

Women in Architecture Survey Results in full

The AJ Women in Architecture survey was open for one week to all women working within the construction industry. 671 women responded; 48 per cent were architects, eight per cent architectural assistants, and students formed 24 per cent of respondents.

Pay

Low salaries and the disparity between what male and female colleagues earn remains a major issue within the profession, and a source of huge frustration for many of those completing the AJ survey.

An astonishing 47 per cent of female respondents believed that they would earn more if they were male, with 44 per cent claiming that male colleagues who do the same or a similar job at their practice earned more than them.

Anecdotal evidence backed up these figures on pay inequality. One respondent who gained a distinction at Part 2 was offered a position at a leading practice, with a salary £3,000 less per annum than her partner, who was also a Part 2 in the same firm. She said: 'I negotiated a better salary but it was still £500 less than my partner, who only graduated with a 2:1 from the same university.'

Respondents' remarks on the perceived gender salary gap also suggested that men might be more brazen when it comes to negotiating pay. One woman

said: 'Having to argue for every pay increase means some women are paid less. Men tend to find it easier to confront bosses.'

There is however a reticence to discuss earnings with colleagues, with 54 per cent stating that they did not think that everyone should know what their colleagues earned. Some believed that they will face disciplinary proceedings for comparing earnings, but since the Equality Act 2010 this has not been the case (*see box on page 9*).

The level of pay in the profession generally was a concern for most of those surveyed. Nearly two-thirds of women, working both full- and part-time, earned

51%

Had no difficulties resuming their career after having children

less than £29,000 a year (60 per cent), with almost a quarter bringing in less than £19,000 per annum (23 per cent).

An alarmingly low nine per cent of those working full-time were earning between £41,000 and £50,000 (the typical pay for an associate being £46,000, according to the AJ100 median pay figures, see AJ 19.05.11). And just nine per cent of our respondents earned director-

level pay, more than £51,000, suggesting the majority of female architects hit a glass ceiling at some point in their career when it comes to pay and promotion.

Of those women in full-time employment, 24 per cent earn between £30,000 and £40,000; the median pay from the 2011 AJ100 survey puts the average architect's salary at £37,000.

For part-time workers, salaries which might also have to cover childcare seemed particularly low, with the majority (26 per cent) reporting earnings of between £19,000 and £25,000.

Many pointed out that some women will have only just finished their seven years' training when they start considering maternity leave and the possibility of part-time work. 'You generally qualify in your mid to late twenties, so it does feel like you don't achieve a great deal before stopping.'

Thirty-five per cent of the women we surveyed thought that in the current economic climate, pay parity was likely to decrease. As one respondent noted: 'The recession will have a greater impact on women – the profession finds it difficult to accommodate part-time working, a much more important issue for women with young children.'

Discrimination

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63 per cent) have experienced sexual discrimination in their

EQUAL TERMS – EQUAL PAY: THE LAW

Under the Equality Act 2010, it's unlawful for an employer to discriminate against you because of your sex. Where men and women, working for the same employer, are doing one of the following, they are entitled to the same terms in their employment contract:

- The same or similar work
 - Work rated as equivalent in a job evaluation study by the employer
 - Work of equal value.
- Pay secrecy clauses in employment contracts are unenforceable.

architectural careers. Incidents vary from the subtle – 'being given more secretarial work to do than my male Part 1 colleagues' and 'difference in treatment on return from maternity leave on part-time basis' – to the blatant: 'I have been asked if I'm menstruating, been told my salary will be reduced as a result of being pregnant, and have been taken off jobs on site when pregnant.'

Fortunately sexual discrimination does not appear to happen often, with respondents witnessing it either 'very infrequently' (32 per cent) or 'never' (18 per cent).

Contrary to many of the responses from leading architects published later in this issue (see for instance Cindy Walters >>