

Suffolk County Council: Gender Pay Gap Report 2025/26

1. Introduction from Jeanette Bray, Assistant Director: HR & OD

Our gender pay gap has continued to close this year. Suffolk County Council's mean and median gender pay gaps have reduced in the last year, by 3.3% and 4.1%, respectively. Our median gender pay gap is 0.8%, which is significantly better than the national median average of 13.1%. Overall, it has reduced by 17.8% since reporting started in 2017.

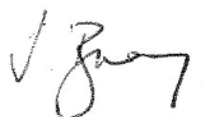
Suffolk County Council's gender pay gap is linked in part to societal conditions and the employment law landscape, which are gradually changing over time. It is also related to the gender composition of our workforce. We have a high proportion of women working in lower paid roles (73.7%). Despite the fact we also have a high proportion of women in higher paid roles (71.5%%), this adversely impacts the average pay of our female staff. Since 2017, the proportion of men in quartile 4 has increased by 10.2%, and the proportion of women in quartile 1 has increased by 9.2%.

There have been a number of specific pay factors reducing our gender pay gap over the last five years; higher pay awards for lower paid employees and the removal of spinal points in our grades which will have a significant impact on increasing the average pay of lower paid staff, who are proportionally more female and therefore the average pay of women has increased at a higher rate than men. The reduction in both the mean and median gender pay gap this year whilst large has slowed from the reduction last year and is expected to continue slow in coming years as we approach there being no gap.

It is important to differentiate the gender pay gap, which compares average pay for all female staff to average pay for all male staff¹, with the matters of equal pay, which concern disparity of pay for people in similar roles. As we have a robust job evaluation process, we are confident that we do not have an equal pay issue.

We are committed to improving inclusion on the basis of legal sex, and reducing disparity of outcome for our female staff. More broadly, we seek to ensure equality of outcome as far as possible for people of all genders and sexes, and to be an employer of choice.

Statutory declaration: I can confirm the data reported has been calculated according to the requirements and methodology set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities Regulations 2017) and using the standard reports provided by our HR management information system software supplier.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Bray'.

Jeanette Bray
Assistant Director: HR & OD

¹ **NB:** The legal requirements for gender pay gap reporting are based on legal sex, which currently in UK law has only two categories. We recognise and value the gender diversity and true identities of our staff. We have tried to use gender-inclusive language where possible, and to be clear about when we are talking about legal sex and when we are talking about gender. In various places, where we talk about women/men or female/male staff, we are referring to legal sex and not gender.

2. Explanation of terms and legal requirements

What is the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap is a measure of the difference between the **average** pay **all** men in an organisation receive, compared to the **average** pay **all** women in the same organisation receive. It is not the same issue as 'equal pay' (see below).

A positive pay gap means that females on average earn less than males. A pay gap of zero means the average pay of men and women is the same. A negative pay gap means that the average pay of female employees is higher than that for males.

What is equal pay?

Equal pay concerns people doing the same or similar jobs. There should be no substantive difference in remuneration for a woman and a man doing the same or similar work (or work of equal value) for the same employer. It is unlawful to pay people unequally due to their sex. Suffolk County Council does not have an equal pay issue. All roles are rigorously assessed against objective criteria for similarity, complexity and levels of responsibility by a job evaluation panel that includes representation from the trade union UNISON.

What is the national gender pay gap?

The [median national gender pay gap](#) in 2024 was 13.1%. Where a gender pay gap exists, there is an expectation that employers will take actions to reduce disparity. This will usually affect women. For instance, an organisation could increase the number of females in senior roles, and/or assess its policies, practices and procedures to remove any obstacles that have a negative effect on the pay of female employees (or potential employees).

What are the measures which must be published?

Public sector organisations who employ 250+ people are required to publish their gender pay gap, as of 31 March each year. The following measures must be published on the organisation's website and a dedicated government site, by 30 March the following year.

Mean gender pay gap	<i>The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of all male employees and that of all female employees. Mean = the total of all, divided by the number of individuals.</i>
Median gender pay gap	<i>The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of all male employees and that of all female employees. Median pay = the pay of the person who is in the exact middle position, if all people in that group are ranked, from highest to lowest pay.</i>
Mean/median bonus gap	<i>The difference between the mean/median bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees</i>
Bonus proportions	<i>The proportions of male and female relevant employees who were paid any bonus pay during the relevant period</i>
Quartile pay bands	<i>The proportions of male and female full-pay employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands</i>

Which indicator is more useful, mean or median?

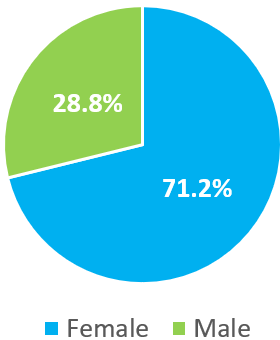
The Office for National Statistics prefers median earnings as an indicator for the average person in an organisation, because the median is not affected by extreme values, such as changes in the earnings of small numbers of very high earners. Hence them having only provided the median gender pay gap in the source linked above.

However, as the mean gap captures the fact that the upper end of the earnings distribution is dominated nationally by men, the mean is also an important measure of women's labour market disadvantage.

Suffolk County Council data as of 31 March 2024

(excluding maintained schools)

Composition of workforce



Mean gender pay gap

SCC	SCC last year	Difference
2.9%	6.2%	3.3%

Median gender pay gap

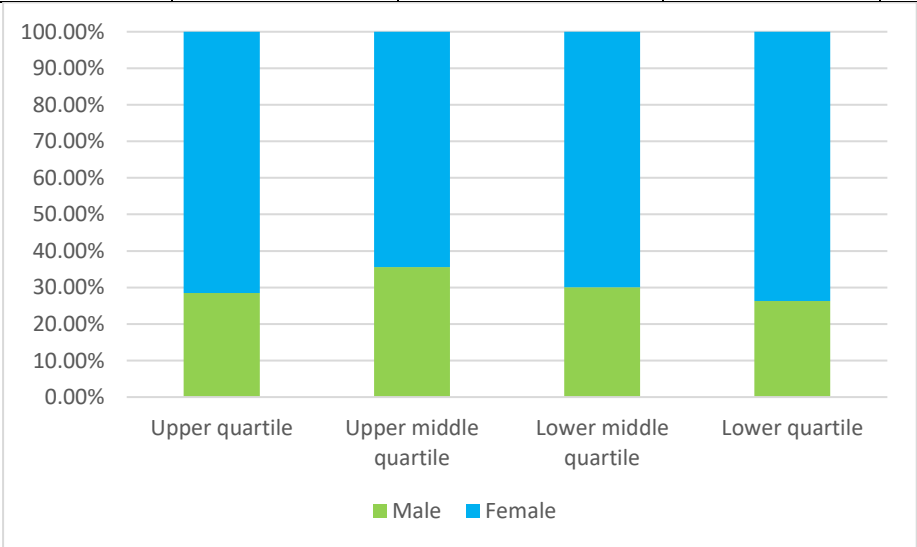
SCC	SCC last year	Difference	National average
0.8%	4.9%	4.1%	13.1%

Mean/median bonus gap/bonus proportions

SCC do not pay any form of bonus payments to staff

Quartile pay bands

Quartile pay bands	Male (31/03/2024)	Female (31/03/2024)	Male (31/03/2023)	Female (31/03/2023)
Upper quartile	28.5%	71.5%	31.1%	68.9%
Upper middle quartile	35.6%	64.4%	39.3%	60.7%
Lower middle quartile	30.1%	69.9%	28.9%	71.1%
Lower quartile	26.3%	73.7%	24.7%	75.3%



3. SCC's progress on actions from our 2024-2025 Gender Pay Gap Action Plan

There were a number of actions completed in 2024/25 and a number proposed to carry forward to 2025/26.

4. SCC's Gender Pay Gap Action Plan 2025-26

The action plan for 2025/26 is currently under review, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality, and will be signed off by the Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team.

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