



# Reflections on being a female investment executive

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I've been working in the banking and investment space for over 15 years and let me say firstly, that I love my job!

I work for the Scottish National Investment Bank as an Executive Director of Sustainable Investment, focused on technology and innovation-based investments. The Bank was launched in November 2020 to be a development bank for Scotland, delivering patient, mission impact investment to the Scottish economy.

I was attracted to the Bank as I truly believe in its missions and the impact it can have on Scotland.

In this role, which builds on experience I've built elsewhere, I've been lucky enough to work with some of Scotland's finest founders, entrepreneurs and scaleups, both in the investment space and also through the lens of economic development.

Without doubt there is pressure in a role like this, and it can be intense, but it is also unbelievably rewarding. I get the opportunity to work with some fantastic and inspirational people and see first-hand the impact our investments can make.

Many jobs, businesses and sectors were forced to change working patterns and styles through the pandemic, and I think we are yet to see a settled 'new normal'. What appears clear is that many jobs no longer require individuals to be at *their desk* in *their office* for all of the working week. While this flexibility does carry some opportunity cost – particularly in terms of learning from, and offering coaching to, colleagues – when balanced appropriately I think these costs are far out-weighed by the benefit of being able to work patterns that suit day-to-day life. So, while I am now based in Edinburgh with the Bank, I do all of this while still living in Inverness with a young family (and thankfully, an amazingly supportive husband).

The statistics around females working in the private equity and venture capital arena are challenging. Women remain underrepresented in investment teams at all levels and only represent c10% of investment roles at a senior level. However, things are changing. Between 2018 and 2021, all-male investment teams declined from 28% to 12%. I have definitely witnessed this change, and when I meet up with people from across the investment industry space I am encouraged in how these are becoming increasingly more balanced – although there is still a distance to travel. I realised recently that I am now happy to recommend the investment industry as a place to work for people from all backgrounds, which is certainly something that I have not always felt.

At the Bank we want to be at the forefront of further change. When I joined, I was strongly encouraged that the organisation had both a gender balanced Board and a gender balanced Executive Team – sadly still a rarity in financial services.

Having a better gender balance within the investment sector is about far more than opportunities for employment. For me, it is also not just about gender. I think it's vital that those who are making investment decisions are not only representative of different genders and ethnicities but also different social backgrounds. The way we assess risk, the way we analyse information and people is mostly driven by our upbringings, experiences and exposure and I would also want to build a team that considers all of those things, pushing the boundaries of them all! One of the many sources of optimism I have for the future is that when I speak to people across the profession, I would now view this as an increasingly mainstream view. So while I would like to see change happening faster, it is happening, and it's happening in one direction and will doubtless result in a much improved profession once complete.

Setting all of that aside, I see it as a privilege working for the Bank and as an investor in Scotland. Keep an eye open for some of the great investments the team will be announcing soon!

**Sources:**

Report shows progress in boosting investment in UK's women entrepreneurs - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))  
BVCA Diversity and Inclusion Report - Online.pdf