

Equality Duty & Gender Pay Gap

March 2026

Equality Duty

Introduction

Staffordshire County Council is proud of the diversity of the county and recognises that promoting equality and inclusion will improve public services for everyone. The Council has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people. As part of this Act, the public sector equality duty requires the Council to show how it is meeting its responsibilities as an employer, including a requirement to publish information on its workforce, broken down by protected characteristics, which are:

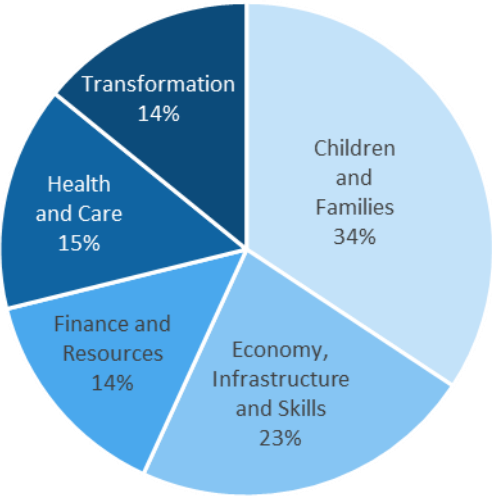
- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

This report forms part of the Council's response to that duty and provides workforce data which will help us to understand the effectiveness of our employment policies and processes in promoting equality.

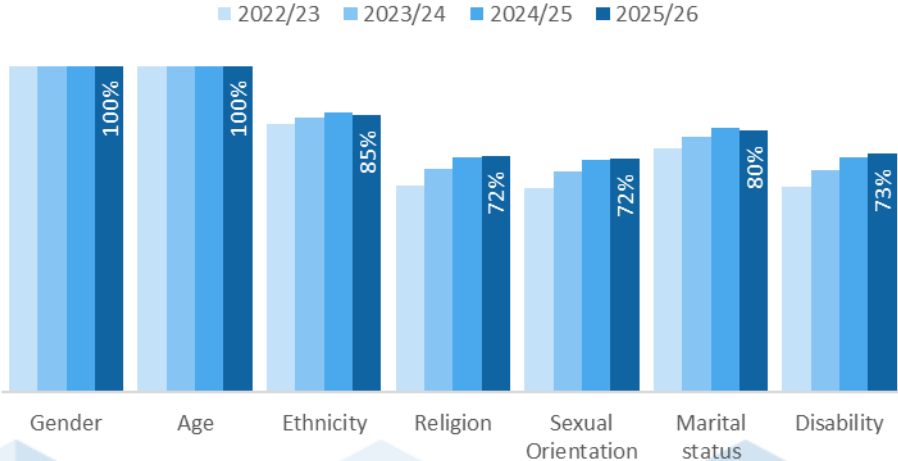
All figures for the 2025-2026 financial year are taken as at 01/01/2026

Overview

- As at the 1st January 2026, Staffordshire County Council employed people in 4,933 contracts across 5 directorates, which represents an increase of 3.4% from last year.
- Our organisational structure changed at the start of the current financial year, with the Corporate Services and Finance directorates being reorganised into Finance & Resources and Transformation. Transformation is now the smallest directorate, accounting for 14% of the workforce, whilst Children and Families is the largest at 34%.
- Despite these changes, the completeness of our equalities data has remained consistently high, with several characteristics showing improvement



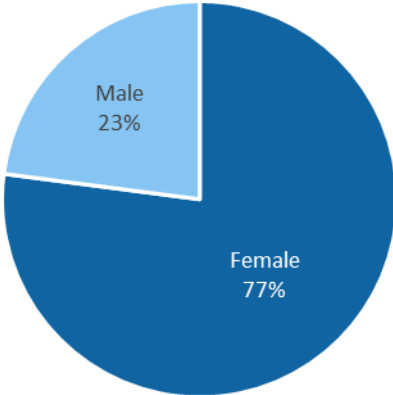
Completion rates by characteristic



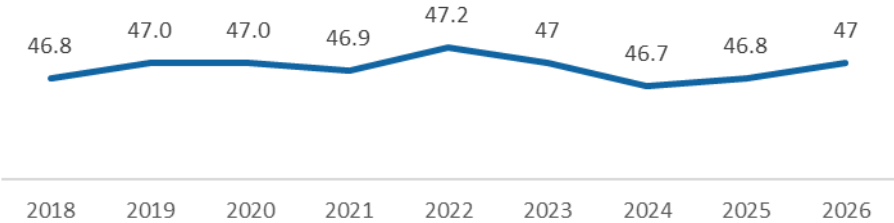
- Please note that although the Council works with a number of partner organisations to deliver its services, particularly in the adult social care sector, the figures in this report only cover those people directly employed by SCC.

Sex and Age

- Staffordshire County Council has always had a predominantly female workforce, and, as of January 2026, 77% of our workforce was female.
- The distribution of workers by age group has been consistent year-on-year, but does vary between genders; there are higher proportions of females in the 30-59 age groups, whereas the male workforce has higher proportions of staff above and below this, particularly in the 70+ age range

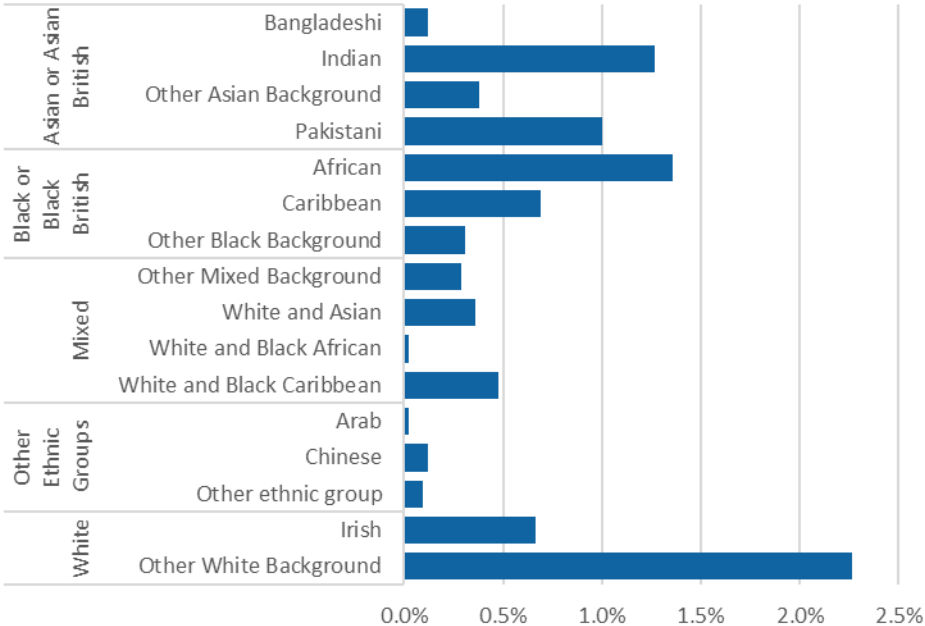
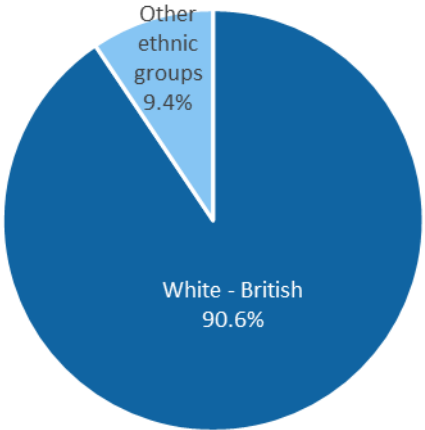


- The County Council’s age profile has remained stable since 2009, and currently 29% of staff are aged 39 or under, 26% are aged 40-49, 30% are aged 50-59, and the remaining 15% are aged 60 or over.
- The average age of the workforce fluctuates slightly from year to year but has been broadly consistent over the last nine years at around 47yrs, with the difference in the average ages of male and female employees having narrowed from 2.6yrs to 0.6yrs over that time



Race

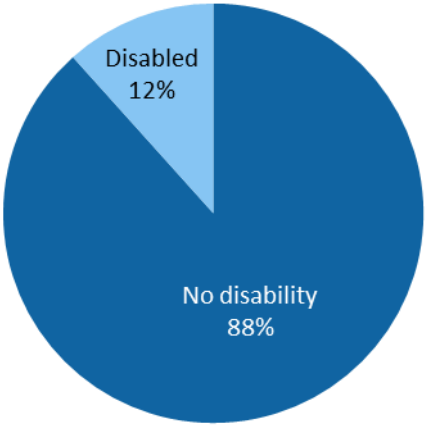
- Information about race is now held for 85% of staff - 4,192 people. Although the percentage has fallen slightly from last year, our larger workforce means that in real terms we now hold data for more than 100 additional people.
- 9.4% of the known workforce are from ethnic backgrounds other than *White - British*, falling slightly from 10.0% last year.
- Within this, *Other White Background* is the most populous group (2.3%), followed by *Black or Black British - African* (1.4%) and *Asian or Asian British - Indian* (1.3%)



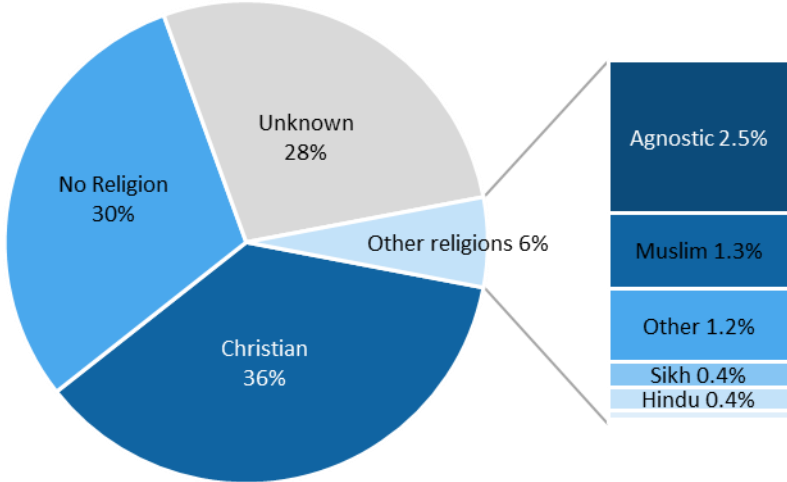
- The figures for the known workforce compare well against data from the 2021 Census, which recorded 90.2% of residents as White - British, and 9.8% from other ethnic groups

Disability and Religion

- Disability information is now held for 73% of staff - 3,599 people - which represents an increase of 1% from last year.
- 419 people indicated that they have a disability, equivalent to 12% of the 'known' workforce and 8% of the workforce as a whole.



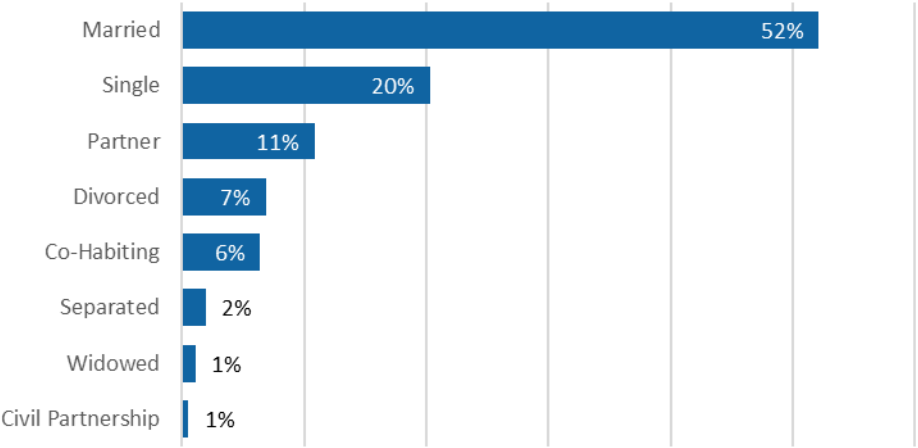
- Information on religion or belief is now held for 72% of staff - 3,574 people - which represents an increase of 1% from last year.



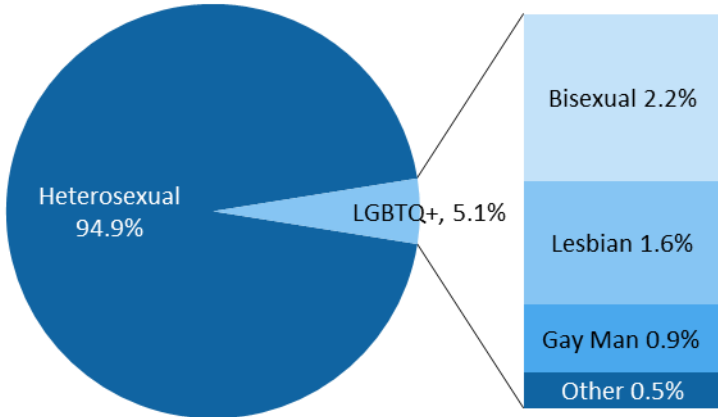
- Christianity is the most commonly cited religion, accounting for 50% of the 'known' workforce and 36% of the workforce as a whole.
- Staff citing 'no religion' account for a further 41% of the 'known' workforce and 30% of the workforce as a whole.

Marital Status and Sexual Orientation

- Information on marriage and civil partnerships is now held for 80% of staff - 3,963 people. Although the percentage has fallen slightly from last year, our larger workforce means that in real terms we now hold data for more than 100 additional people.
- The current figures remain consistent with those from previous years, although the proportion of staff recorded as Single has fallen slightly.



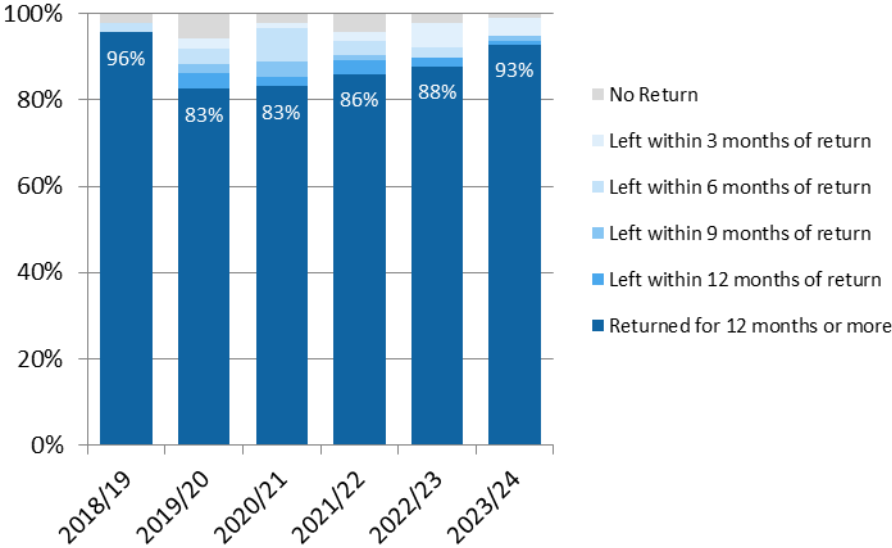
- Information on sexual orientation is now held for 72% of staff - 3,534 people - which represents an increase of 1% from last year.



- Both the number and proportion of staff recorded as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other have increased from last year (previously 4.7%)

Pregnancy and Gender Reassignment

- The proportion of staff returning from maternity leave for 12 months or more has been consistently high, averaging 88% across the last six years, and has improved year-on-year for the last four years.



- A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if they are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.
- The Council does have employees with this characteristic recorded, but because of the low numbers we are unable to publish figures whilst maintaining their confidentiality.

- Please note that these figures run a year behind the rest of the report to allow for a full year of return following the end of the maternity leave period.

Gender Pay Gap

Introduction

Staffordshire County Council, as a public sector employer of more than 250 employees, is required to report on its gender pay gap in line with 'The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017' for workers in scope.

The gender pay gap differs from that of equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay differences between men and women undertaking the same or similar jobs considered equal value; it is unlawful to pay people who perform the same or similar duties differently because they are male or female. The gender pay gap is a measure of the differences between men and women's average earnings, allowing organisations to be transparent about pay differences and to take positive action to address them.

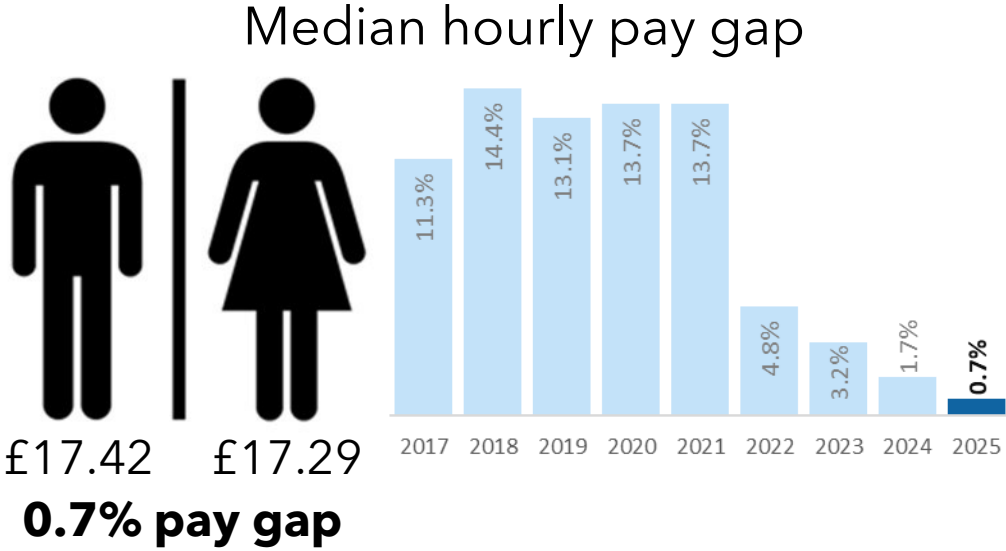
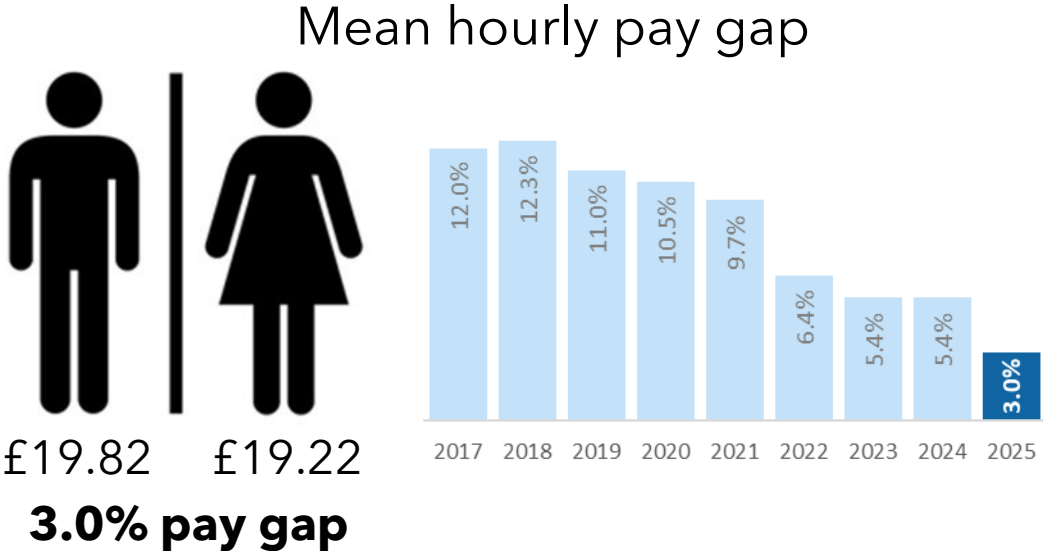
As stipulated in the legislation, we are required to publish the following gender pay data:

- Gender pay gap (mean and median values)
- Gender bonus gap (mean and median values)
- Proportion of men and women receiving bonuses
- Proportion of men and women in each quartile of the organisation's pay structure.

The deadline for publication of this year's gender pay gap figures is 30th March 2026, and will be based on salary data for full pay employees and casual workers in post as at the snapshot date of 31st March 2025.

Gender pay gap - average hourly rates

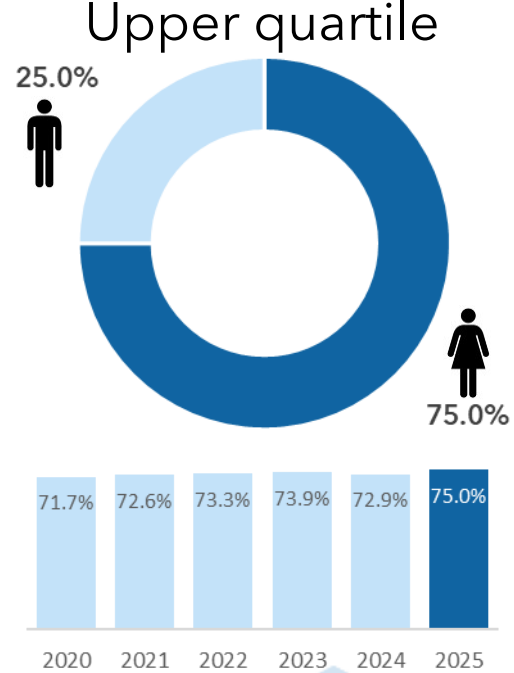
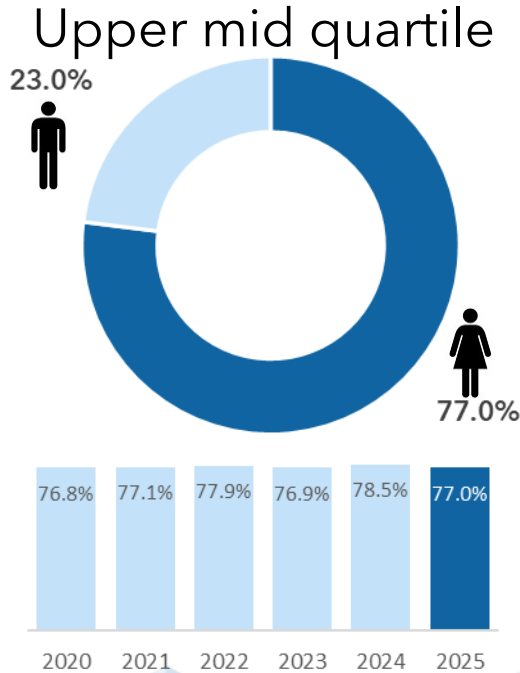
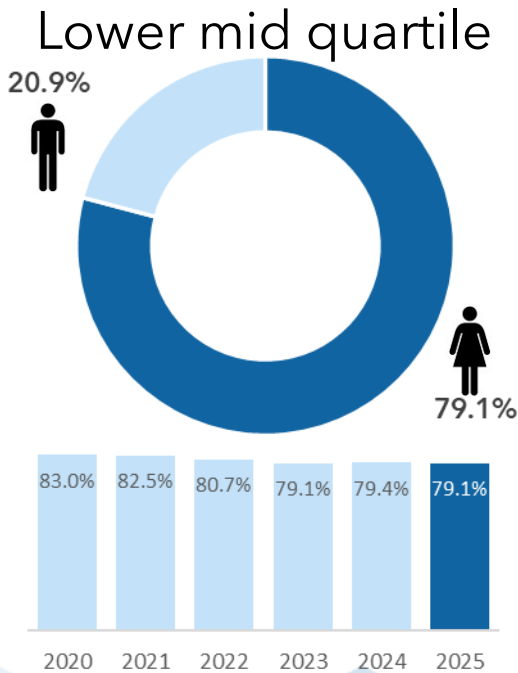
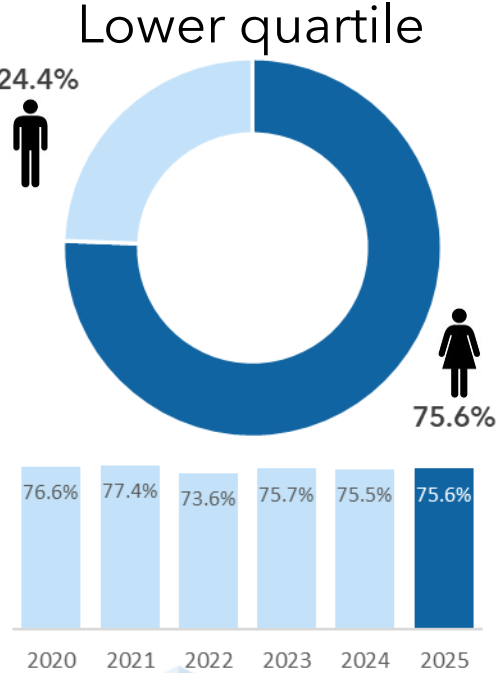
- Our mean gender pay gap has improved from last year, and now stands at **3.0%**
- Our median gender pay gap has continued to improve and now stands at **0.7%**
- Both measures remain significantly lower than national benchmarks from the ONS ASHE Survey, 2025
 - Overall 13.4% mean/12.8% median; Public sector 12.3% mean/13.5% median; Private sector 15.5% mean/17.5% median



- Our bonus pay gap remains at 0%, as we no longer have any bonus or performance-related pay arrangements in place


Gender pay gap - workforce quartiles

- 76.7% of the in-scope workforce is female, but the distribution of these staff throughout the pay quartiles varies
- The proportion of female staff in the lower mid and upper mid quartiles remain slightly higher than average, while the proportion in the upper quartile - one of the key drivers in reducing our pay gap - is slightly lower than average, but did increase substantially over the last year



Understanding our pay gap

Since the first gender pay gap publication in March 2018, we have undertaken significant analysis to understand the reasons for our pay gap and have identified the following:

- Our pay gap fluctuates during the year and is susceptible to change.
 - The make-up of our workforce impacts on reducing our pay gap.
 - There is a greater proportion of women than men in part time lower paid jobs.
 - We have very few part-time employees within managerial roles and within the upper pay quartile.
 - There are gender imbalances across the organisation by job category.
 - Historical societal factors which we cannot control, and which may take some years to see change.
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Our equality, diversity and gender pay gap commitments

Staffordshire County Council are committed to taking steps to support greater equality, diversity & inclusion and in turn, reduce our gender pay gap. Actions include:

- Delivery of year four of our People Strategy, ensuring we provide an inclusive and accessible working environment.
- Improving our workforce data collection and creating a diversity workforce profile to identify trends, drive improvements and monitor our progress.
- Developing and implementing our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives, policy, associated guidance and action plan
- Continuing to support and develop our employee voice and network groups to enable colleagues from different backgrounds to share their experiences of working at SCC and to help us make improvements to our working environment.
- Reviewing relevant People Policies with the principle that they will be inclusive, supportive and consider employee wellbeing.
- Continuing to improve our recruitment practices, technology and guidance and support to ensure they provide equality of opportunity and to become an employer of choice.
- Ensuring that managers have the skills to lead, inspire and develop their teams, and that everyone has the opportunity to grow.
- Developing our apprenticeship strategy and considering how we can support underrepresented groups within particular jobs.