

Report: Gender balance in worldwide patenting

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) has published the '[Gender profiles in worldwide patenting](#)' report. The report looks at the gender of inventors worldwide. Female innovators have doubled in the last twenty years, but women still only represented 12.7% of patent inventors in 2017 compared to 6.8% in 1998.

The report finds that:

- more than one in five patent inventions have a named female inventor
- the biggest increase of female inventors compared to males is in academia. Patents linked to female inventors in universities rose from 15% to 20% between 1998 and 2017. Women inventors in industry rose from 6% to 10% over that period
- industries with the highest numbers of female inventors are biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and organic fine chemistry. In these areas, approximately half of the patent applications filed between 1998 and 2017 named at least one female inventor
- the proportion of female inventors resident in the UK has risen from 8% in 1998 to 11% in 2017
- the highest proportions of female inventors in the UK were in Tyne and Wear (13.4%) and Oxfordshire (13.2%)

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Andrea Leadsom:

It's inspiring to see the number of female inventors increasing in recent years. The UK has been home to some incredibly strong female innovators who have changed the course of history – from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu who brought inoculation to the UK, to Ada Lovelace, the world's first computer programmer.

We know that more needs to be done to inspire women to patent their ideas and turn them into real products and services. That's why we're investing in women's talent, including through the Women in Innovation Awards, the Industrial Strategy Youth Prize and the NESTA Longitude Explorer Prize.

Tim Moss of the IPO said:

While it is great to see the trend improving there is still a long way to go. We must work harder to tackle the root causes of the difference and increase efforts to encourage and inspire more women to innovate, invent, design, create, and then maximise their commercial value through the IP system.

Notes to editors:

The research team looked at where female names appeared in worldwide patent information. The report covers the period from 1998 to 2017.