

Employment Matters Committee

2 September 2025

Gender Pay Gap 2025/26

Report from: Lesley Jones, EDI Lead

Author: Paul Richards, HR Workforce Information Officer

Summary

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 requires all employers with more than 250 employees to report annually on their Gender Pay Gap. This report provides to the Committee sight of the Council's results for this reporting year ahead of publication on the Council's public website by 31 March 2026 and on the Government dedicated Gender pay gap reporting website. The Council does not have a specific duty to publish data on an ethnicity or disability pay gap, but this data is also provided in this report.

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report in relation to the Gender Pay Gap, as detailed in appendix 1, prior to external publication and to also note the ethnicity and disability pay gap results, as set out in Appendices 3 and 4.

2. Budget and Policy Framework

- 2.1 Whilst there is no specific decision to be made based on this report, it is important that the Committee is aware of the Council's Gender Pay Gap results as a snapshot, prior to publication.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 requires all employers with more than 250 employees to report annually on their Gender Pay Gap. For the public sector this snapshot is the 31 March each year.
- 3.2 The Regulations require Public Authorities to report their gender pay gap data, which is then published, and publish the information on its own website.

3.3 The Council does not have a specific duty to publish data on its ethnicity or disability pay gap, but this data is also provided in this report.

3.4 **Requirements of the Gender Pay Gap Legislation**

3.4.1 Qualifying employers are required to take an annual “snapshot” of their total payroll and report on a few key metrics, they are:

- the mean and median hourly gender pay gap;
- the mean and median gender bonus gap;
- the proportion of men and women receiving a bonus; and
- the proportion of men and women in each of four pay quartile bands

3.4.2 The report must be accompanied by a written statement vouching for its accuracy and this statement must be signed by a director or someone of equivalent seniority.

3.4.3 The report and accompanying statement must be published on the employer’s public website and the report must be available on that website for three years. In addition, the information must be provided to the Government via a designated website.

3.5 **Other detail**

3.5.1 The Regulations prescribe which elements of pay are included in the calculation of pay and bonus pay, and they determine the formulas that the employer should follow.

3.5.2 The reporting data includes all council employees who were employed on 31 March. Apprentices, seasonal, temporary or casual employees are included if they fall within the reference period created by the snapshot date. The data excludes schools-based staff. Under the Regulations the Governing Body of maintained Local Authority schools are responsible for the reporting duty for the employees of their school, where the regulations apply.

3.5.3 We publish this information on the [Council's website](#) and on the [governments website](#).

3.5.4 This report relates to the snapshot date of 31 March 2025 that is published by 2026.

3.6 **Adherence to the statutory duty**

3.6.1 The Council’s Corporate Management Team has agreed to the implementation of the following arrangements to meet its statutory responsibilities:

- A Gender Pay Gap report to be presented at the Employment Matters Committee in September 2025 prior to publication on the Council’s

external website in March 2026; the report to be shared with Trade Unions, Employee Forums, and the Equality Board.

- The Chief Organisational Culture Officer to act at the Council's "senior person" in signing the report.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1 Gender pay is different to equal pay, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.2 The Council can have a gender pay gap but still be equal pay compliant. The cause of the gender pay gap may not fall within the direct control of the employer, as it is likely to be caused by the distribution of men and women in different job roles.
- 4.3 In 2024, the mean national average Gender Pay Gap was reported to be 13.1%, according to data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
- 4.4 Our workforce gender profile is 73.9% female and 26.1% male, based on the 31 March 2025 Gender Pay Gap snapshot.
- 4.5 2601 employees are included in the snapshot comprising 2391 permanent staff and 210 casual staff.
- 4.6 Posts within Range's 1-8 in the Council have been assessed using the National Joint Council Job Evaluation Scheme and this is recognised as neutral; the result of each evaluation determines the respective MedPay PPP pay range to which the post is assigned. Service Manager posts are evaluated against the GLPC job evaluation scheme.
- 4.7 The detailed results of the Council's Gender Pay Gap, to be published March 2026, are shown at Appendix 1.
- 4.8 Executive Summary of Gender Pay Gap Findings (Snapshot Date: 31 March 2025)
- **Mean Hourly Pay:** Male colleagues earned, on average, 3.8% more per hour than female colleagues (Data Set G1).
 - **Median Hourly Pay:** The median hourly rate for male colleagues was 3.5% higher than that of female colleagues (Data Set G2).
 - **Mean Bonus Pay:** Male colleagues received, on average, 3.9% more in bonus pay than female colleagues (Data Set G3).
 - **Median Bonus Pay:** There was no difference in the median bonus pay between male and female colleagues, indicating parity at this level (Data Set G4).
 - **Bonus Pay Participation:** 3.9% of female colleagues received bonus pay, as a proportion of the total female workforce (Data Set G5).
 - **Pay Quartile Distribution:** Female colleagues represented the majority across all pay quartiles (Data Set G6).
- 4.9 A comparison of Medway Council's Gender Pay Gap for the last 5 years is shown at 4.9.1:

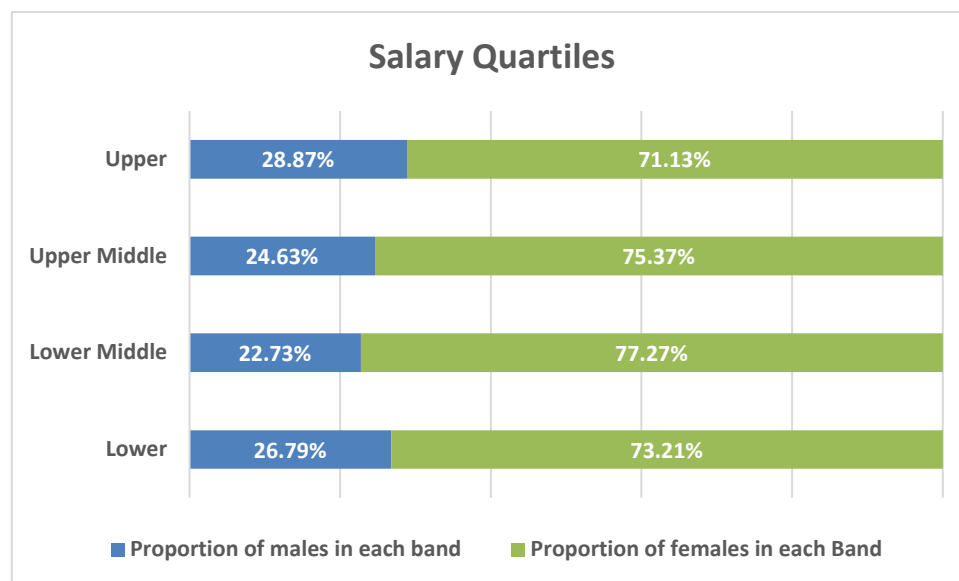
4.9.1 Comparator Table Data Sets G1, G2, G3, G4 & G5

Medway Council	2021 Report	2022 Report	2023 Report	2024 Report	2025 Report	Variance/Comment
Mean Hourly Rate Gap (data set G1)	10.6%	7.7%	6.9%	6.0%	3.8%	The mean gender pay gap has continued to decrease since 2021. In 2025 the mean gender pay gap is the lowest since reporting first started.
Median Hourly Rate Gap (data set G2)	7.0%	5.2%	2.9%	7.9%	3.5%	The median hourly pay gap has declined overall, despite a temporary increase in 2025 dropping from 7.0% in 2021 to 3.5% in 2025.
Mean Bonus Pay Gap (data set G3)	Nil	Nil	Nil	-14.3%	3.9%	There is a 3.9% mean bonus pay gap, which means that on average men receive 3.9% more bonus pay than women.
Median Bonus Pay Gap (data set G4)	Nil	Nil	Nil	0.0%	0.0%	There remains parity between men and women when it comes to the median for bonus pay.
Proportion of Male/Female colleagues who received bonus pay. (data set G5)	1.3% Male 0.6% Female	0.4% Male 0.8% Female	0.4% Male 0.7% Female	2.9% Male 5.0% Female	1.4% Male 3.9% Female	The proportion of females who receive bonus pay continues to exceed male colleagues.

- 4.10 The table above illustrates a continued year-on-year reduction in the mean Gender Pay Gap in hourly pay, declining from 10.6% in 2020 to a new low of 3.8% in the latest reporting year.
- 4.11 The median Gender Pay Gap in hourly rate of pay has decreased from 7.9% to 3.5%.
- 4.12 For the current reporting year, the mean bonus pay gap has increased to 3.9%, meaning that women received, on average, 3.9% less bonus pay than men.
- 4.13 Due to the automatic nature of how some bonus payments are awarded—being applied consistently to eligible social workers regardless of gender—the Council has limited scope to influence the mean bonus pay gap. As a result, the mean bonus pay gap is inherently subject to regular fluctuations, reflecting changes in workforce composition rather than any discretionary pay practices.

- 4.14 The median for bonus pay is unaffected by the change and remains at 0.0% which indicates that there is parity in that metric.
- 4.15 Salary quartile reporting is calculated by sorting employees by their hourly rate of pay, from the lowest to the highest, then splitting them into four equal quartiles. Graph 1 shows the proportion of male and female employees broken down into the four pay quartile bands. Data set G6 (Appendix 1) shows the hourly pay rate range for each of the quartiles. The lower salary quartile includes apprentice pay, which is lower than the national minimum wage rate.

Graph 1 - Data Set G6 2025



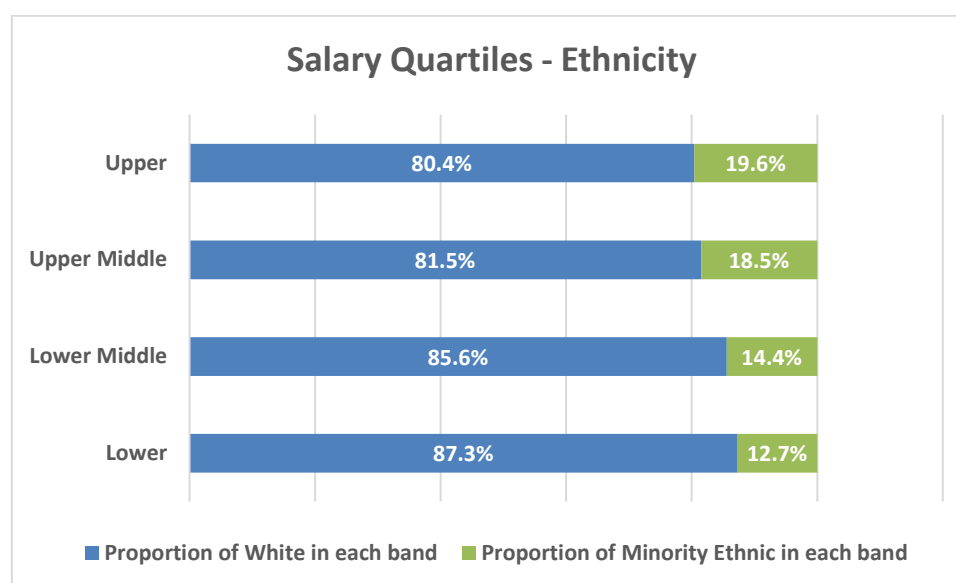
- 4.16 The number of female employees in the Lower Middle and Upper Middle quartiles are slightly above the workforce gender profile of 73.9%. The reverse is the case in the Lower and Upper quartiles where they are slightly underrepresented.
- 4.17 A comparison with other councils in our geographical region has been undertaken using the data from the 2024 reporting year (Appendix 2). This identifies Medway Council as being in the middle of the pack and outperforming our nearest County Council neighbour. In comparison to Council's in the Southeast of a similar size to Medway Council we also sit within the middle of the pack.

5. Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap

- 5.1 Unlike the Gender Pay Gap there is no requirement to publish an Ethnicity or Disability Pay Gap. As part of our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy action plan Medway Council have committed to publishing both of these pay gaps on a voluntary basis. The data sets for this year and can be found at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.

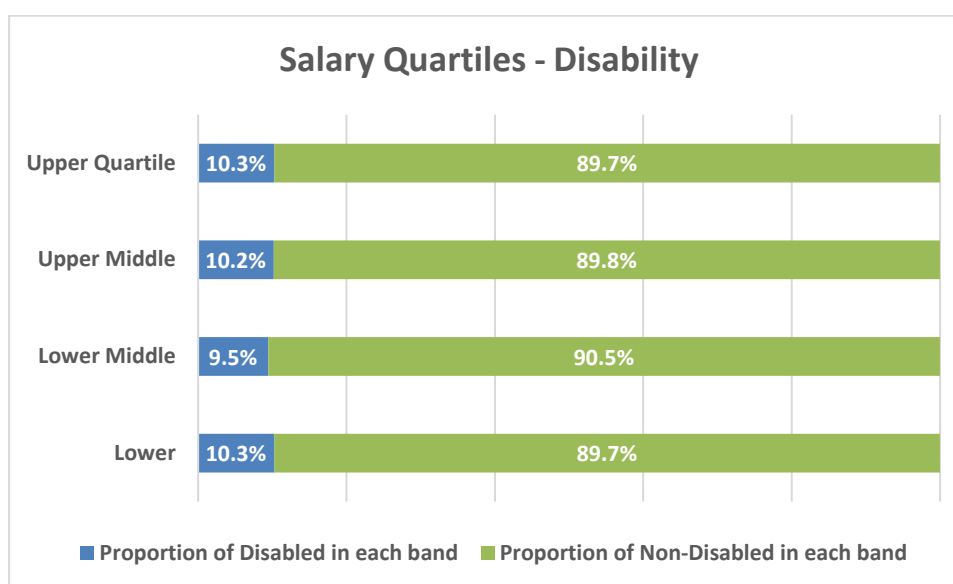
- 5.2 The current declaration rate for ethnicity stands at 94.5% and 58.5% for disability. Increasing these rates is a key action within the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan, with the aim of enabling future external publication of this data.
- 5.3 It is important to highlight that, unlike Gender Pay Gap reporting, employees have the option to withhold or not disclose their ethnicity and disability information. As a result, individuals who choose not to declare or who actively opt out are not represented in the reported figures.
- 5.4 As outlined in Appendix 3, the Ethnicity Pay Gap analysis shows that Minority Ethnic employees have a higher mean and median hourly pay compared to White employees. This indicates that, on average, Minority Ethnic employees receive a higher hourly rate. While the mean bonus pay for Minority Ethnic employees is lower in this reporting year, a greater proportion of Minority Ethnic employees received a bonus compared to their White counterparts.
- 5.5 Minority Ethnic employees are most represented in the upper pay quartile. The opposite is true for White employees where they are most represented in the lower pay quartile.

Graph 2 – Data Set E6 2025



- 5.6 Compared to the previous year the Disability Pay Gap has continued to decrease, with both the mean and median figures now showing a negative gap. This indicates that, on average, disabled employees earn slightly more than non-disabled employees (Appendix 4).

Graph 3 – Data Set D6 2024



6. Financial and legal implications

6.1 There are no direct financial or legal implications from this report.

7. Risk Management

7.1 The risk implications arising from this report are detailed below:

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Reputational damage	Failure to comply with the statutory requirement to publish an annual statement	There is no published sanction if the Council's statutory duty is not met.	DIV
		The statement will sit within the Chief Organisational Culture Officer accountability and appropriate measures will be put into place to ensure compliance.	
		Ensure publication within the timeframe.	DIV
		The failure to publish a statement could lead the Council to be criticised for not taking this matter seriously.	
		A widening gap could impact the council as an employer of choice.	
		Take action to understand the reasons for the gap and put in place appropriate action.	CIII

Recruitment and retention issues	Failure to take proactive steps could lead to us widening the gap further.	Undertake detailed analysis of the data and take steps in the Equality, diversity & Inclusion strategy and action plan to address these gaps.	CIII
Likelihood: A: Very Likely B: Likely C: Unlikely D: Rare		Impact: I: Catastrophic II: Major III: Moderate IV: Minor	

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 We operate a job evaluation scheme to support adherence to equal pay.
- 8.2 The Gender Pay Gap data indicates that, on both the mean and median hourly pay measures, male employees earn more than female employees. However, the Council's Gender Pay Gap remains below the national average reported by the ONS in April 2024, which stood at 13.1%. The Council continues to show a downward trend in its Gender Pay Gap.
- 8.3 We want to improve the diversity of our workforce across all protected characteristics, not just gender, and strive to ensure we have a complete data set across all three of these protected characteristics so that we can undertake analysis and take action based on the most accurate picture of the workforce to improve any pay gap.
- 8.4 Medway has a predominantly female workforce. This may be attributable to our raft of family friendly policies, including flexible working.
- 8.5 In comparison to our closest local authority neighbors, and our comparator local authorities in the Southeast, Medway Council is in the middle of the pack in relation to Gender Pay Gap.
- 8.6 With regard to ethnicity and disability pay gaps there is an opportunity to increase the declaration rate, especially for disability, and therefore have improved data on which to make recommendations and take action where necessary.

Lead officer contact

Lesley Jones, EDI Lead
01634 332472, lesley.jones@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Gender Pay Gap results

Appendix 2 – Comparison with geographical Local government neighbours in Kent

Appendix 3 – Ethnicity Pay Gap results

Appendix 4 – Disability Pay Gap results

Background papers

None