

Clear call for change as UK's Top 50 equity trailblazers  
are named for International Women's Day – 08.03.2023



Allies, lobbyists, mentors and campaigners committed to driving equity and societal change for women have been named in the 2023 Trailblazer50 list compiled by WeAreTheCity. Revealed ahead of International Women's Day 2023 in support of its #EmbraceEquity theme, the Trailblazer50 list highlights incredible individuals working tirelessly to make society a better place for women.

This is the second Trailblazer50 listing to recognise and celebrate those who step outside of their day job to drive conversations around domestic violence against women and girls, period poverty, race, menopause, FGM, child marriage and social mobility.

#### A variety of voices

From health, banking and law to sports, charity and broadcasting, these 50 equity trailblazers include activists, athletes, professors, CEOs, mentors and writers. Despite their different backgrounds, they share one common goal: to change the way we perceive equity and to spearhead meaningful action.

"First and foremost, our Trailblazer50 seeks to bring public recognition of the impact and influence these changemakers are having on society," says **Vanessa Valley OBE**, CEO of

**WeAreTheCity.** “In the spirit of their work and aspirations, we asked each trailblazer what action they would like to see organisations or the government take to drive gender equity.”

**Their answers were many and varied, including the following calls for change:**

- Have shared and equal maternity, paternity and parental leave
- Enable flexible working hours and job sharing at executive level
- Eliminate the gender pay gap
- Recognise and remove barriers
- Acknowledge and address bias
- Prioritise women's health care and focus on prevention rather than cure
- Realise that ethnicity and race can negatively heighten someone's risk and experience of women's health issues
- Ensure a level playing field in girls sport to reflect recent elite level success
- Introduce comprehensive education on gender equality for boys and girls
- Engage men in the discussion around the need for equity in the workplace and society

### **Stronger together**

HSBC Bank has kindly sponsored the 2023 Trailblazer50 List and is also hosting a networking lunch at its HQ in Canary Wharf towards the end of March. The aim of this is to enable the trailblazers to come together to connect, hear each other's stories, share best practice and further strengthen their resolve to bring about change.

*“Change takes courage and commitment. The Trailblazer50 list is full of people who are making a real difference in our community and furthering our collective goal of equality and inclusion. We applaud the recipients and congratulate them on the impact they're making,”* **Sam Cooper-Gray, Head of Market Strategy and Engagement, Global Business Banking, HSBC.**

**The full 2023 Trailblazer50 list is below.** To find out more about them and their work, visit: <https://wearethecity.com/trailblazers/>. Meanwhile, below please see a little insight from a few that you may like to share.

### **TRAILBLAZER CALLS TO ACTION**

*“Introduce equal parenting leave for men and women. If all public-listed and large private companies adopted this policy, it would be a game changer for families and would even-up the playing field in the workplace overnight.”* **Denise Wilson-White OBE, Chief Executive, The FTSE Womens Leader review**

*“Normalising a shared approach to parental leave and caring responsibilities more generally. We will not make the progress we need in gender equity in the workplace if the burden stays on one set of shoulders.”* **Amy Cashman, Executive Managing Director, Kantar Insights UK & Ireland**

*“The government and organisations need to better understand and address gender experiences and outcomes. For example, action needs to be taken regarding the disproportionate number of Black women affected by obstetric challenges such as heavy periods and fibroids and the impact of these on their careers and everyday lives. Crucially,*

action must be taken to address the number of Black women dying in childbirth.” *Professor Nicola Rollock, Professor of Social Policy and Race, King’s College London, author of The Racial Code*

“Across every sector and community, we need to shift our understanding and relationship with our own health. It’s an absolute truth: prevention is better than cure. Employers need to put supporting staff wellbeing on their agendas and the government needs to fund and prioritise public health initiatives.” *Athena Lamnisos, CEO, Eve Appeal*

“Flexible working from day one for everyone; by default. So, the onus is on the employer to prove why it wouldn’t work, not on the employee to prove why it would.” *Anna Whitehouse, Journalist, Editor, Heart radio presenter, Founder of Mother Pukka*

“I would urge companies to redouble their efforts to unlock vital sources of early stage funding, continue inspiring young girls into entrepreneurship and boost the business opportunities for female founders. We know that unlocking the potential of female entrepreneurs is crucial to securing gender equity and that £250bn could be added to the UK economy if women matched men in starting and scaling businesses.” *Dame Alison Rose CBE, Chief Executive, NatWest Group plc*

“Better collection and use of gender disaggregated data. Good data is a powerful tool for change.” *Helen Pankhurst CBE, Senior Advisor CARE International, Professor at MMU*

“I would like to see the government introduce genuinely comprehensive education on gender equality, coercive control and VAWG.” *Ruth Davison, CEO, Refuge*

“We need to invite proper consultation from diverse groups of women to change the architecture, rather than treat women as remedial. Also, give them training to be better at fitting into spaces designed for and by men.” *Deborah Frances-White, Comedian/Human Rights and Gender Activist*

“The key to true gender equity is education. We know that not only does education provide women and girls access to more opportunities, but it can also provide our male counterparts with the knowledge on how they, too, can, and should, fight for a more just and equal world.” *Jaspreet Kaur, Poet, Author of Brown Girls Like Me, Educator*

“Get men engaged! We will not achieve gender equity unless organisations engage men in the topic. These would include running workshops and communication programmes to help male leaders and colleagues.” *Robert Baker, CEO, Potentia Talent Consulting*

### **Trailblazer50 2023 List**

*The full list is here: please note that it pays a posthumous tribute to Brenda Hebb Trenowden CBE, former chair of the 30% club, Partner at PwC and senior independent Director of the England and Wales Cricket Board*

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Awarded for</b>	<b>Company</b>
Denise Wilson White OBE	Women's Advocacy - Women on Boards	Chief Executive, The FTSE Womens Leaders Review
Brenda Hebb Trenowden CBE	Women's Advocacy - Women on Boards	Partner, PwC (posthumous)
Professor Rosie Campbell	Women's advocacy - Women in Leadership	Director of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership & Professor of Politics, King's College London
Rupal Kantaria	Women's advocacy - Women in Business, Social Economics	Partner and Head of the Oliver Wyman Forum UK
Amy Cashman	Women's Advocacy - Women in Finance	Executive Managing Director, Kantar Insights, UK & Ireland
Deborah Gilshan	Women's advocacy - Women in Leadership	Founder 100% club & Advisor, Investment Stewardship & ESG
Pinky Lilani CBE DL	Women's advocacy - Women in Leadership, progression of Women in Business and Asian Women	Founder and Chairman of Women of the Future
Rania Robinson	Women's Advocacy - Women in Advertising and Communications	CEO and Partner, Quiet Storm
Professor Nicola Rollock	Women's Advocacy - Race Equity	Professor of Social Policy and Race at King's College London, Author of The Racial Code
Kelly Simmons OBE	Women's Advocacy - Women in Sport	FA Director of Women's Professional Game
Athena Lamnisos	Women's Advocacy - Women's health	CEO & Charity Leader, Eve Appeal
Kate Stephens	Women's Advocacy - Women in the workplace/social mobility	CEO, Smart Works Charity
Christina Blacklaws	Women's Advocacy - Women in Law	CEO, Blacklaws Consulting, Former President of the Law Society

Clare Murphy	Women's Advocacy - Women's health	Chief Executive, British Pregnancy Advisory Services
Deborah Frances-White	Activist Human Rights and Gender Activism	Comedian, Writer, Speaker & host of The Guilty Feminist Podcast
Jude Kelly CBE	Women's Advocacy - Human Rights and Gender Activism	Founder & Director, WOW Foundation
Jaspreet Kaur	Women's Advocacy - Progression of Asian Women	Award-Winning Poet, Writer and Educator
Dr Leyla Hussein OBE	Activist Women's Rights - International lecturer on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and gender rights	Global Advocacy Director for the Africa-led Movement to End FGM
Taban Shoresh	Activist Women's Rights - Helps to support to displaced female victims of conflict in the Middle East	Founder and CEO, The Lotus Flower
Helen Pankhurst CBE	Activist Women's Rights - Descent of Emmeline Pankhurst (Suffragette movement)	Senior Advisor CARE International, Professor at MMU
Dana Denis-Smith	Women's Advocacy - Women in Law	CEO, Obelisk Support and Founder, First 100 Years Campaign
Asif Sadiq MBE	Women's Advocacy - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Male Allyship	Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Warner Bros. Discovery
Robert Baker	Women's Advocacy - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Male Allyship	CEO, Potentia Talent Consulting
Anna Lane	Women's Advocacy - Women in Finance	resident and CEO, Women in Banking and Finance (WIBF)
Ann Cairns	Women's Advocacy - Women in the Workplace	Experienced Global Executive and Chair
June Sarpong OBE	Women's Advocacy - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Male Allyship	TV Broadcaster, Corporate Executive, NED & Author of Diversify
Anna Whitehouse	Campaigner - Flexible Working	Founder, Mother Pukka, Heart Radio Presenter, Author

Professor Sue Vinnicombe CBE	Women's Advocacy - Women in Leadership	MA PhD FBAM CCMi Professor of Women and Leadership, Cranfield School of Management
Samina Akram	Women's Advocacy - Islamic Women and Ethical finance	Managing Partner, Samak Ethical Finance Ltd
Suki Sandhu OBE	Women's Advocacy - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Male Allyship	Founder and CEO, Audeliss and Involve
Sophie Neary	Women's Advocacy - Women in the Workplace	Group Director, Meta UK & Ireland
Tunji Akintokun MBE CCMi	Women's Advocacy - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Male Allyship	Senior Director, LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, UK and Ireland
Liz Dimmock MBE	Women's Advocacy - Women in the Workplace	Founder and CEO, Moving Ahead
Avivah Wittenberg Cox	Women's Advocacy - Women in the Workplace	CEO, 20-First
Laura Bates	Campaigner - Sexism in Society	Feminist Activist & Writer
Melanie Richards CBE	Women's Advocacy - Women in the workplace	Non Executive Director, Morgan Stanley International and HKA, Chair of The Eve Appeal
Naomi Dickson	Women's Advocacy - Jewish Women's Aid	CEO, Norwood
Sue O'Brien OBE	Women's advocacy - Women in Business	Executive Chair, People Advisory, UK & Vice Chair, Teneo
Professor John Amaechi OBE	Women's Advocacy - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Male Allyship	Founder, APS Intelligence Ltd
Payzee Mahmood	Campaigner - Women's rights	Campaign Manager, IKWRO, Women's Rights Organisation
Elliott Rae	Women's Advocacy - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Male Allyship	Speaker, Author and Founder of MusicFootballFatherhood
Dame Alison Rose DBE	Women's Advocacy in Business - The Rose Review	CEO, Natwest Group PLC
Dame Inga Beale	Women's Advocacy - Women in Business	Portfolio Director, Chartered Insurer
Professor Dame Lesley Regan	Women's Advocacy - Women's Health	Chair, Wellbeing of Women (WOW)
James Bardrick	Women's Advocacy - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Male Allyship	Citi Country Officer, UK

Gina Martin	Campaigner - Up skirting	Campaigner, Speaker and Writer
Sophie Chandauka MBE	Women's Advocacy - Women in Business, Race and Inclusion	Head of Americas Risk Management and Intelligence, Meta
Inez Murray	Women's Advocacy - Women's Economic Empowerment	CEO, Financial Alliance for Women
Amika George MBE	Campaigner - Period Poverty	Founder and Director, Free Periods
Ruth Davison	Women's Advocacy - Domestic Abuse, Violence against Women and Girls	CEO, Refuge

### **About WeAreTheCity**

WeAreTheCity, founded in 2008 is one of the largest communities of working women in the UK. Our mission is to provide women with the resources they need to excel in their careers, upskill and inform women across the world via our webinars, summits and conferences and to raise the profile of women through our various awards. We work with over 100 different companies and support numerous charities and campaigns that drive equity for women. We have shone a spotlight on 1450 incredible women through our awards, most of which we continue to support. We have helped to upskill over 15,000 women through our events and have helped over 40 schools reach role models by connecting our community to their programmes. WeAreTheCity also has a sister organisation, WeAreTechWomen which provides resources and educational opportunities to women in technology.