

Employment Matters Committee

17 September 2026

Gender Pay Gap 2025/26

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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 2027 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 to the report, prior to external publication and to also note the ethnicity and disability pay gap results, as set out in Appendices 3 and 4.
- 1.2 The Committee is also asked to note the Council's intention to develop a Pay Gap Action Plan, which will use workforce and pay gap analysis to identify and address barriers to progression, representation and inclusion, including support for employees experiencing menopause.

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 on the 31 March each year.

3.2 The Regulations require Public Authorities to report their gender pay gap data and publish the information on their 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 2026 that is to be published by 31 March 2027.

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 2026 prior to publication on the Council's external website in March 2027; 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.

3.6.2 In line with emerging Government requirements for employers with 250 or more employees, a Pay Gap Action Plan will be developed, commencing with a detailed analysis of workforce representation, pay quartiles, grading and leadership profiles at directorate level, together with a review of menopause-related data and support arrangements, as shown in Appendix 5. This evidence will inform targeted actions to address any identified barriers to progression, representation and workplace inclusion. The resulting action plan will include measures to address pay disparities and support employees experiencing menopause.

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 2025, the mean national average Gender Pay Gap was reported to be 12.8%, according to data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

4.4 Our workforce gender profile is 75.2% female and 24.8% male, based on the 31 March 2026 Gender Pay Gap snapshot.

4.5 2847 employees are included in the snapshot comprising 2,642 permanent staff and 205 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.

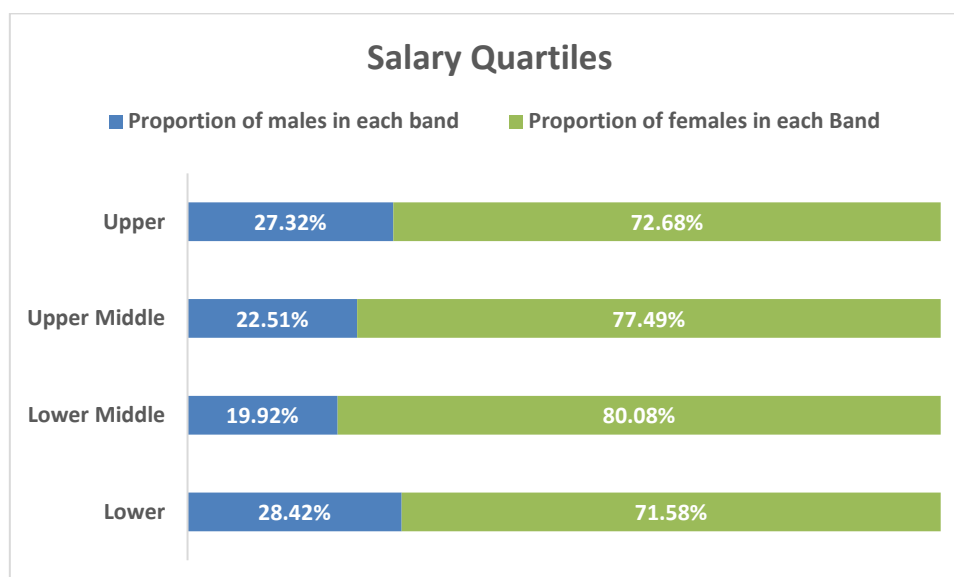
- 4.7 The detailed results of the Council's Gender Pay Gap, to be published by March 2027, are shown at Appendix 1.
- 4.8 Executive Summary of Gender Pay Gap Findings (Snapshot Date: 31 March 2026)
- **Mean Hourly Pay:** Male colleagues earned, on average, 1.1% more per hour than female colleagues (Data Set G1).
 - **Median Hourly Pay:** The median hourly rate for male colleagues was 2.3% higher than that of female colleagues (Data Set G2).
 - **Mean Bonus Pay:** Male colleagues received, on average, 2.1% 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:** 4.5% 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	2022 Report	2023 Report	2024 Report	2025 Report	2026 Report	Variance/Comment
Mean Hourly Rate Gap (data set G1)	7.7%	6.9%	6.0%	3.8%	1.1%	The mean gender pay gap has continued to decrease since 2022. In 2026 the mean gender pay gap is the lowest since reporting first started.
Median Hourly Rate Gap (data set G2)	5.2%	2.9%	7.9%	3.5%	2.3%	The median hourly pay gap has declined overall, despite a temporary increase in 2024 dropping from 5.2% in 2022 to 2.3% in 2026.
Mean Bonus Pay Gap (data set G3)	Nil	Nil	-14.3%	3.9%	2.1%	There is a 2.1% mean bonus pay gap, which means that on average men receive 2.1% more bonus pay than women.
Median Bonus Pay Gap (data set G4)	Nil	Nil	0.0%	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)	0.4% Male 0.8% Female	0.4% Male 0.7% Female	2.9% Male 5.0% Female	1.4% Male 3.9% Female	1.6% Male 4.5% 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 1.1% in the latest reporting year.
- 4.11 The median Gender Pay Gap in hourly rate of pay has decreased from 7.0% in 2020 to a new low of 2.3% in the latest reporting year.
- 4.12 For the current reporting year, the mean bonus pay gap has decreased to 2.1%, meaning that women received, on average, 2.1% 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 2026



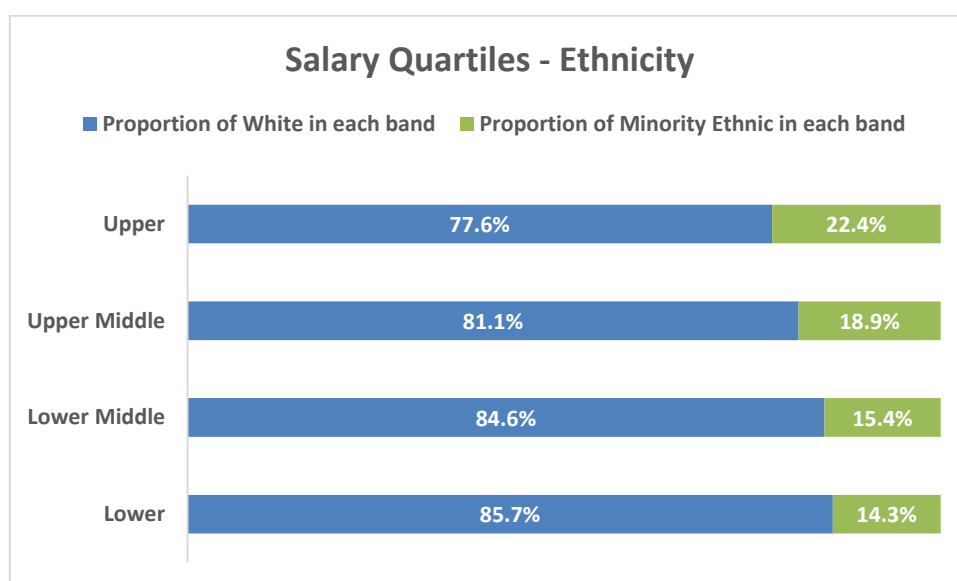
- 4.16 The number of female employees in the Lower Middle and Upper Middle quartiles are slightly above the workforce gender profile of 75.2%. The reverse is the case in the Lower and Upper quartiles where they are slightly underrepresented.

- 4.17 A comparison with other councils across Kent using published 2025 reporting data (Appendix 2) demonstrates that Medway Council performs favourably in relation to its Gender Pay Gap. Medway has one of the lowest mean and median Gender Pay Gaps among Kent local authorities. The Council's gender pay gap has also continued to reduce year-on-year and is lower than many comparable authorities within the county. When compared with councils of a similar size across the South East, Medway remains well placed and sits within the better-performing half of comparator organisations.

5. Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap

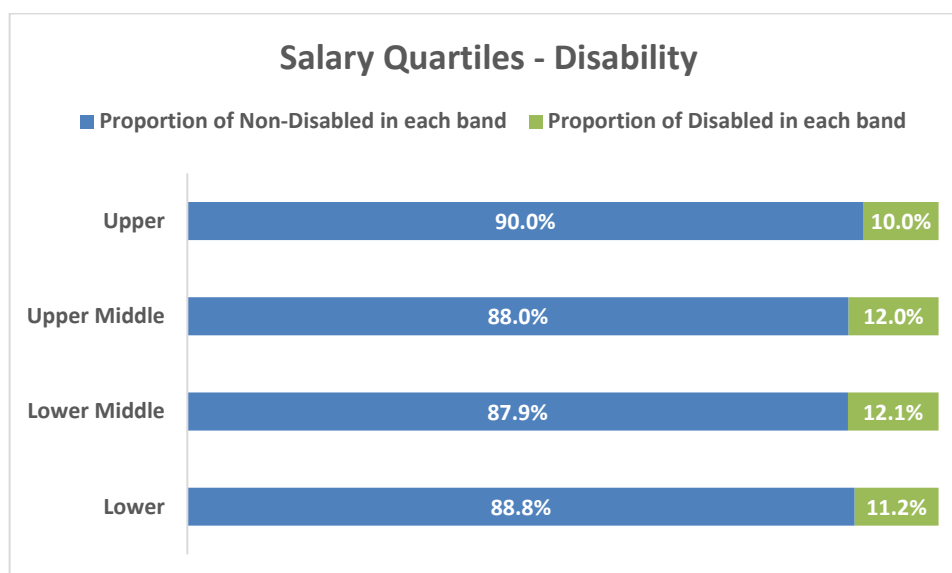
- 5.1 Unlike the Gender Pay Gap there is no requirement to publish an Ethnicity or Disability Pay Gap. As part of our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy action plan Medway Council have committed to publishing both of these pay gaps on a voluntary basis. The data sets for this year and can be found at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.
- 5.2 The current declaration rate for ethnicity stands at 90.3% and 55.7% 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 2026



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

Graph 3 – Data Set D6 2026



6. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) implications
- 6.1. There are no direct LGR implications arising from this report.
7. Financial and legal implications
- 7.1 There are no direct financial or legal implications from this report.

8. Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
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.	The statement will sit within the Chief Organisational Culture Officer accountability and appropriate measures will be put into place to ensure compliance.	D4
Reputational damage	The failure to publish a statement could lead the Council to be criticised for not taking this matter seriously.	Ensure publication within the timeframe.	D4
Reputational damage	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	C3
Recruitment and retention issues	Failure to take proactive steps could lead to us widening the gap further.		C3

For risk rating, please refer to the following table:

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	1 Critical 2 Major 3 Moderate 4 Minor

9. Conclusions

9.1 We operate a job evaluation scheme to support adherence to equal pay.

9.2 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 2025, which stood at 12.8%. The Council continues to show a downward trend in its Gender Pay Gap.

- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 Medway has a predominantly female workforce. This may be attributable to our raft of family friendly policies, including flexible working.
- 9.5 In comparison to our closest local authority neighbors, and our comparator local authorities in the Southeast, Medway Council is in the lower middle of the pack in relation to Gender Pay Gap.
- 9.6 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.

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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.
Appendix 5 - Action Plan
Appendix 6 – Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers

None