplaces that offer practical policies—such as supplying sanitary products, separate facilities, and fair allocation of tasks without gendered assumptions—were seen as more inclusive. Pay transparency, clear career progression, and unbiased mentorship further contributed to a sense of value and professional growth. Additionally, open communication in team meetings, communal lunches, and cross-department collaboration fosters a sense of equality and teamwork.

However, many respondents also shared experiences of exclusion. Being the only woman or gender minority in a workshop can feel isolating. Subtle biases—such as assumptions about ability, excessive praise for 'simply hiring women', or the expectation to 'prove' their skills—can feel patronising and undermine confidence. More overt challenges, including sexism, harassment, and exclusion from opportunities, remain pressing issues in some workplaces:

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

“No female toilet or sanitary disposal. Incorrect sized PPE and uniform. No understanding of menstrual/monthly discomfort and support around this. Sexist language in the canteen. Pictures of topless/underwear clad women in the workshop. Manager assuming I’m distracting male colleagues by talking to them (the male colleagues initiated conversation with me). Assumptions about what I’m able to lift/carry/move.”

Inclusivity often depends on the workshop owner's stance, with a lack of formal policies or training leading to inconsistent workplace cultures. In some cases, gestures toward inclusivity, such as featuring women in marketing while failing to address internal equity, are seen as disingenuous tokenism.

Shifting workplace culture beyond stereotypes and biases to genuinely celebrate individuals for their skills and contributions, regardless of gender or background, creates lasting change. Representation in leadership and visible role models in the industry were also highlighted as key factors in ensuring the next generation feels supported and inspired.

The role of gender-aligned mentorship and representation

We asked respondents if they had access to mentors or colleagues who shared their gender identity and how this may have affected their work experience. Respondents highlighted the significant impact of having mentors and colleagues who share their gender identity in workshops. Many emphasised the importance of representation and support networks, with some describing positive experiences in inclusive environments, while others noted ongoing challenges in male-dominated workplaces.

For those with access to gender-aligned mentors or colleagues, the experience was positive:

“In my workshop there is one other woman. We have quickly bonded and can talk about the problems we face. It makes a massive difference and also helps loads with my personal development. I definitely feel a lot more confident in going to her with questions over anyone else.”

Some respondents shared that community-building events and connections through social media helped a sense of belonging and confidence. Several mentioned that having other women in the workplace creates a more supportive environment where challenges are discussed openly, and facilities are more inclusive. Others reported that gender-balanced teams contribute to better workplace dynamics, fostering mutual respect and reducing the feeling of isolation. Many respondents highlighted the value of mentorship—whether from female mentors or supportive male allies—in building confidence, addressing biases, and encouraging professional growth. Some also noted that working alongside other women helped validate shared concerns and experiences, making the workplace feel more relatable. Others pointed out that gender diversity in the workplace leads to varied perspectives, improved collaboration, and a more positive work culture overall.

However, several respondents reported challenges due to a lack of gender representation in senior roles. Many noted that the absence of women in leadership positions limits mentorship opportunities and leaves them without visible role models. Some described feeling isolated in workshops where female colleagues are rare, making it difficult to address gender-specific concerns. Others commented about subtle exclusion, such as gender-based assumptions, a lack of understanding of specific challenges, and discomfort discussing topics like sanitary facilities. A number of respondents also expressed difficulty in finding mentors outside of their workplaces.

These perspectives highlight the need for greater representation, more mentorship opportunities, and stronger commitments to inclusivity in workplace culture.

Gender identity and access to employment: barriers, biases, and opportunities

We asked about the extent to which gender identity had impacted career advancement, where 1=*Not at all*, and 5=*Significantly*. Among all 39 responses, the median score was 2 (range 1-5), meaning gender identity had little impact on career advancement. There was a clear difference between genders for this question, with male respondents scoring a median of 1 (*Not at all*), whilst female respondents were 3 (*Somewhat impacted*), and non-binary 3.5 (Figure 8).

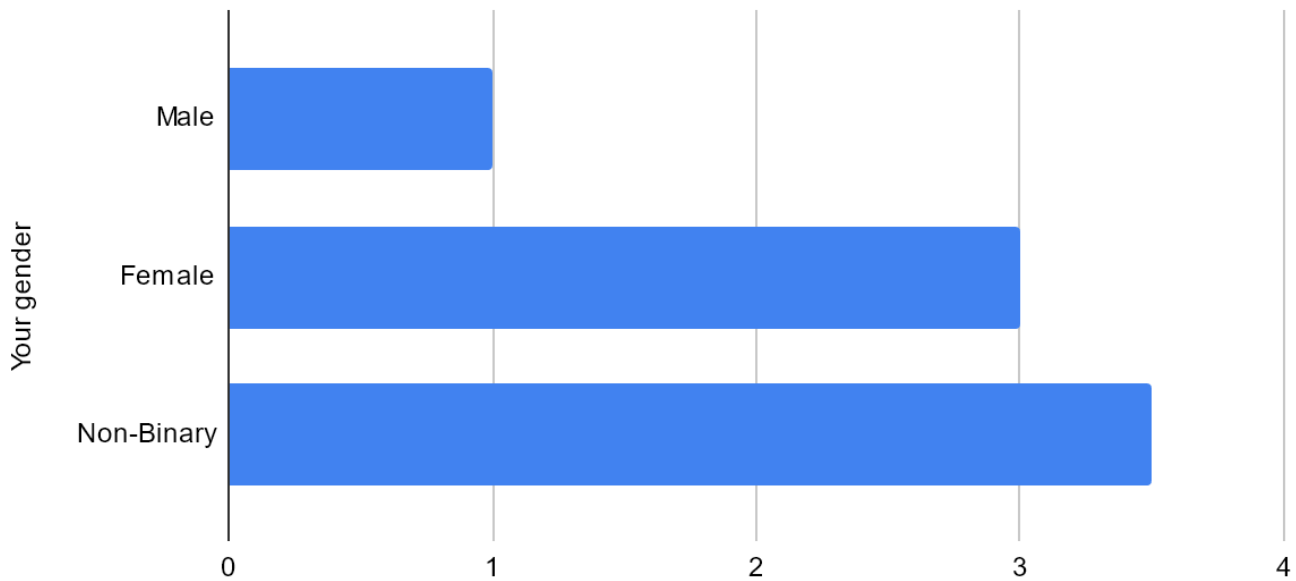


Figure 8 Extent to which gender identity has impacted career advancement, where 1=*Not at all*, and 5=*Significantly*.

We asked respondents to describe any specific ways in which gender identity had influenced access to workplace and employment opportunities. Respondents shared a range of experiences. While some described equitable treatment or even advantages in specific situations, many highlighted systemic barriers rooted in gender bias, cultural expectations, and workplace structures.

A few respondents noted that being a woman in a male-dominated field sometimes helped them stand out in job applications, as some employers sought to diversify their teams. Others described supportive workplaces where employers or mentors actively ensure equal access to training and career progression, countering traditional biases. Some women also found opportunities through networks or initiatives designed to promote inclusivity, allowing them to gain experience that might otherwise be difficult to access.

However, many respondents described significant challenges. Educational disparities were frequently mentioned, with some noting that all-girls schools often lacked woodworking or craft opportunities, while others recalled being steered toward traditionally ‘feminine’ skills like sewing rather than trades. In the workplace, gendered assumptions influenced task allocation, with women often assigned detailed, smaller-scale work while men were given larger or more prestigious projects. Several respondents

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

reported being denied access to machine training or complex tasks due to supervisors' biases about their abilities:

"It's pretty clear how my career hasn't advanced as quickly as my male peers. There have been pay disparities. I have been excluded from opportunities that would help advance my career without any justification (machine training). I have been forbidden from using tools I am trained to use."

Career progression was another key concern, with many women describing slower advancement compared to their male peers. Some reported being overlooked for promotion without clear justification, while others pointed to the lack of women in leadership roles as a barrier to mentorship and professional growth. Pay disparities were noted, with some respondents uncertain about wage equity due to a lack of transparency, while others reported being paid less than male colleagues despite performing similar work.

Workplace culture and expectations also played a role in limiting opportunities. Several respondents described patronising behavior, where they were expected to take on organising or caretaking roles rather than being seen as skilled makers. Others noted unequal access to physical resources, such as being discouraged from using certain tools. Many women mentioned struggling with confidence, particularly when pricing their work or advocating for their worth, often due to internalised biases reinforced by societal norms.

Concerns around life choices and long-term career sustainability were raised. Some respondents felt uncertain about pregnancy and maternity leave policies in male-dominated workplaces, with worries about being perceived as a burden if they needed flexibility.

On a broader level, many described the furniture-making industry as 'old-fashioned', with lingering gender biases affecting experiences. Some respondents expressed frustration with being overlooked in professional settings, such as exhibitions, where male colleagues were often addressed first.

Employers

Employers reflecting on business composition, gender representation, and inclusivity policies

The majority (95%) of business employers responding to the survey worked with wood as the primary material. Seventeen businesses provided location details, revealing that all but one were located in England, and also concentrated in the south of the country, the furthest north being near Peterborough (Figure 9). No businesses indicated that they were located in Scotland or Wales. One business located in New York City USA responded to the survey.



Figure 9 Locations of businesses responding to the survey.

The total number of employees among 16 business respondents was 666, with the largest company employing 150 people. The mean number of employees was 42.

The total number of employees working directly in the manufacture of products was 235, with 70 people working in this role in the largest company and a mean of 15 employees working directly in manufacturing. Proportionally, the mean percentage of employees working directly in manufacturing was 48% across these 16 businesses.

We asked how many of these employees involved in manufacturing were women, trans or non-binary. Among the 16 responses received, the total number was 293, ranging from 0-6 with a mean of 1.8. Proportionally, of all employees engaged in manufacturing, a mean of 17% were women, trans, or non-binary, ranging from 0-50%. Therefore, the proportion of female employees working in the manufacture of products was approximately one-third that of men (17% women cv. 48% men).

In terms of the proportion of women, trans and non-binary individuals working at a senior level in the 16 businesses, the mean was 13%, ranging from 0-50%.

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

We asked those responding on behalf of a business to rate their place of work for gender inclusivity in a range between *Poor* (1) and *Excellent* (5). Overall, the 19 respondents rated their businesses highly with a resulting median score of 5. We explored responses further by gender of respondents, revealing that while this score remained unchanged among women with a median score of 5, it was slightly lower among male respondents (median 4.5).

We asked those responding on behalf of businesses to rate their workplace, where 1 was poor ('not as good as we'd like it to be'), and 5 was excellent ('we believe we're exemplary'). Overall, respondents rated their businesses a median of 5. In terms of specific areas, Equal promotion opportunities was rated most highly, with the following in descending order: Zero tolerance of discriminatory behaviour; Equal pay; Inclusive leadership; Cultural sensitivity, and; Diverse teams/working groups (Figure 10). Two other aspects received a median rating of 4: Accessible restrooms/loos, and; Diverse senior leadership. Very few respondents awarded their businesses less than a score of 3 for any of these aspects.

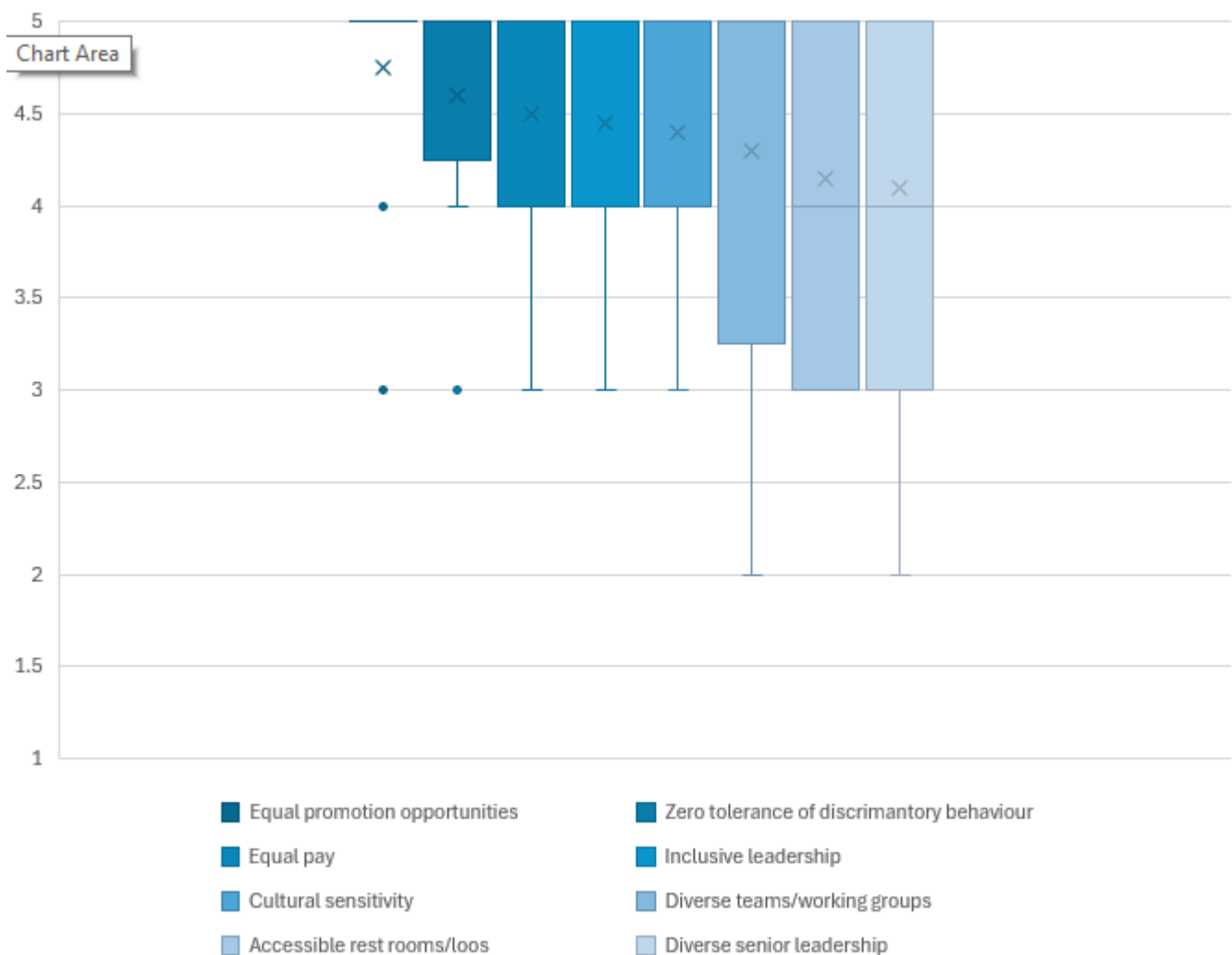


Figure 10 Business respondents rating of diversity and inclusion in the workplace for a range of different aspects, where 1 is Poor and 5 is Excellent. The mean value is indicated by 'X', the horizontal line indicates the median, the shaded box shows the distribution of the upper and lower quartiles, while the lines show the full range and dots indicate outliers.

Fostering equity: Employers are driving gender diversity in workshops

Asked to provide any examples of inclusive practices in their businesses, employers shared a range of practices aimed at fostering equity and diversity. Many businesses introduced educational initiatives, such as running creative programmes for local schools and developing apprenticeship programmes to create more accessible pathways into the industry. Inclusive hiring practices were also emphasised, with some companies ensuring their recruitment processes actively welcome all genders and featuring female makers in job advertisements and on company websites to encourage diversity:

“[...] Showing female makers on job ads and website (as it is a true reflection of who we are and who we want to be).”

Within the workplace, some businesses focus on equitable task distribution, ensuring all employees have access to the same opportunities regardless of gender. Transparent salary bandings and regular one-to-one meetings help maintain pay equity and provide employees with consistent support and feedback. To further strengthen workplace culture, some employers offered unconscious bias training and made practical improvements, such as upgrading facilities to better accommodate a diverse workforce.

Employers also highlighted the importance of increasing female representation within their teams and promoting gender diversity within their companies. While these efforts reflect progress, respondents acknowledged that continued work in education, recruitment, and workplace culture is necessary to drive lasting change in the industry.

Employers suggesting ways to support marginalised genders in industry

Employers identified several key areas where their businesses could become more inclusive for women, trans, and non-binary individuals. Many highlighted the importance of broadening outreach in recruitment by actively promoting roles through platforms that reach underrepresented groups and clearly stating a commitment to diversity in job advertisements and company materials. Positive representation within marketing and workplace visibility was also seen as a key factor in making the industry more welcoming.

Workplace policies were another area highlighted for improvement, with suggestions such as offering uniforms suited to all body types and developing policies that support employees during menstruation and menopause. Businesses were also encouraged to provide sanitary products in restrooms and foster a culture where these topics can be discussed without stigma.

Concerns around behavior and language specifically in workshops were frequently raised, with calls for businesses to monitor and address harmful comments in shared spaces like break rooms and off-site locations:

“We are working on language and behaviour that is acceptable in the workplace. There seems to be a difference in how people will behave and communicate if they are in an office or workshop environment, we wish to create equally safe and inclusive space.”

Leadership and accountability were identified as essential for meaningful change. Respondents emphasised the need for visible leadership which actively champions inclusivity and provides clear channels for anonymous feedback on workplace culture. Ensuring that respectful behavior expectations apply equally across offices, workshops, and job sites was seen as critical to maintaining a consistent standard of professionalism.

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

Finally, employers noted that work environments could be more inclusive by providing gender-neutral restrooms and ensuring communal areas feel welcoming for all. Encouraging diverse collaboration by pairing employees from different backgrounds on projects was suggested as a way to promote inclusivity and mutual understanding across teams.

Training and Education

Respondents involved in education were able to answer a range of questions via two routes: either as an *Educator* (teacher, training provider, education manager etc.), or; as a *Student*. In total, 46 responses were received, 21 from Educators and 25 from Students.

Educators

Educators' reflections on student motivations

Most Educator respondents were a *Teacher or tutor* (76%), with a range of other roles described (Figure 11).

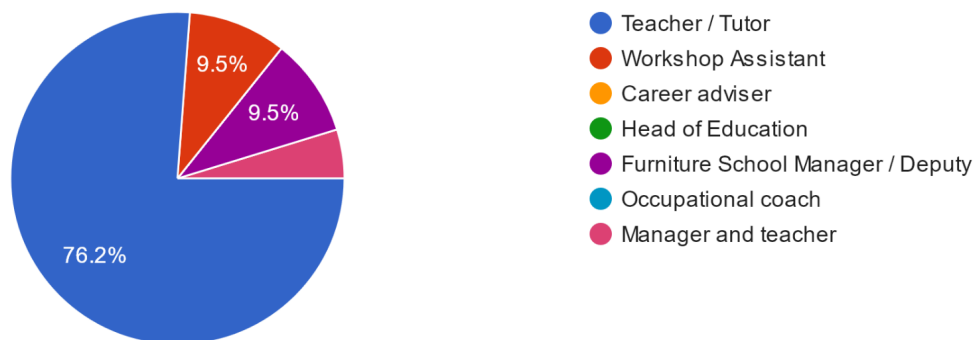


Figure 11 Educator roles and proportions described by respondents.

There was a range of responses representing different types of educational institutions (Figure 12). Among the 21 responses, *Independent training provider* and *University* were equally represented (24% each).

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

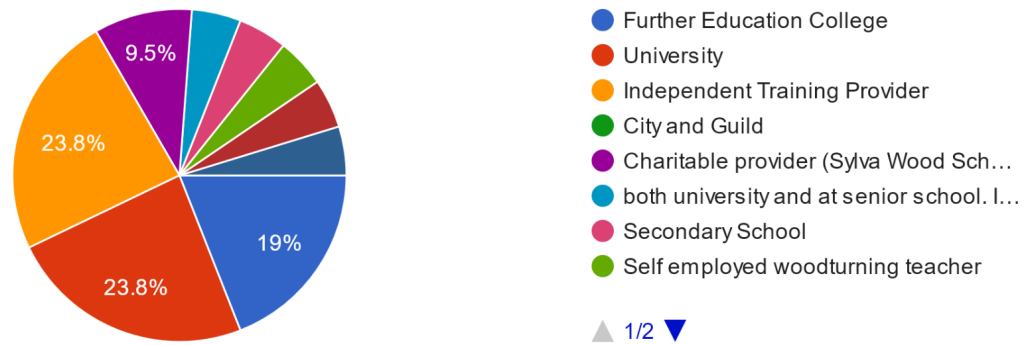


Figure 12 Proportions (%) of different types of education attended by respondents.

A wide range of training and education levels were provided by Educators including: *Bachelors Degree* (count 7); *Apprenticeship* (4); *Masters Degree* (3); *Foundation Course* (2); *Higher National Certificate* (2); *BTEC* (1), and *Higher Level Diploma* (1). The majority of respondents (8) provided *Unaccredited* training and education.

Among *Unaccredited* training providers, most provided *Adult learning courses* (8), followed by *Evening classes* (7) and *Professional courses* (4). Other Educators provided courses in *Community wellbeing woodwork* (2), *Green woodworking* (2), and *Heritage craft courses* (2). One Educator provided *Hobbyist courses*.

We asked Educators their opinion about the primary reason that students choose their course or programme. The main reason given among most Educators (17: 81%) was *Interest in hands-on creative woodwork*. An equal number mentioned *Exposure to woodworking experiences at school* (8), *Seeking a career switch* (8), and also *Passion for sustainable/heritage craft* (7). Some thought that *Influence from family, friends or role models* also played a role (5).

Increasing visibility, accessibility, and financial support in furniture-making careers

We asked Educators their opinion about what might make a career in furniture-making more attractive to young people, especially those from marginalised genders. The feedback highlighted the importance of diverse and visible role models in furniture-making careers. Many responses emphasise early exposure, whether through school visits, job fairs, or grassroots approaches, ensuring that woodworking and furniture making is presented as a viable and appealing career path from an early age. There is evidently a strong call for clearer routes into the industry, with better career advice and tangible connections between education and employment.

Another recurring theme was the need for industry-wide cultural change. Educators mentioned inclusive working environments, removal of barriers for marginalised genders, and positive experiences with craft and tradespeople. There was also concern about negative perceptions of the industry, suggesting that shifting societal attitudes—through media representation, networking opportunities, and improved industry outreach—could help counteract stereotypes.

Financial stability and work-life balance also emerged as key factors. Some responses highlighted the importance of salary incentives and industry support, while others mentioned the appeal of sustainable and ethically-minded workplaces that foster long-term careers.

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

Several comments by Educators pointed out that young people often lack awareness of the breadth of roles within the industry. Many associate furniture-making solely with bench work, overlooking opportunities in design, production, and other specialisations. Showcasing the full scope of careers, as well as helping individuals connect personal narratives to their craft, could help make the industry more attractive.

Barriers to attracting marginalised genders to furniture-making courses

We asked Educators to share challenges they encountered in attracting students from marginalised genders to their courses. A recurring challenge in attracting students from marginalised genders was the difficulty in reaching them through conventional marketing methods. Many promotional efforts are designed to appeal to those already interested—typically white men with the disposable income to afford courses—while others who might be open to furniture-making are not effectively engaged:

“We always have a high proportion of cis men on our courses. Much of this is to do with them having more disposable income than almost everyone else, and being prepared to spend it on themselves.”

Some respondents suggest that face-to-face outreach, role model visibility, and targeted messaging could help address this gap.

The dominance of male-dominated workspaces presented another significant barrier. Open days and workshops often reinforce the perception of woodworking as an industry primarily for men, with few women or gender-minority individuals present. This lack of representation can deter potential students who may feel uncomfortable or excluded in such spaces. Some courses have found that having female staff members or visibly diverse teaching teams encourages more applications from women, trans and non-binary students.

Financial barriers also play a role. The cost of courses, combined with an assumption that the industry lacks diversity, prevents some from even considering furniture-making as an option. While bursaries and funding schemes exist to improve accessibility, they are not always well-publicised or sufficient to overcome broader socio-economic disparities.

Another key issue is a general lack of awareness. Many people, particularly those without prior exposure to craft and woodworking in school or at home, simply do not know that furniture design and making are viable career paths. Some institutions report gradual improvements in gender diversity, with some courses approaching a 50/50 gender split, but others still struggle to attract more than 20% of their students from marginalised genders.

Confidence and comfort within the workshop environment also affect participation. Some women feel more at ease learning from female instructors or within spaces that explicitly foster inclusivity. Institutions that promote diversity more visibly note higher-than-average participation from marginalised genders, though some students still gravitate towards more expressive craft like wood carving, ceramics and textiles.

In the opinion of 21 Educators, the woodworking/furniture industry offered moderate support (3, where 1=*Poor* and 5=*Excellent*) for inclusivity and marginalised genders. This result was influenced by a single score of 5 as the most frequent score was 2 (9 respondents).

Bridging the gap between education and employment in furniture-making

We asked Educators how confident they were that their programme/course prepared students for employment in the furniture-making industry. The median score was 3 or moderately well (where 1-Poorly and 5-Excellent), although the range of responses was revealing. The most frequent score was 4 (8: 40%), while 3 respondents scored 5, one scored 2 and two scored 1.

Most Educators (35%) reported that the majority of students (75-100%) found employment in industry on completing their course/programme (Figure 13). On the other hand, 25% of Educators reported that 50% or less of their students found employment.

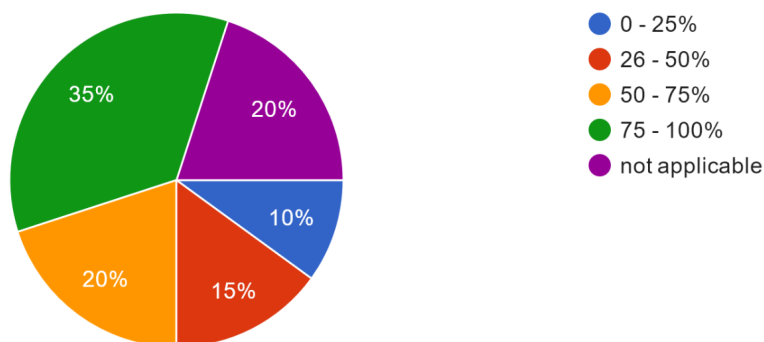


Figure 13 Proportions of students finding employment on completion of their course/programme in the view of Educators (21 respondents).

We asked Educators about the kinds of partnerships or initiatives they believed could help bridge the gap between education and industry. Seventeen responses were received. Educators shared a range of ideas, highlighting the importance of early exposure to craft, hands-on experiences, and the creation of inclusive workshop spaces. Many emphasised the importance of partnerships between schools and furniture businesses, allowing students to engage with woodworking from an early age. Hands-on workshops, particularly aimed at girls, trans, and non-binary students, were seen as key to breaking stereotypes and building confidence with tools and machinery. Bringing in diverse role models from underrepresented genders was also suggested to provide inspiration and tangible career aspirations.

Practical experience was a recurring theme, with calls for businesses to offer paid industry placements and improve apprenticeship wages to remove financial barriers. Educators suggested creating safe and inclusive spaces as well as hosting women, trans, and non-binary-only events.

Educators stressed the need for greater representation in educational curricula, incorporating the work of marginalised makers and inviting guest educators from diverse backgrounds to provide a wider range of perspectives. Social media and outreach campaigns were identified as powerful tools to increase visibility, showcasing the successes of marginalised individuals in furniture making to inspire young people. Promoting trade specifically for underrepresented genders was also suggested as a way to blend skill-building with networking in a supportive environment.

Several Educators saw potential in business-led initiatives, such as student competitions that involve industry mentorship and collaborative projects, as well as forums where businesses can learn from each other about best practices in diversity and inclusion. Beyond school, Educators stressed the need for

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

long-term support, including targeted funding, mentorship, and business training to help marginalised individuals transition into employment or entrepreneurship. Strengthening long-term partnerships between education providers and industry was seen as critical to ensuring clear and sustainable career pathways.

Students

Student pathways: Course choices, accessibility, and barriers to education

Twenty-five students answered the survey, all of whom were currently enrolled in a wide range of courses run by various providers. The majority (52%) were taking *Make* courses, while 11 (42%) attended a *Design and Make* course, with one Student (4%) attending a *Design* course. Course duration ranged from short courses (one-day or more) through to three-year full-time. The majority (44%) were attending a course between 3-12 months, followed by 16% each for 2-year or 3-year courses. There was an approximately even split between those attending courses full-time (48%) versus part-time (52%). Only 25% of courses offered an internship, apprenticeship or hands-on work placement as part of their education.

In terms of how the Students became aware of their course/programme, the main routes were: an *Existing interest in a specific subject* (9); *Word of mouth* (7); *Social media* (3) and *Open days* (3).

We asked Students whether they had experienced any barriers to accessing education, with the majority (13: 52%) responding *No*, 12% *Maybe* and 36% *Yes*. Therefore, 48% of Students possibly experienced some barriers to accessing education. In terms of the barriers faced. *Expenses* were most frequent (7), followed by *Location* (6), and *Course structure* (4). One female respondent remarked:

“As a busy mum who has to work. Tired, overloaded and information received and processed in a different way to when I was younger. Trying to re-enter education while re-aligning the brain to education requires a different approach to teaching 20yr olds. That’s often not available so you sink or swim. Which is an approach leaning towards failure. Less being discouraged directly and more set up to fail by inadvertently system failure to adapt and flex.”

Navigating gender bias and structural challenges

We asked Students whether they had ever felt discouraged from pursuing certain educational paths in furniture making or related fields due to their gender identity, disability, or other personal characteristics. The majority answered *No* (52%), although notably one-third answered *Yes* (32%) and a minority *Maybe* (16%).

Nine Students reflected on the challenges of entering a male-dominated field, describing how the lack of women and non-binary individuals in their learning environments often led to feeling isolated and intimidated. Many struggled with self-doubt, particularly when working with machinery or asking questions, as gendered expectations shaped their confidence and interactions. Structural barriers further complicated access to education, with workshop schedules and programme structures rarely accommodating older students, parents, or those with childcare responsibilities. Gender bias was also a recurring issue, with students recounting experiences of discouragement from educators, teasing, and difficulty securing apprenticeships due to the reluctance of older males to mentor women.

Some queer and neurodivergent respondents in the student section shared feedback about how past experiences of bullying and a lack of mental health support made navigating the field even more

challenging, requiring a lot of resilience to persist. Additionally, the perception of craft as an undervalued profession compared to academia meant that high-achieving students received little encouragement to pursue woodworking, further reinforcing barriers to entry.

Understanding training quality and career aspirations: Balancing design and making

In terms of hands-on practical making training for those Students where applicable (24), the training received was rated 4.3 (between 1 and 5 stars). Design elements of training (19 Students) received a slightly lower star rating (3.4).

Students expressed a range of career aspirations, the majority (56%) a mixture of designing and making, while 28% were aiming to be primarily workshop-based (*i.e.* crafting or making). Among 14 comments received, these can be summarised as follows. Students found creative satisfaction in bringing their ideas to life, seeing both design and making as integral to their practice. Several Students envisioned self-employment, either as a full-time career or a side business, aiming to balance their passion with financial stability. For some, hands-on learning proved far more engaging than traditional academic work, shaping their preference for workshop-based careers. Firsthand experience in workshops and exposure to skilled craftsmanship played a significant role in shaping their goals. Others were still exploring their options, with interests ranging from conservation work to experimenting with different materials and processes. Across responses, students highlighted the importance of integrating design and making, valuing opportunities to develop their own furniture designs while honing their technical skills.

In terms of the influence of a range of factors for pursuing a career in making or design, *Personal interest* was the main influence overall (13), followed by *Hands-on experience*. In contrast, *Income potential* and *Job stability* were less influential overall (both 2).

The majority (75%) of Students felt that gender identity did not influence their career path preference in terms of being workshop-based versus design-based. Responses highlighted challenges and motivations in navigating a traditionally male-dominated field including: creating a safe working space, isolation, breaking gender stereotypes, and barriers from lack of confidence.

Most Students (32%) were planning to find a job in industry in a workshop-based role after completing their course, followed by 20% who aim to start their own business.

Shaping the future of the Woodworking and Gender Project

We asked all respondents to help us shape and prioritise the Woodworking and Gender Project by posing this question:

Imagine being in our shoes, embarking on this new project exploring opportunities and barriers relating to gender inequality in the woodworking sector. How would you choose to prioritise work across our main project areas?

The five project areas listed were: Working with education providers; Working with students already in education; Working with employers to support inclusivity; Providing specialised training for marginalised genders, and; Raising the profile of gender inclusivity through communications and outreach.

Each of the five project areas was prioritised by 102 respondents where Priority 1 is the most important, and Priority 5 is the least important.

Overall among all respondents (Table 1), the priority order for the five project areas was:

1. Working with education providers;
2. Working with employers to support inclusivity;
3. Working with students already in education;
4. Raising the profile of gender inclusivity through communications and outreach, and;
5. Providing specialised training for marginalised genders.

Between key sub-populations of respondents, *Working with employers to support inclusivity* and *Working with education providers* consistently ranked first or second as priorities. The area most commonly ranked third priority was *Working with students already in education*, except for non-binary respondents for whom *Providing specialised training for marginalised genders*, and among Educators who prioritised *Raising the profile of gender inclusivity through communications and outreach*.

The identical priority order to All respondents was shared by Male, Business, and Student respondents. Female respondents shared similar priorities except ranking *Working with employers to support inclusivity* (rank 1) above *Working with education providers* (rank 2).

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

Table 1 The five areas of the Woodworking and Gender Project prioritised by respondents overall and by sub-population, where 1=highest priority and 5-lowest priority.

PROJECT AREA	HIGHEST PRIORITY ←			→ LOWEST PRIORITY	
	1	2	3	4	5
Females	Working with employers to support inclusivity	Working with education providers	Working with students already in education	Raising the profile of gender inclusivity through communications and outreach	Providing specialised training for marginalised genders
Males	Working with education providers	Working with employers to support inclusivity	Working with students already in education	Raising the profile of gender inclusivity through communications and outreach	Providing specialised training for marginalised genders
Non-binary people	Working with employers to support inclusivity	Working with education providers	Providing specialised training for marginalised genders	Working with students already in education	Raising the profile of gender inclusivity through communications and outreach
Businesses	Working with education providers	Working with employers to support inclusivity	Working with students already in education	Raising the profile of gender inclusivity through communications and outreach	Providing specialised training for marginalised genders
Individuals	Working with employers to support inclusivity	Working with education providers	Working with students already in education	Providing specialised training for marginalised genders	Raising the profile of gender inclusivity through communications and outreach
Educators	Working with employers to support inclusivity	Working with education providers	Raising the profile of gender inclusivity through communications and outreach	Working with students already in education	Providing specialised training for marginalised genders
Students	Working with education providers	Working with employers to support inclusivity	Working with students already in education	Raising the profile of gender inclusivity through communications and outreach	Providing specialised training for marginalised genders
ALL	Working with education providers	Working with employers to support inclusivity	Working with students already in education	Raising the profile of gender inclusivity through communications and outreach	Providing specialised training for marginalised genders

Discussion and Conclusions

Comparisons between surveys (2023 and 2024)

In 2023, Sylva Foundation conducted its first survey on gender equality in the woodworking industry, gathering insights exclusively from business owners. The 2023 survey provided a snapshot of gender representation in the sector, but it lacked the perspectives of employees, educators, and students. In 2024, the survey was expanded to include these groups, offering a more comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities within the industry.

The 2023 survey revealed that only 8.5% of manufacturing roles were held by women, while women in senior roles accounted for 29% of the workforce. A year later, the survey recorded that 17% of manufacturing positions and 13% of senior roles were occupied by women, trans, and non-binary individuals. This increase may not reflect an actual industry-wide shift but rather a change in who responded. The 2024 survey likely reached businesses that are already engaged in gender diversity efforts, making the numbers appear more encouraging than they might be across the broader sector.

One of the starkest contrasts between the two surveys lies in how workplaces were rated for gender inclusivity. In 2023, 93% of employers believed their workplaces were inclusive, with most rating their businesses as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'. The 2024 results, which included employee perspectives, painted a more complex picture. While male employees tended to rate their workplaces highly, women and non-binary individuals reported persistent structural barriers. Many noted a lack of access to well-fitting PPE, inadequate facilities for menstrual health, and a workplace culture where sexist jokes and dismissive attitudes were commonplace. Others spoke about being excluded from leadership roles, facing unequal pay, and having to prove their competence more than their male colleagues. At the same time, employees in some businesses reported significant improvements, pointing to transparent pay structures, mentorship programmes, and proactive inclusivity policies as making a real difference. While some workplaces are clearly changing for the better, the gap between employer perceptions and employee experiences suggests that many businesses still underestimate the challenges faced by marginalised genders.

Recruitment and career progression remain significant hurdles. The 2023 survey showed that many employers struggled to recruit women, often citing a lack of female applicants. The 2024 survey revealed that the issue runs deeper. Women and non-binary employees frequently reported that they were steered away from machine work, overlooked for promotions, and placed in less prestigious roles. Some respondents described a frustrating reality in which they were hired as a way for a business to appear diverse but then given fewer opportunities to develop their skills. Others shared positive experiences, noting that some companies were taking active steps to build more inclusive teams and create fairer career progression pathways. The mixed responses highlight that while change is happening in certain areas, outdated attitudes and systemic biases still prevent true equality across the whole sector.

Education and training emerged as a critical factor influencing career access. The 2024 survey found that many women enter woodworking through career switching rather than formal education, often because they were not encouraged to pursue craft-based training earlier in life. Financial barriers, rigid course structures, and gendered expectations continue to limit access to woodworking and furniture making education. Many educators pointed out that the industry does not do enough to engage with young people from diverse backgrounds, and that clearer pathways from education to employment are needed. Some institutions are making efforts to create inclusive spaces and provide better support for

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

marginalised students, but there is still a long way to go in ensuring woodworking education is accessible to all.

A key consideration when interpreting the 2024 results is the likely bias in the survey sample. The responses predominantly came from businesses and individuals who were already engaged in conversations about gender inclusivity. This helps explain why the proportion of marginalised genders in manufacturing roles appeared to nearly double between 2023 and 2024 and why inclusivity ratings were relatively high. The survey did not capture data from the many businesses that may still be resistant to change or unaware of gender issues, meaning the results should not be mistaken for a broader industry shift. That said, the 2024 findings are nonetheless valuable because they provide a more nuanced base against which further research can judge progress. Some businesses are actively working to improve representation, inclusivity, and career pathways for marginalised genders. Some workplaces are leading by example, unpacking gender-related challenges, and making structural changes to create fairer and more welcoming environments.

The findings from these two surveys reinforce the need for continued engagement and broader outreach. While it is encouraging to see businesses addressing gender imbalance, real change will require bringing more of the industry into these discussions. Strengthening connections between education and employment, improving workplace policies, and ensuring career progression is truly equitable are key areas for development. The challenge ahead is not just to support those already on board with gender inclusivity but to reach the wider industry and encourage more businesses to take meaningful action.

The Workplace

The results of this survey have emphasised the systemic and cultural changes necessary to create equitable workplaces in woodworking and furniture-making industries while also highlighting many laudable and impactful best practices underway in some workplaces.

In terms of workplace culture and inclusivity, generally employers felt that their workplaces were good for inclusivity, with women rating higher workplace inclusivity than men. Women highlighted a number of specific workplace challenges including: difficulty accessing appropriately sized PPE and tools; lack of facilities for menstrual health and female toilets; biases and stereotypes such as ‘mansplaining’; social exclusion and undervaluation, and being overlooked for promotions or roles; instances of overt and (subtle) sexual harassment, and; structural barriers like poor ergonomic design of workspaces.

Among many positive experiences cited by respondents, better representation of women in the workshop was felt to foster belonging. Supportive practices like mentorship, open communication, equitable task distribution, and gender-diverse teams improved inclusivity. Companies emphasising pay transparency, unbiased promotion opportunities, and diversity initiatives created a better workplace culture.

Relating to workplace challenges, some respondents felt that there was a bias in task allocation, with women assigned to less prestigious roles and smaller-scale tasks. In career development, many felt women must prove their skills repeatedly and face fewer opportunities for promotions and leadership.

Representation of women and non-binary individuals in leadership is limited, hindering mentorship opportunities. Mentorship from female colleagues or supportive male allies was cited as improving

confidence and helping navigate biases. Lack of gender-diverse teams can lead to isolation and discouragement.

Some recommendations for improvements suggested by employers include:

- I. **Structural changes:** ergonomic workspaces, inclusive PPE, and fair task distribution.
- II. **Workplace policies:** pay transparency, maternity policies, and inclusivity training to address unconscious bias.
- III. **Mentorship:** structured mentorship programs for marginalised genders.
- IV. **Representation:** increase marginalised genders in leadership roles to provide visible role models.
- V. **Education reforms:** ensure equal access to woodworking opportunities in schools and promote diverse role models.
- VI. **Cultural shifts:** encourage open dialogues, celebrate diversity, and dismantle gendered stereotypes.

Training and Education

Generally, the most common route into the industry was university furniture courses. While men more commonly pursued further education pathways, women were more likely to enter through career switches or self-teaching than men. Respondents felt moderately prepared for working in the industry, with little variation by gender or role, except for apprentices/sole traders who felt better prepared. Women faced fewer opportunities in school workshops and were often guided toward traditional "feminine" crafts rather than woodworking.

Overall, respondents felt moderately prepared for working in the woodworking/furniture industry, although opinions on this were divided. Many students choose courses due to personal interest in creative woodwork or as part of a career switch. Practical, hands-on courses were highly valued, with many expressing an appreciation for experiential learning over traditional academic pathways.

About half of student respondents had experienced barriers, including expenses, location, and course structures not accommodating parents or older learners. A significant challenge for some people was programmes failing to adapt to diverse life circumstances, such as childcare or neurodivergent needs.

Students from marginalised genders faced challenges in male-dominated environments, including limited mentorship opportunities and sexism. Gender identity influenced career paths for 25% of respondents, often driven by a desire to break stereotypes or create inclusive spaces.

Educators felt that craft careers are undervalued academically, discouraging high-performing students from pursuing them. Historical biases against women and non-binary individuals in workshop settings created feelings of isolation and self-doubt.

About half of students aspired to combine design and making, with others aiming for workshop-based roles or starting their own businesses. Factors influencing career choice included personal interest and hands-on experience, while income potential and job stability were less significant.

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

Some recommendations for Training and Education by Educators and Students include:

- I. **Early exposure:** partnerships between schools and businesses to introduce woodworking early in education.
- II. **Gender-inclusive workshops:** targeting marginalised groups to build confidence and break stereotypes.
- III. **Paid opportunities:** Paid apprenticeships and internships to reduce financial barriers for marginalised groups.
- IV. **Inclusive curriculum and representation:** incorporate diverse role models and educators in programmes to reflect inclusivity. Showcase contributions from women, trans, and non-binary individuals to challenge traditional narratives.
- V. **Supportive learning environments:** flexible course structures accommodating diverse life circumstances (i.e. parents, neurodivergent learners). Creating gender-inclusive workshops and mentorship programmes to foster confidence and belonging.
- VI. **Industry collaboration:** collaboration and partnerships between students and businesses to bridge education and employment gaps. Long-term collaboration between institutions and industry would help ensure clear pathways for graduates.

Priorities of the Woodworking and Gender Project

By asking respondents to prioritise the key areas of the Woodworking and Gender Project, we aimed to understand where our efforts could have the greatest impact in tackling gender inequality in the woodworking and furniture making sector. Their responses reaffirmed the main objectives and areas of work set out for the project, guiding our efforts over the next two and a half years to drive meaningful change in both education and industry.

The emphasis on working with education providers as the top priority suggested the importance of addressing gender inequality at its roots. If furniture education reflects the biases of the industry—where marginalised genders struggle to access prestigious opportunities, training, apprenticeships, and clear career pathways—progress will remain slow. Strengthening partnerships with schools, colleges, and universities will help create a more inclusive pipeline into the craft, ensuring that students from all backgrounds feel welcomed and supported. This also aligned with concerns raised by educators, who emphasised that visibility, representation, and structured pathways are essential for attracting a more diverse workforce.

However, the fact that women, non-binary people, educators, and individuals in the industry prioritised ‘Working with employers to support inclusivity’ suggested that real change must start within the workplace. While men and business owners considered education as the highest priority, we recognise that those most affected by inequality from marginalised genders considered the workplace more of a priority than education.

Since we had slightly more male respondents, their preferences may have tipped the overall ranking in favour of prioritising working with education, but the lived experiences of marginalised genders pointed clearly toward industry change as the most urgent need.

Our focus has been and remains to be working directly with, and for, employers to create more inclusive workplaces—ensuring fair hiring, equitable career progression, and a shift in workplace culture that

Woodworking and Gender Sector Survey 2024

actively supports women, trans and non-binary makers. While working with education remains critical, it cannot be effective if students enter an industry where they still face bias, exclusion, and limited opportunities.

By prioritising industry transformation first, we can create workplaces that are genuinely inclusive and ready to welcome the next generation of diverse makers. Working with education providers will remain a key part of the project, but always in service of ensuring that training leads to real, sustainable careers—rather than just an education that falters at the workshop door.

‘Supporting students already in education’ ranked third as a priority for the project, showing that while industry-wide change is necessary, students may need more targeted support while they are still in training. Many respondents reflected on feeling isolated in male-dominated learning environments or being discouraged from using machines and technical equipment. Strengthening networks, ensuring access to gender-aware mentorship, and fostering workplace experience opportunities will be key areas of focus.

Although ‘Raising the profile of gender inclusivity’ ranked fourth, educators saw this as particularly critical, ranking it third. This reflected the need for continued outreach and awareness-raising efforts to shift public perception, normalise women, trans and non-binary people in woodworking, and challenge long-standing stereotypes. While the sector remains male-dominated, visibility matters—ensuring that the successes and contributions of marginalised genders are seen and celebrated will help build momentum for lasting change.

Finally, ‘Providing specialised training for marginalised genders’ was ranked as the lowest priority overall but was significantly more important to the small number of non-binary respondents. While broader systemic change is important, training remains an important tool for building confidence, fostering community and creating safe learning environments for those who have historically been excluded. This suggests that while it may not be the primary driver of change, it remains an essential element of the project for those who need it most.

These priorities will guide the Woodworking and Gender Project as we refine our initiatives, ensuring that our efforts are directed where they are most needed. The results confirm that education and workplace culture must be tackled together, and that supporting both students and industry professionals will create more sustainable and meaningful change. By focusing on these priorities, we can work toward a woodworking and furniture making sector that is not only more diverse but truly inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all.