



WiW Report 2018

Six Steps to Effectively Market
Wholesale Careers to Women



WOMEN IN WHOLESALE

INSPIRE • SUPPORT • PROGRESS



“

I've worked in foodservice wholesale for 25 years and have constantly been frustrated by the lack of diversity within the industry. I am delighted to be involved in the WiW initiative that is tackling gender parity. It is so important for the health, sustainability and profitability of the industry that we are better positioned to target, attract and retain a more diverse talent pool.

Coral Rose, Managing Director, Country Range Group

Women in Wholesale

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INTRODUCTION TO WiW REPORT

WELCOME TO THE 2ND WOMEN IN WHOLESALE (WIW) REPORT, WHICH AIMS TO ATTRACT WOMEN INTO THE SECTOR AND SUPPORT THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS THROUGH THE WHOLESALE CHANNEL, REGARDLESS OF RANK.



EMBRACING CHANGE

Since I launched the Women in Wholesale conference in 2016, I've been amazed at the growing number of senior management and employees supporting its aims – to help women with positive career and personal development through educational and networking events.

This appetite for change, and enthusiasm to share best practice, has been exhilarating, but more needs to be done. Females account for 47% of jobs in the sector but 11% occupy senior management rolls. This compares with the government target of 33% for FTSE 350 companies by 2020.

Attracting more women into wholesale is not a purposeless aim – it's good for business. According to global management consultancy firm McKinsey, companies across all sectors with the most women on their boards consistently outperform those with no female representation.

This year, WiW wanted to better understand the talent pipeline. Are there enough female applicants to wholesale? How can we reach more in the recruitment process? Are employers doing all they can to attract and retain women by showcasing attractive careers? In essence, how can we effectively market fulfilling careers to women?

WIDENING THE TALENT POOL

Widening the talent pool must not be a goal the industry merely plays lip service to. Throughout this guide we show that there are tangible ways to ensure wholesale welcomes all, and that structured pathways to progression and a culture of inclusivity naturally increase diversity.

Underpinning our six-step guide, which includes thought-starters and actionable tips, is exclusive data from research consultancy HIM. I hope you agree, its findings have highlighted opportunities where we can promote, improve and support the development of women.

Wholesale is a dynamic sector. Investing in its future workforce will ensure its sustainability in a modern, technology-driven world. I hope this report helps businesses and individuals be the change they want to see.



*Elit Rowland, Founder and
Organiser, WiW
Email: elitrowland@newerapr.co.uk*

FOCUS ON FLEXIBLE WORKING

FWD is committed to supporting wholesalers to increase diversity in their workforce, especially at senior levels. This is to better reflect society at large and offer opportunities for all.

We know that having more diversity in leadership positions benefits companies in many ways and applaud the work of Women in Wholesale in driving this agenda.

That is why, this year, FWD has invested in research into flexible working. Partnering with us on this project is flexible work specialists Timewise – an organisation who support employers to design solutions to attract, retain and develop the best talent. Together, we want to help members increase diversity in their workplace and share good practice.

FWD members identified flexible working as a potential approach to unblocking progression for all employees and increasing the talent pool. The Timewise project assessed the current state and potential for flexible working in the sector, looking at the cultural and operational constraints which may exist. There is a realisation that wholesale can do more in these areas.

As one interviewee said: "What was good for the last 25 years is no longer fit for purpose for the next 25 years. With the workforce changing, we

need to embrace everything that's happening. If we wait it will be too late, the ship will have sailed, and the talent pool is gone."

But it is not just about ensuring people already in work have access to job roles designed to help them achieve the right work-life balance, it's also vital to get the recruitment process right if employers are serious about attracting a more diverse talent pool.

There are some great examples of best practice out there, but much more needs to be done within the industry. The Women in Wholesale network and events programme – and the FWD investment in flexible working research – are vital parts of that process.



*James Bielby, Chief
Executive Officer, FWD*

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- Name

MARKETING CAREERS TO WOMEN AT A GLANCE

EXCLUSIVE RESEARCH

WiW's official research partner HIM reveals channel-specific insight from wholesalers operating within the sector.

88% of managing directors and HR managers believe a gender-diverse workforce can have a positive impact on how a business performs

92% of applicants enter wholesale from other industries as diverse as health care and education. **92%** of those people were interested in other industries as part of their job search

67% of HR personnel say they actively recruit females for male-dominated roles. **86%** of managing directors say their company does not

89% of HR personnel use social media as a way of attracting talent. **62%** of female applicants used a recruiter to find a job in wholesale with **8%** using social media

23% of women said the offer of flexible working was important when searching for a job. **77%** of women employed in the sector cited flexibility as being "very important"

22% of HR professionals do not feel there is enough information on how to address unconscious bias. **22%** do not know what it is

44% of wholesalers run internships or work experience programmes for school-leavers or graduates. **0%** specifically target women through these initiatives

"The wholesale industry's female workforce is from diverse professional backgrounds, which means today's wholesalers compete directly with companies in FMCG, retail, finance, and many more sectors when it comes to attracting female talent. Offering relevant benefits, like development opportunities and flexibility, can increase wholesalers' chances of reaching top talent to create much desired balance, especially at the operational and senior management level. This report shows how wholesalers can be relevant at the recruitment stage as well as how to address female employees' changing needs as they progress in their career."

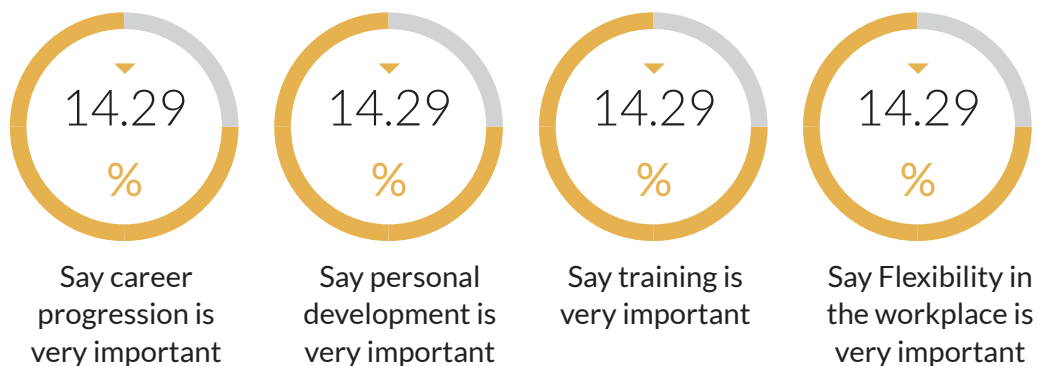


Marie Hense,
Senior Research and
Innovation Manager,
HIM

Managing director's views on which departments they would like to see more women:



Employees views on what is important to them:



HR managers report on what their company offers:

77.78% say their company does not offer career progression support for women



44.44% say their company regularly measures satisfaction or loyalty



50% say their company measured satisfaction or loyalty results by gender



33.33% says their company offers flexible working opportunities



Six Steps

Best practice in marketing careers to women exists within the wholesale industry. WiW identified certain areas where companies have made positive steps to attract female talent alongside ways in which the industry can improve. We've hand-picked six key themes.

1. UNDERSTAND WHOLESALE EMPLOYEES

THE CHALLENGE:

Wholesale faces stiff competition in attracting quality talent. 92% of women entered wholesale from other industries. 92% were interested in other industries in their job search.

A SOLUTION FOR EMPLOYERS:

The perception of the wholesale industry is that a person enters at ground-level and is promoted from within. Because of the often physical nature of work on the depot floor, this has meant, traditionally, those rising through the ranks tended to be men. However, employees attracted to the sector is changing.

HIM's exclusive research provides a snapshot of that change. Women respondents came to wholesale from diverse backgrounds such as finance and banking, information technology, education, health care and food

and drink manufacturing. 92% of those women were also looking at other industries during their job search. This suggests wholesale faces stiff competition in attracting quality talent.

Whether entrants are career starters, job movers, or career returners, understanding the make-up of the potential talent pool can inform how to attract a more diverse workforce, in particular to senior positions, where wholesale lags 22% behind current government targets.

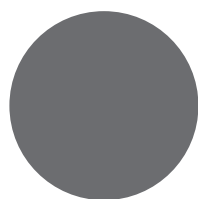
A recent report by PwC highlighted that whatever the reasons preventing higher levels of female recruitment, there is a need for employers to get better at looking outside the industry when hiring talent. But, companies have to do more than that. "They [employers] will also need to look inside, at their own processes, if they are to succeed in delivering gender-inclusive recruitment," the report says.

ACTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS:

- Identify what industries applicants are coming from and the industries they are interested in
- Identify blockages in attracting and selecting women to certain roles
- Look at the competition. Are they doing something well that the company can learn from?
- If the talent pool is not forthcoming, review the positioning of job adverts
- Seek to better understand women's career stages and use this information to inform the offer

ADDITIONAL READING:

[*Winning the Fight for Female Talent*, PwC](#)



Wholesaler viewpoint:
Natalie Campbell, Parfett's

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2. WALK THE DIVERSITY TALK

THE CHALLENGE:

HIM research suggests a disconnect between departments: 67% of HR managers say they actively recruit females to create a diverse workforce. 86% of managing directors say their company does not.

A SOLUTION FOR EMPLOYERS:

Adopting a meaningful diversity and recruitment strategy requires buy-in from all parts of the business. A strategy that exists in a silo is not workable, and the most successful fostering of an inclusive culture is driven from the top down with accountability at every stage.

Speaking at the 2017 WiW Conference, A.F. Blakemore Group HR Director Ian Diment revealed the company's newly created strategy, describing it as a "holistic" journey. Included in it is an equality, inclusion and diversity action plan being rolled out to its management team this year, which includes workshops on promoting the benefits of a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Making sure everyone – from board level to the depot floor – is on the same page and committed to achieving a shared goal is a vital step on every diversity journey. Once teams understand they are supported, work can begin in earnest.

Equally important is communicating that inclusive company culture to any potential workforce. Advice from Public Health England suggests employers should consider adding a statement to job adverts if they are underrepresented in certain areas, along the lines of "Applications would be particularly welcome from..."

In doing so, companies must ensure they "walk the diversity talk". PwC found that females increasingly want an accurate and honest impression of a company culture before deciding whether to join it: 61% looked at the diversity of the leadership team; 67% looked at positive role models and 56% looked at whether an organisation publicly shares its progress on diversity.

ACTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES:

- Ask whether a diversity strategy is shared by all. If not, put together a compelling case
- Create a shared road-map so the journey is clear and measurable
- Identify areas where staff may need training
- Tell potential applicants about your commitment to gender parity
- Consider publicly sharing your progress

ADDITIONAL READING:

The Workplace Wellbeing Charter: Public Health England

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Wholesaler viewpoint
Ian Diment, Blakemore

3. TARGET THE TALENT POOL

THE CHALLENGE:

Recruiters may be looking in the wrong place for hires: 89% of HR personnel use social media as a way of attracting talent. 62% of female applicants used a recruiter to find a job in wholesale. 8% used social media.

A SOLUTION FOR EMPLOYERS:

Where an employer looks for talent is a major factor in whether it brings in a more diverse workforce.

There are benefits to online: social media can reach more people, faster and cost effectively. But, a job posted in the wrong place can waste time and money. Employers must make sure the right people are reading the right message.

Generalist job boards provide access to a broad spectrum of jobseekers, whereas niche job boards will target a more focussed audience. Posting online mainly reaches candidates actively job-seeking, whereas proactively identifying, engaging and attracting talent is more likely to widen the pool.

When it comes to attracting female applicants, employers should think about pinpointing networks. Many women will not operate within traditional male networks. Instead, they might access initiatives like Women in Wholesale or other women in business forums outside of wholesale. In HIM's research, 62% of female applicants said they used a recruiter.

Language, too, plays an important part in creating gender-neutral job adverts. Behavioural economist at Harvard University Iris Bonet has been exploring how adverts can be designed to attract interest from both sexes. She believes women are less likely to apply for jobs with male-coded words, such as "leader", "assertive" and "competitive".

Imagery of women alongside men also makes companies more attractive. And, if companies want to show diversity is truly at the heart of the business, putting up both men and women on the interview panel demonstrates that commitment.



ACTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES:

- Review where jobs are being posted – is a job advert targeting the right people?
- If your recruitment strategy is passive, proactively target women through networks that may be outside of wholesale
- Analyse the wording in job adverts and on the company website. Is it gender neutral?
- Include imagery of women alongside men, even if women are underrepresented
- Place women alongside men on the interview panel

ADDITIONAL READING:

[The Ultimate Guide to Online Recruitment](#), | [Wanted: A Way With Words in Recruitment](#), FT, 2017



Wholesaler viewpoint:
Sarah Whiddett, Head
of Insight & Customer
Experience, Bidfood

"It's important to embrace specialist recruiters, especially if we want to increase the number of women working within wholesale. They offer three core benefits: increasing awareness of the sector (a key barrier for women), raising profiles of candidates who perhaps don't have the same confidence to self-promote as their male counterparts, and raising the issue of flexibility through helping candidates negotiate a balance that works for them."

4. SHOWCASE ATTRACTIVE CAREERS

THE CHALLENGE:

Women want different levels of support as their careers progress: 24% of women said the offer of flexible working was important when searching for a job. 77% of women employed in the sector cited flexibility as being “very important”.

A SOLUTION FOR EMPLOYERS:

Women’s lives change, in particular after they have had children, but that doesn’t mean they don’t want to fulfil their career potential. Understanding how to make work viable for women as they enter or reenter the jobs market is paramount for showcasing attractive careers.

In HIM’s research, we saw that while flexibility wasn’t always a top priority for women coming into wholesale, those already in the industry saw it as “very important”. One reason for this may be that individuals now find themselves with a family, juggling a work-life balance.

Offering a range of benefits, for example flexible working, mentoring opportunities, childcare vouchers, or part-time options and including these as a selling point, will attract more women to a role. According to flexible working specialists Timewise, less than one in ten jobs paying over £20,000 are advertised as being open to flexible working.

Back to work programmes can also give women confidence that a workplace will support them after a family.

Restrictive language in job applications such as “list your recent experience”, may also put off women who have taken a career break. Recognising the value of transferable skills and providing adequate training can help to bridge this gap.

Research carried out by the 30% Club, in its Just About Managing study suggests men are often prepared for specific roles by their managers whereas women are left lacking managerial support and the know-how to step into senior executive roles. Advertising there is a clear path to promotion, and having strong female role models within the business, will encourage women to join and progress through the company.

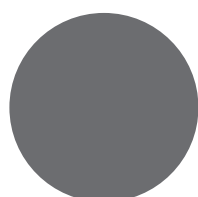


ACTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES:

- Explore flexible working. Employees should ask about whether this is an option and employers should offer it where applicable
- Review the language used in job ads and weed out restrictive statements
- Look at the full range of benefits the company offers – does the list encourage gender parity?
- Create a clear road map for career progression
- Understand women may need help along the way, such as mentoring or return to work programmes

ADDITIONAL READING:

[*Just About Managing*, 30% Club](#)



Wholesaler viewpoint:
Manjari Prashar, Principal
Consultant, Timewise

“Timewise research with wholesale employers, in partnership with FWD, has shown that managers understand the benefits of flexible working for talent attraction and retention, yet managerial roles are still regarded as unsuitable for flexible working. This is the barrier the sector needs to overcome, by redesigning jobs so that they work for both the employer and the employee.”

5. ADDRESS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

THE CHALLENGE:

Awareness of unconscious bias needs to be raised: 22% of recruiters do not feel there is enough information on how to address unconscious bias. 22% do not know what it is.

A SOLUTION FOR EMPLOYERS:

Unconscious bias can influence decisions in recruitment. According to advisory, conciliation and arbitration service ACAS there are two types: affinity bias occurs when people favour others who look like them, or share their values and experiences. The “halo effect” is when positive traits are transferred onto a person without anything being known about them.

“Unconscious bias at work can influence decisions in recruitment, promotion, staff development and recognition and can lead to a less diverse workforce,” its advice states.

In wholesale, as with many other industries, men hold the majority of senior positions and so women may be unwittingly discriminated against in recruitment due to affinity bias.

Moreover, women’s own aspirations can be affected by bias which tend to reflect the current norm. Unconscious beliefs about career advancement, the assumption that women need to take on more masculine characteristics to succeed,

alongside doubting their own abilities and strengths, can all prevent women from putting themselves forward for senior roles.

Encouragingly, HIM’s research shows that 56% of HR managers know what unconscious bias is and feel there’s enough information and supporting materials to help with training. However, 22% feel there isn’t and 22% do not know what it is.

Numerous studies, including one by the British Journal of Management found 2015 found greater gender parity on boards that include women. Similarly, structured interview processes also helped mitigate unconscious bias. In 2015 the Civil Service pledged to introduce name-blind recruitment for all roles, alongside recruiters KPMG, HSBC and Deloitte.

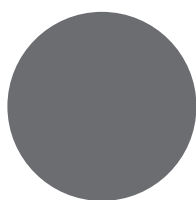


ACTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES:

- Be aware of unconscious bias and plug gaps in awareness training
- Consider implementing name-blind recruitment
- Try using an “unconscious bias lens” when considering job promotions or how you interact with teams
- Take a considered approach at interview stage, recording the reasons for decision-making
- Challenge you own unconscious bias and ask whether it’s holding you back

ADDITIONAL READING:

Advice on Unconscious Bias, ACAS | *How to Recognise and Overcome Your Unconscious Bias*, The Guardian, 2015



Supplier viewpoint:
Sue Knowles

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6. INVEST IN THE FUTURE

THE CHALLENGE:

Not enough girls are being attracted into the industry: 44% of wholesalers run internships or work experience programmes for school-leavers or graduates. 0% specifically target women.

A SOLUTION FOR EMPLOYERS:

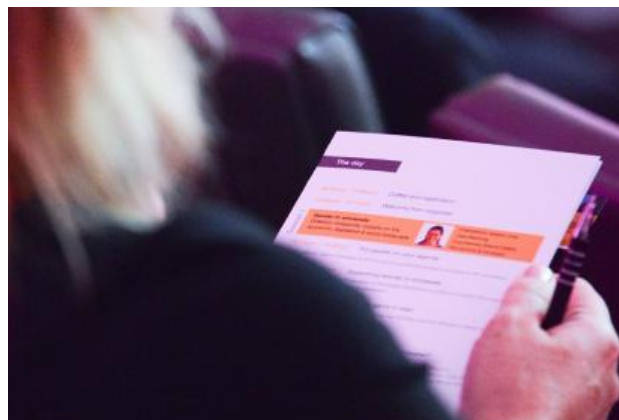
As wholesale modernises and becomes more reliant on technology, the opportunities for young women entering the profession increases. However, wholesale suffers from an image problem.

As Amir Chaudray, director at Birmingham-based Indus Foods told Better Wholesaling magazine last year: “The shortage of enthusiastic people coming into the industry is a problem. If you ask 16-18-year-olds what they want to be when they grow up, I don’t think you’ll find anyone saying they want to be a wholesaler.”

Yet, there are many examples of great outreach to schools and universities. Companies like Brakes runs a finance and supply chain and operations graduate scheme alongside apprenticeships. Indus offered its first internships last year – a two-week programme for students attending colleges and sixth forms in Birmingham. And, in 2016 the FWD announced it aimed to award half of its individual training grants to women by 2018, building on a 40% share in 2015/16.

However, 0% of HIM’s research respondents targeted young girls as potential entrants to the industry, despite it needing digital pioneers, great communicators, negotiators, entrepreneurs alongside a need for increased gender-parity.

Campaigns that have targeted girls in other industries, for example science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) are starting to see traction. WISE campaigns for gender balance in these subjects via its “People Like Me” campaign, and the government-funded Stem Ambassadors targets children with role models in science and technology. What can wholesale learn from these initiatives so it ensures it invests in its future?

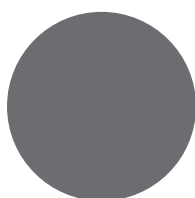


ACTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES:

- Review existing schemes and ask if they are fit for purpose?
- Identify transferable skills, such as IT skills and understand how better to target women
- Demonstrate through internships and apprenticeships that wholesale is an industry where skills will be valued, developed and rewarded
- Shout about the wholesale industry
- Identify areas where funding can be accessed to train women

ADDITIONAL READING:

[Closing The Tech Gender Gap](#), *The Guardian*, 2017 | [The Wise Campaign](#) | [How Wholesalers Can Recruit Millennial Talent](#), *Better Wholesaling*, 2016



Supplier viewpoint:
Janna Horstius, managing
director, Robinson's Fresh Foods

“The Foodservice industry has diversified hugely and opened up many opportunities in sales, purchasing, picking and driving – all hugely important roles to make the industry efficient and grow further. My aim to encourage women to join through training and encouragement within schools and colleges by offering holiday jobs, step student schemes and work placements. We need to continually invest to ensure the sustainability of the sector.”

HAVE YOUR SAY

How can we better market careers in wholesale to women?

Exclusive insight provided by WiW's official research partner HIM.

"I like to think that gender doesn't matter, even though I know it does. Particularly in the industries I have worked in: manufacturing, agriculture, construction and now wholesale. I think what matters more is ensuring that companies are striving to be more inclusive. Progress takes time, but if organisations are committed to improving diversity and have clear plans in place, it is a step in the right direction."

"A balance is important, but not to the detriment of having the right talent and skill. I don't like positive discrimination for gender, I would prefer for efforts to be focused on equal opportunities in education, recruitment, apprenticeships etc, to drive this balance."

"Lack of applicants is often the challenge, we need to improve our brand as a sector."

"Staff numbers in the physical side of the business (warehouse operations) are dominated by male applicants and is where the largest percentage of our staff numbers sit. We don't get many female applicants for these roles."

"I hope I support neutral decision-making by training our interviewers, and constantly challenging the 'status quo'. I hope that I walk the talk."



ONE-PAGE PLAN CHECKLIST

- 01 Understand wholesale employees**
 Do you know what industries applicants are coming from and the industries they are interested in? Find out and look at the competition. Is it addressing gender-parity better and what can be learned?
 Completed ☐
- 02 Walk the diversity talk**
 Is a commitment to diversity shared by all in the company? If not, put together a compelling case, and create a shared road-map so the journey is clear and measurable.
 Completed ☐
- 03 Target the talent pool**
 Are job adverts targeting the right people? Are women being proactively targeted through networks that may be outside of the wholesale industry? Check, too, you are using gender-neutral language in ads.
 Completed ☐
- 04 Showcase attractive careers**
 Look at the full range of benefits the company offers – does the list encourage gender parity? Are there roles where flexible working can be introduced? Have you highlighted benefits to employees?
 Completed ☐
- 05 Address unconscious bias**
 Do you feel fully armed with information to tackle unconscious bias at the recruitment stage and when assessing promotions? Identify areas where training is needed and help managers.
 Completed ☐
- 06 Invest in the future**
 Ask whether the company is fit for the future and will meet the expectations of a future workforce. If it doesn't, identify opportunities to redress the gender balance.
 Completed ☐

2018 EVENTS CALENDAR

- **MAY 9TH** | HIM Convenience Conference 2018, London | www.himshopper.com/events
- **JUNE 8TH-10TH** | Scottish Wholesale Association Conference, Perthshire
www.scottishwholesale.co.uk/events
- **JUNE 28TH** | FWD Annual Conference & HIM Awards, Burton-on-Trent | www.fwd.co.uk
- **SEPTEMBER 11TH** | Women in Wholesale Conference, London
www.newerapr.co.uk/women-in-wholesale
- **NOVEMBER 13TH** | IGD Supply Chain Summit, London | www.igd.com
- **NOVEMBER 15TH-16TH** | LEAD UK Network Event, London | www.lead-eu.net
- **NOVEMBER 29TH** | FWD Gold Medal Awards, London | www.fwd.co.uk

GET YOUR TICKETS FOR THE WiW CONFERENCE 2018



The WiW conference is an educational and networking event for women of all levels working in wholesale as well as male managers and middle managers.

Date:
11th September

Time & Venue:
9:30am-4:30pm
Royal Society of Medicine,
1 Wimpole St, W1G OAE

Full day conference and networking
Lunch and refreshments provided

Tickets will be available from
April 2018

Cost:
Early bird rate until 11th July:
£150 + VAT

Register online:
www.newerapr.co.uk/womeninwholesale

Contact:
Email: elitrowland@newerapr.co.uk
Tel: 07956 030 804



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Thank you to Coral Rose, Clare Bocking and Ellie Krupa, and all our sponsors and supporters, for your help and input in producing this report – *Elit Rowland*.

