

GENDER PAY GAP REPORT

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1. Introduction

All public sector employers are required to publish information about gender pay gaps by 31 March on an annual basis. The information provided within this report is based on a snapshot date of 31 March 2021. The report shows the difference in the average pay between employees of male and female gender which are defined as all men and women in the workforce. Included in the data used for this report are all employees of Northumberland County Council who were in employment on 31 March 2021. This includes all areas of the Council including - Finance, Fire & Rescue, Communities and Business Development, HR/OD, Planning and Local Services, Public Health and Community Services, Regeneration, Adults and Children's Directorates but does not include NCC School employees as each school is required to provide their own gender pay gap information as their own organisation.

If a workforce has a high pay gap this can indicate issues within the organisation and the calculations can help identify the issues. This report complies with the requirements of government legislation in regard to content and publication.

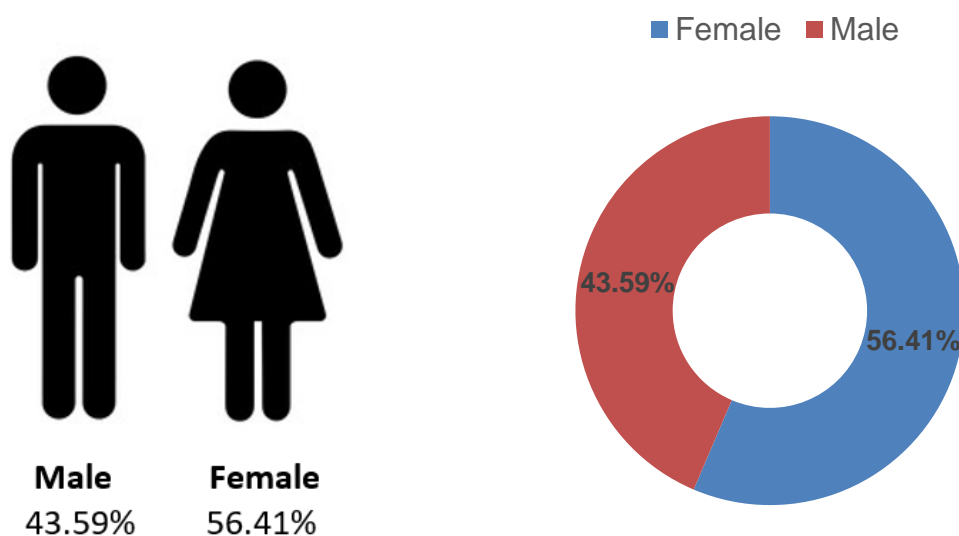
Gender pay gap is not the same as equal pay which is defined as pay differences between genders when carrying out the same roles/jobs of equal value.

Northumberland County Council's Pay Policy is based on the consistency, fairness and transparency to ensure reward is given fairly irrespective of gender and this can be viewed at www.northumberland.gov.uk.

The report also takes into account the work undertaken to date by the Council on its previous actions which were set out in the Gender Pay Gap Report based on the figures applicable on 31 March 2020 and such actions and work to date are therefore within the scope of the report.

2. Our Gender Pay Gap

Gender Profile



The information is based on a snapshot date of 31 March 2021. On this date the workforce consisted of 54.80% female employees and 45.20% male employees within NCC.

2021/2020 Comparison - Gender profile

2021	2020	Difference
<i>Men</i>	<i>Men</i>	
43.59 %	43.12 %	+ 0.47 %
<i>Women</i>	<i>Women</i>	
56.54 %	56.88 %	- 0.47 %

Gender Pay Gap in Hourly Pay:

Mean
1.41%
Gender Pay Gap

The mean gender pay gap in hourly pay is the difference between the male mean hourly pay and that of females mean hourly pay. The mean is the average calculated by dividing the sum of all rates of pay (male or female) and dividing by the number of employees. The mean gender pay gap in hourly pay as a percentage for NCC is 1.41% which means that the hourly rate for men is 1.41% greater than the hourly rate for women, this is lower than the previous year where the average hourly rate for men was 2.30% greater than women.

2021/2020 Comparison - Mean Hourly Rate

2021	2020	Difference
<i>Men</i>	<i>Men</i>	
£14.89	£14.35	+ 0.54
<i>Women</i>	<i>Women</i>	
£14.68	£14.02	+ 0.66

Median 0.00% Gender Pay Gap

The median gender pay gap in hourly pay is the difference between the male median hourly pay female median hourly pay. The median is the midpoint of a range of values therefore the mid hourly pay point for both males and females within the organisation.

Within NCC the gender gap in median hourly pay between male and female employees is **0.00%** (females earn the same as males)

The gender pay gap in NCC is substantially below the provisional ONS figure for the 2020 national average median pay gap for all employees, which is **15.4%** in favour of male employees. The gender pay gap in this organisation is due to the males employed having jobs at higher grades that relates to the skills and knowledge required for the role compared to females, particularly within middle management roles (Pay bands 8-10), this is the only work quartile (Upper Middle) in which males outweigh females. NCC uses local pay bands with specific pay ranges. Bands vary by levels of responsibility and each band has a set range of increments. Employees move through the increments through time regardless of gender. For this report hourly rate is calculated from base pay.

2021/2020 Comparison - Median

2021	2020	Difference
<i>Men</i>	<i>Men</i>	
£12.69	£12.35	+ 0.34
<i>Women</i>	<i>Women</i>	
£12.69	£12.35	+0.34

The differences in median pay remains the same as the previous year, the median hourly rate of pay has increased for both men and women.

Bonus Gender Pay Gap

The pay framework for NCC does not allow the provision of bonus payments to employees. Therefore, there is no data in relation to this part of the report as it does not form part of the pay framework for the Council and is therefore out of scope.

Proportion of Males and Females in each Pay Quartile

The gender pay gap regulations require reporting for the organisation to be split into 4 quartiles dependent on earnings and gender. For NCC, this reflected a split in pay bands as follows:

Upper	Senior manager grades + Pay Bands 7-13
Upper Middle	Pay Bands 5,6,7
Lower Middle	Pay Bands 4,5
Lower	Pay Bands 1, 2 ,3,4

The percentage of female employees has increased in the upper middle quartile. The majority of first line manager roles in areas that in the past have been in areas with under represented female staff such as Planning, Highways Maintenance and Neighbourhood Services roles are part of this quartile. In the lower middle quartile just under two thirds (61.03%) of employees are female, this has reduced slightly from 2020. The high percentage of females in the Upper Middle quartile has helped the council to sustain positive results in regards to Gender Pay Gap, this therefore maintains the mean and median figures.

2021/2020 Quartile Comparison

	2021/2020 %		Diff	2021/2020 %		Diff
	Men 2021	Men 2020		Women 2021	Women 2020	
<i>Upper</i>	42.98	42.38	+0.6	57.02	57.62	-0.6
<i>Upper middle</i>	48.45	48.70	-0.25	51.55	51.30	+0.25
<i>Lower middle</i>	38.68	38.37	+0.31	61.32	61.63	-0.31
<i>Lower</i>	44.24	43.21	+1.03	55.76	56.79	-1.03

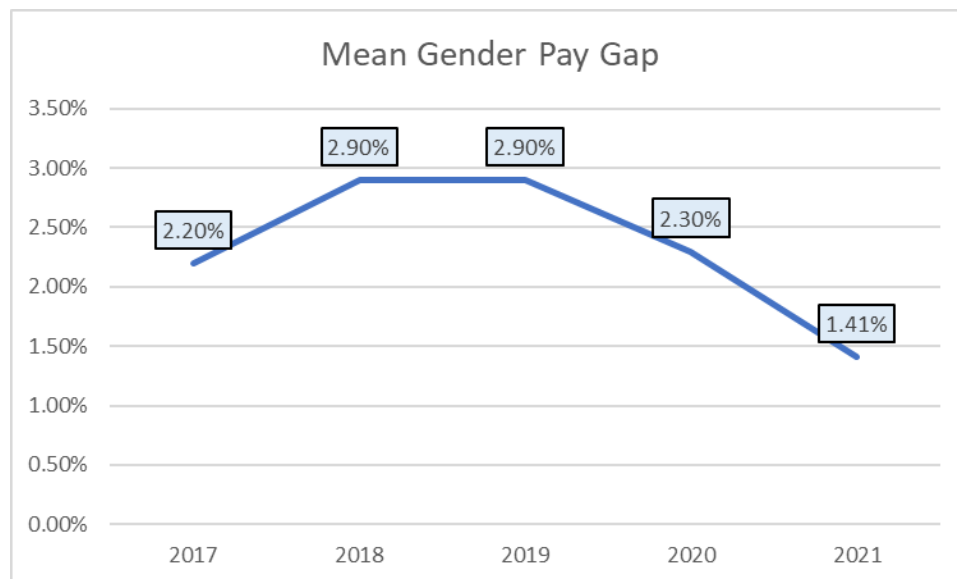
3. What does this mean?

The Gender Pay Gap within Northumberland County Council is one of the lowest compared to other north east regional local authorities that have published data for 2020. Data has been compared through published data on the government website. It is also considerably lower than the national average figure for all employees which is **15.4%** (Office of National Statistics – 2021 Gender Pay gap in the UK). Although this is a positive situation, NCC is committed to reducing and hopefully eliminating the gender pay gap in the future, as set out below.

4. What are we doing? - Actions undertaken and future plans for the organisation?

NCC is committed to reducing its gender pay gap and supporting the development of all our employees through a range of actions.

Progress since GPG legislation began in 2017.



Following GPG legislation several actions have been undertaken to support the objective, and in line with NCC's Public Sector Equality Duty. All of these continue to be in place:

Future Talent.

- € Support and develop the careers of females within the organisation and put strategies in place to ensure females are not disadvantaged in comparison to male employees. In succession planning by working with service leads to remove unconscious bias when forward planning by using an internally devised Succession Planning electronic toolkit to support managers.
- € Review Pay Policy on an annual basis to ensure the policy meets objectives.
- € Continued support to employees through Coaching within the organisation. NCC has an internal cohort of trained coaches that can be used to coach employees and provide confidence in their working practices and to support career development. In addition, a mentoring through lived experience programme has been developed to encourage senior managers to access learning from people from a variety of backgrounds e.g., disabled, BAME (Black and Asian Minority Ethnic), LGBT+.
- € A comprehensive campaign to promote international women's day annually featuring a wide range of female leaders and employees throughout the organisation.
- € A Leadership Conference to encourage individuals interested in Leadership or undertaking leadership roles to have ongoing support, encouragement, and confidence to sustain or increase their development.
- € Continued support beyond International Women's Day to influence and recognise the contribution that female employees make within the workplace. Endeavour to undertake gender pay analysis to ensure gender pay differences are addressed through processes and following changes of Pay Spine 1 April 2019 to incorporate

- additional spinal column points within locally agreed pay bands.
- € Promotion of female role models in all ED&I campaigns with specific focus on International Womens Day.
- € Middle manager conference arranged to empower all staff at this level to understand good practice and confidence in managerial roles.
- € Apprentice Conference to celebrate the positive results of apprentices and how they can grow within the organisation.
- € Working with Schools and colleges in Northumberland to become an employer of choice for all genders.

Supporting Working Families

- € Continue to support return to work following maternity or adoption leave and support whilst on leave through Keep in Touch days and continue communication as an employer. NCC holds several family friendly policies such as Shared Parental leave, flexible working policy, agile working, leave of absence and flexitime scheme to support return to work where possible and sustain employment. The Family Leave policy has been reviewed and updated. We aim to encourage an open attitude to provide flexible solutions to fit with personal circumstances.
- € Revision of the annual leave purchase scheme to provide an option of flexibility for employees that can be budgeted over a 12-month period in practice since February 2020.
- € Salary Sacrifice Travel scheme in place since April 2019 to allow families to budget for holidays and ease financial burdens (though suspended since Covid).
- € Ongoing work with Northumberland Community Bank to provide savings and low interest loans to give financial support and financial wellbeing awareness to employees.
- € Widened financial support for employees through Northumberland Money webpage that has several organisations working with the organisation for further options for financial advice, guidance in relation to debt, money management etc.
- € Look at innovative ways to support flexible and agile working for employees and improve guidance to managers to ensure they consider all options in regard to working time.
- € All adverts state posts are open to flexible working should applicants which to be considered.
- € Review of Leave of absence to meet statutory requirements for Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave
- € Expanding Health & Wellbeing support for employees including appointing Health & Wellbeing Champions within service areas to support physical and mental wellbeing.

Inclusion

- € Review of recruitment practices and procedures including identifying and removing any barriers for entry for gender, and other protected characteristics.
- € Dignity at Work policy has been separated from the NCC Grievance policy to ensure bullying or harassment (regardless of nature), has a clear line of reporting.
- € Continue to drive demographic data to enable HR to identify any potential patterns for discrimination including due to gender issues.

- € Employee engagement has been strengthened within the HR & OD strategy to increase engagement in all areas of the organisation, with a specific Engagement workstream set up to lead work in this area and in particular work with those with protected characteristics including gender.
- € Domestic Abuse policy has been reviewed and revised to provide support to employees and to allow continued employment.
- € Engagement and Inclusion Officer and support worker appointed to work within NCC to develop Network Groups, provide analysis of staff survey information and work with the Engagement HR workstream to improve communications with all employees.
- € Growth of Network Groups such as Disability, BAME, Carers, Menopause, Mental Health & Wellbeing and Armed Forces.
- € An Equality & Diversity Lead for the organisation appointed to support the review of all processes and advise of areas of bias so they can be reduced.
- € Revised HR Recruitment Systems that enable the organisation to review recruitment practices and ensure the removal of unconscious bias through anonymised applications prior to shortlisting.
- € Trans Inclusion Policy agreed for authority to support employees through transition and maintain employment.
- € Safecall anonymised whistleblowing reporting for employees to allow anonymity if they wish to speak out about bad practice.
- € As the Recruitment system is developed, provision of detailed reports of protected characteristics will be available for analysis. The information will allow Human Resources/Organisational Development and the Engagement and Inclusion Lead to provide targeted plans to support diversity in all roles.
- € High response rate from 2020 Staff Survey (85%) to inform the organisation of a variety of information and in those employees particular protected characteristics. Information will be collated by the Engagement and Inclusion Lead to produce an action plan moving forward.
- € Equality and Diversity lived experience learning sessions to celebrate and support difference, including session on lived experience of trans women, women with menopause .
- € An Inclusion video developed and promoted to highlight diversity within the Council.
- € Carers Passport implemented for those with Caring responsibilities.
- € Development of more accessible NCC internal and external ED&I website pages to incorporate information about gender pay and other equalities information.

Actions for 2022/23

Further actions have been agreed or considered for 2022/23 within the organisation to ensure the continued commitment to reducing Gender Pay Gap, and with the guidance from the Government Equalities Office regarding effective and promising actions. Each service area of the Council is given a breakdown so that it can be managed at a service level.

Future Talent

- € To increase females in senior manager service roles to enable a more balanced representation in this area (Upper Middle Quadrant). This can be done in a number

of ways.

1. Continue with internal support for accredited management programmes.
2. Review process for internal promotion and recruitment and incorporate more females on interview panels and have structured interviews; a tool that research has shown provides a greater number of female promotions (LGA2018).
3. NCC have implemented Values Based Recruitment to prevent bias at interviews and appoint the most suitable candidate.

Supporting Working Families

- € The Covid-19 pandemic has also led to a widespread and ongoing review of how people work within Northumberland County Council. 24 months of home working has strengthened the Council's attitude to flexible working and many employees have needed to juggle home/work commitments to suit themselves, at no detriment to the quality of work produced. The Council are starting a return to the office in a hybrid style in April 2022, for which staff have been asked to state preferences for which days they would prefer to work, and any concerns they have about returning to an office environment. There is no expectation that staff will be required to work full time from an office.
- € This approach will support working families further to help work/life balance, reduction in childcare fees (i.e. no need to put children in wrap around childcare if parents are at home) but still afford the option to attend an office environment where they wish to.
- € At the time of writing, due to the increase in petrol prices, the Council are exploring options with regard to reimbursement prices for those staff groups that incur significant mileage as part of their roles.

Inclusion

- The Council's network groups now see all HR policies that are being reviewed to ensure that all groups can identify any issues that may impact negatively on those groups.
- Work is being done to promote pensions to female staff in particular due to the knowledge that over a 44 year career, there is a difference of approximately £100k n pension wealth between men and women.
- A staff portal is being set up to cover this with signpost to advice and support. Consideration being given to targeting particular groups (i.e. woman returning from maternity leave, new starters, menopausal age).
- Portal will be expanded to include where staff can get internal and external advice on a large variety of issues.

5. Monitoring Arrangements

Actions will be monitored by the Council's Workforce Committee and the accountable officer with the responsibility for this workstream is the Service Director for HR/OD.

6. Publication Arrangements

This report will be published annually by the Council and will be placed on the Council's website and be made available internally to staff throughout the organisation. The report will also be published on the government website annually to meet legislative requirements.

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