

# Suffolk County Council: Gender Pay Gap Report 2026/27

## 1. Introduction from Tim Jermyn, Assistant Director: HR & OD

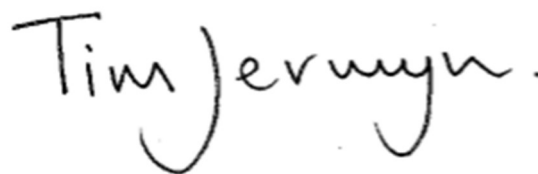
I am pleased to present Suffolk County Council's Gender Pay Gap Report for 2025/26.

Our gender pay gap remains relatively small and continues to compare favourably with both national figures and our own historical position. As at 31 March 2025, Suffolk County Council's mean gender pay gap is 2.4%, representing a further reduction of 0.5 percentage points compared with 2024/25. Overall, our mean gender pay gap has reduced substantially since reporting began in 2017, reflecting sustained progress over time.

Our median gender pay gap is 3.4%, an increase from 0.8% in 2024/25. While this represents a year-on-year increase, it follows several years of significant reductions and remains considerably lower than the national median average (12.8%). The increase in the median gender pay gap is primarily explained by the different pay awards applied to distinct workforce groups during the reporting period, rather than by any change in pay structures. During 2024/25, the majority of our employees received a nationally negotiated pay award of £1,290 pro-rata (with 2.5% applied to higher points). This award disproportionately benefited lower-paid roles, which are more likely to be occupied by women, and therefore continued to support reductions in the mean gender pay gap. In contrast, employees within Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, who are predominantly male, received a higher percentage pay award. A 5.0% pay increase was applied from 1 July 2023, with a further 4.0% increase from 1 July 2024. As a result, the midpoint of male earnings within the organisation shifted upwards relative to the female median, leading to an increase in the reported median gender pay gap. Suffolk County Council's gender pay gap continues to be influenced by the gender composition of our workforce. Women make up the majority of our employees and are disproportionately represented in lower-paid roles. Although women are well represented across all pay quartiles, including senior and higher-paid roles, their over-representation in lower-paid roles continues to impact overall average and median pay outcomes. This pattern has remained broadly consistent over time, although the proportion of women in higher pay quartiles has increased gradually since reporting began.

We remain committed to promoting equality, inclusion and fairness, and to reducing disparities in outcomes for our workforce. The progress made over recent years demonstrates the impact of sustained action, and the measures outlined in this report build on the work undertaken in previous years to support continued improvement.

**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.



**Tim Jermyn**  
Assistant Director:  
HR & OD

## 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 2025 was 12.8%. 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?

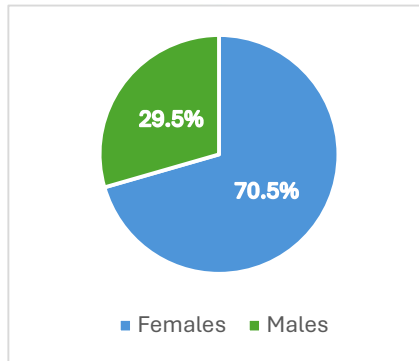
Public sector organisations who employ 250+ people are required to publish their gender pay gap, as of 31 March each year. The following measures must be published on the organisation's website and a dedicated government site, by 30 March the following year.

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>

### 3. Suffolk County Council data as of 31 March 2025

(excluding maintained schools)

#### Composition of workforce



#### Mean gender pay gap

SCC	SCC last year	Difference
2.4%	2.9%	0.5%

#### Median gender pay gap

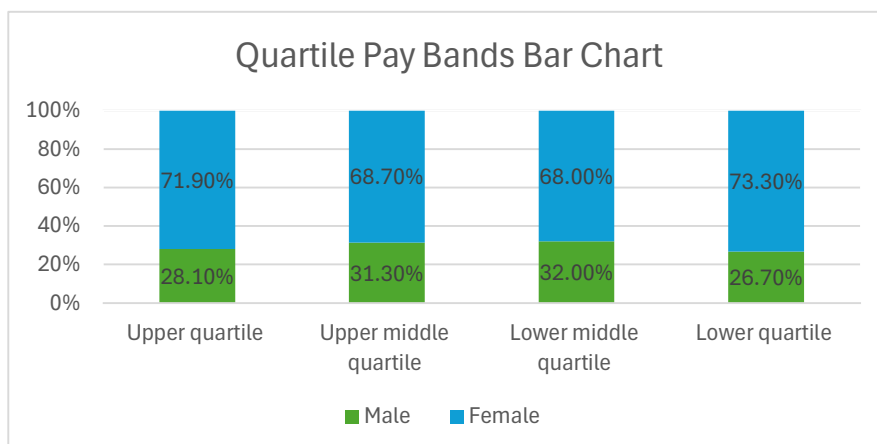
SCC	SCC last year	Difference	National average
3.4%	0.8%	+ 2.6%	13.1%

#### Mean/median bonus gap/bonus proportions

SCC do not pay any form of bonus payments to staff

#### Quartile pay bands

Quartile pay bands	Male (31/03/2025)	Female (31/03/2025)	Male (31/03/2024)	Female (31/03/2024)
Upper quartile	28.1%	71.9%	28.5%	71.5%
Upper middle quartile	31.3%	68.7%	35.6%	64.4%
Lower middle quartile	32.0%	68.0%	30.1%	69.9%
Lower quartile	26.7%	73.3%	26.3%	73.7%



#### 4. SCC's progress on actions from our 2025-2026 Gender Pay Gap Action Plan

SCC is committed to reducing our gender pay gap. This is what we've achieved on the commitments we made last year:

	What we said we would do:	What we have done:
1.	Explore offering places on the next cohort of the Senior Leader Apprenticeship to only those from underrepresented groups, including legal sex and gender identity.	We reviewed the most recent Senior Leader Apprenticeship cohort to understand participation by legal sex and, where available, gender identity. The 2025 cohort comprised 11 learners, of whom 73% were female and 27% male, indicating strong female representation within senior leadership development pathways.
2.	Explore prioritising places on the Leadership and Management Development Programme for participants from underrepresented groups, including legal sex and gender identity.	We reviewed participation across Leadership and Management Development programmes. As at February 2026, 305 employees had completed a programme, with 71% female and 29% male participation. Women were the majority across all programme levels. Gender identity data continues to be collected on a voluntary basis to support future monitoring.
3.	Menopause training will be included in the Mandatory Training Programme for 2025–26.	Menopause and perimenopause training was successfully developed and embedded within the Mandatory Training Programme for all staff during 2025–26. The eLearning module provides practical guidance for employees and managers, supporting awareness, wellbeing and retention.
4.	A SCC Menopause Policy will be introduced in 2025–26.	A Menopause Policy was developed and formally approved during 2025–26. The policy was signed off in early 2026 and is scheduled for launch in March 2026, setting out clear expectations for support, reasonable adjustments and manager guidance.
5.	Explore the opportunities for a third cohort of Parental Returners in 2025–26.	The Parental Returnship Programme continued during 2025–26, with two placements completed between April 2025 and March 2026. Both participants progressed into further employment within the Council, maintaining a 100% progression rate since the programme's introduction.

## 5. SCC's Gender Pay Gap Action Plan 2026-27

We recognise that reducing the gender pay gap requires sustained, long-term action focused on progression, retention and inclusive workplace practices. Building on progress made to date, the following actions will be progressed during 2026–27.

<b>1.</b>	<b>Leadership and management development</b> The Council will continue to monitor participation in Leadership and Management Development Programmes, including Aspiring Managers, First Line Managers and Middle Managers, to understand representation by legal sex and, where voluntarily disclosed, gender identity. This will support ongoing understanding of progression through leadership pathways and help inform future development activity.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Apprenticeship opportunities and progression</b> The Council will continue to support and promote apprenticeship opportunities across all available levels, enabling employees to develop skills, gain qualifications and progress into higher-paid roles. Participation in apprenticeship programmes will be reviewed to understand representation by legal sex, supporting fair access to development and progression opportunities.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Progression from lower-paid roles</b> The Council will continue to support progression from lower-paid roles through apprenticeships, career pathways and development opportunities. This recognises that women are disproportionately represented in lower-paid roles and that supporting progression is a key long-term lever in addressing the gender pay gap.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Parental returners</b> The Parental Returnship Programme will continue to be supported during 2026–27. Subject to funding and capacity, the Council will review opportunities to sustain and, where feasible, expand the programme to support parents returning to work following extended career breaks.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Menopause support</b> Following the launch of the SCC Menopause Policy in March 2026, the Council will embed menopause support through manager guidance and policy implementation. The Council will review feedback and learning to understand how this support contributes to employee wellbeing, retention and sustained participation at work, in preparation for mandatory action plans on gender equality and supporting employees through the menopause which will be required by all employers of more than 250 employees from April 2027.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Inclusive recruitment and progression practices</b> The Council will continue to promote inclusive recruitment and progression practices, including the use of positive action where appropriate, to support balanced representation across roles and grades and to encourage progression into senior and higher-paid roles.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Workforce data and future action planning</b> The Council will continue to review workforce and gender pay gap data annually to understand trends and inform future actions. Learning from this analysis will be used to support the development of a more formalised equality action plan, in line with forthcoming legislative requirements.