



What people think,
feel and do

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Enterprise Nation

Female Founders



Key findings

7 December 2020

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Project details

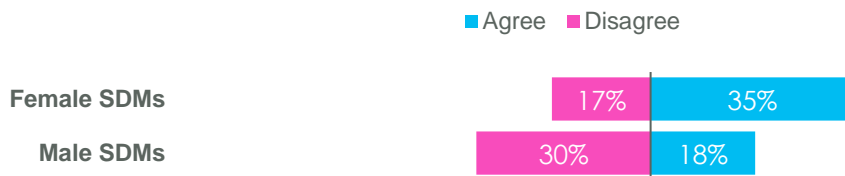
PROJECT NUMBER	OP15916
PROJECT NAME	Female Founders
CLIENT COMPANY NAME	Enterprise Nation
CLIENT CONTACT NAME	Liz Slee
PROJECT MANAGER NAME	James Crouch
PROJECT MANAGER EMAIL	jamescrouch@opinium.com
SAMPLE	502 senior decision makers in SMEs
FIELDWORK DATES	25 November to 2 December 2020

Impact of working from home

Working from home and female SME leaders

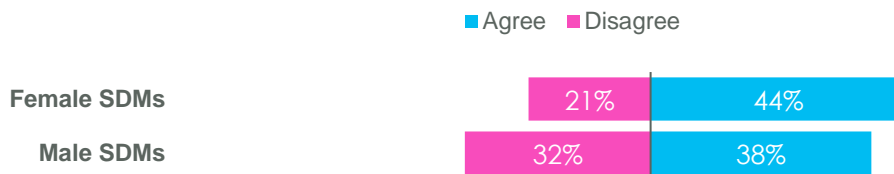
The impact of the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women business leaders, especially when it comes to childcare. Just over a third (35%) of female senior decision makers in UK SMEs said lockdown childcare responsibilities made it difficult to run their business properly. By comparison, only 18% male SME leaders say the same, with 30% actively disagreeing and saying it made it easier.

Lockdown childcare responsibilities have made it difficult to run my business properly



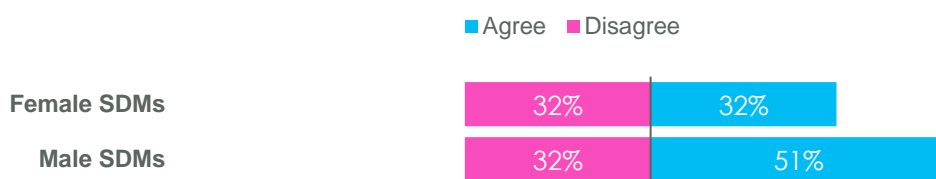
However, there are other areas where the difference between men and women plays out differently. Despite the impact from childcare, a large proportion of both men (38%) and women (44%) think the pandemic has normalised working from home and opened up new opportunities for their business. However, women are actually clearer in their agreement, with 44% agreeing and only a fifth (21%) disagreeing.

Lockdown has normalised working from home and opened up new opportunities for my business



Also, male SME leaders were far more likely than women SME leaders to say their mental health has been impacted by working from home (51% vs 32% respectively).

Working from home has impacted my mental health



The positives of working from home

More broadly speaking, female SME leaders found lots of benefits from working from home on their business:

- Three in five (58%) said running a business from home gives them more flexibility
- A similar proportion (58%) welcome hybrid working and more flexible working practices
- Half (50%) think hybrid working could equalise business opportunities for men and women

Starting a business during the pandemic

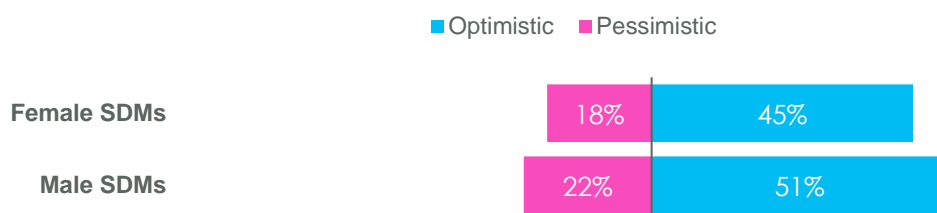
Of the senior decision makers (of both genders) that started a business this year, just over half (52%) did so because they could see there was an opportunity, while for two in five (39%) it was something they had always wanted to do

Post-lockdown expectations

What the world might look like post-lockdown

Both male and female senior decision makers in UK SMEs are generally optimistic for the prospects of their businesses post-lockdown, with 51% of men optimistic and 45% of women optimistic.

Business's prospects post-lockdown



Business leaders of both genders are almost equally divided on their post-lockdown plans: 37% say they made many important changes that they will continue with / learn from after the pandemic, while 36% say their business has been hugely negatively impacted and they will look to return to operating the way we were before the pandemic.

However, post-lockdown just under a quarter (23%) of all SME leaders are looking to employ more women, with 12% saying that changes in hybrid/remote working mean they are looking to employ more women. This rises to a third (32%) of female SME leaders planning to employ more women, with 19% pointing to changes in hybrid/remote working and 15% saying this is due to changes in their equality and diversity policies.

About Opinium

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.

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