

# Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

## Gender Pay Gap 2025/26

March 2026

Version Number 1.1  
Document Owner: Chief People Officer



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Each year the Council is required by the Equality Act (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, to prepare and publish its Gender Pay Gap data.
- 1.2 The gender pay gap is an equality measure that shows the difference in average earnings between men and women, expressed as a percentage of male earnings.
- 1.3 The specific requirement is to publish the following statistics on the Council's public-facing website for the snapshot date of 31-March each year and report the same, to the government online by the statutory deadline of 30-March in the following year:
  - 1.3.1 **Mean gender pay gap** - The difference between average hourly pay for men and women
  - 1.3.2 **Median gender pay gap** - The difference between median hourly pay for men and women
  - 1.3.3 **Pay quartiles** - The proportion of male and female employees in each of four pay quartile bands
  - 1.3.4 **Mean gender bonus gap** - Difference between average bonus pay for men and women
  - 1.3.5 **Median gender bonus gap** - Difference between median bonus pay for men and women
  - 1.3.6 **Bonus proportions** - The proportion of men and women receiving a bonus
- 1.4 The council does not pay bonuses, therefore there is no data to report for the measures related to bonus payments.

1.5 The legislation details those employees at 'Maintained Schools' must be treated as if employed by the governing body, therefore the Council must exclude schools from its gender pay gap reporting.

## **2. Council's Gender Pay Gap 2025/26**

2.1 Sandwell Council's 'mean' Gender Pay Gap figure for 2025/26 has remained at 2.2% compared to the last 12 months.

2.2 By way of a benchmark, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) the mean UK Gender Pay Gap in 2025 was 6.9%. The mean gender pay gap for West Midlands Authorities in 2025 was 2.3% and Sandwell remains within the benchmark average for the region.

2.3 In addition, it should be noted that the median Gender Pay Gap figure has narrowed in the last year from 6.6% to 5.0%.

2.4 The following table shows the progress that we have made since Sandwell Council first published its Gender Pay Gap in 2018.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Mean GPG</b>	<b>Median GPG</b>
<b>2017-18</b>	<b>8.40%</b>	<b>12.60%</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	<b>7.10%</b>	<b>12.60%</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	<b>6.40%</b>	<b>14.40%</b>
<b>2020-21</b>	<b>5.10%</b>	<b>12.10%</b>
<b>2021-22</b>	<b>3.40%</b>	<b>10.40%</b>
<b>2022-23</b>	<b>0.60%</b>	<b>3.30%</b>
<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2.50%</b>	<b>6.80%</b>
<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2.20%</b>	<b>6.60%</b>
<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2.20%</b>	<b>5.00%</b>

3. The proportion of male and female employees in each of four pay quartile bands as at the snap-shot date of 31-March-25 is as follow:

<b>Quartile</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Lower quartile	39.2%	60.8%
Lower-Mid quartile	32.2%	67.8%
Upper-mid quartile	45.3%	54.7%
Upper quartile	44.8%	55.2%

- 3.1 The causes of any gender pay gap remain complex and overlapping and there is no single over-riding reason why a gender pay gap exists. For the purposes of this report points 3.2 to 3.4 provide evidence of ways in which the gender pay gap has continued to improve for Sandwell Council.
- 3.2 **Foundation Living Wage** - Sandwell is honouring a long-term commitment to pay the Foundation Living Wage which is currently set at £13.45 per hour. This is to help improve the lives of employees at the lower end of the NJC pay scale. Currently, 74% of Council employees who are in receipt of the Foundation Living Wage are female.
- 3.3 **Progression within the Grade** - Each April, and in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment, employees receive a pay increment until they reach the top of their grade. Analysis of pay bands B to J shows that 52% of female employees compared to 56% of male employees are at the top of their grades. This disparity has narrowed over time and will continue to narrow through incremental progression within the grade, provided there is no substantial shift in the overall workforce demographics resulting from organisational change, turnover and recruitment.

3.4 **Improved representation in Senior Roles** - Female employees continue to be well represented in senior roles. The table below shows the gender split by grades for employees included in the gender pay calculations over the period of last 5 years: -

	Gender	Chief Officers	Hay Managers	Band J	Band I	Band H	Band G	All grades
2025/26	Male	4	12	21	50	95	173	1635
	Female	3	15	34	49	129	213	2416
2024/25	Male	4	15	18	44	90	152	1660
	Female	3	16	30	36	126	174	2431
2023/24	Male	4	14	19	41	86	155	1612
	Female	5	17	26	39	108	176	2315
2022/23	Male	4	14	24	37	85	153	1659
	Female	6	18	14	50	105	183	2318
2021/22	Male	4	14	26	32	91	144	1713
	Female	4	18	14	47	98	168	2367

- 3.4.1 **Chief Officers** – Gender balance at this level shows only small year to year variation. There were no Service Directors in post as at the snapshot date of 31-March-2025.
- 3.4.2 **Hay Managers** - Near parity between genders, with both generally remaining stable over time.
- 3.4.3 **Band J** - Some variation for males, whilst the strong upward trajectory for females has reversed the balance from 2023/24 onwards
- 3.4.4 **Band I** - Both genders are now almost equally represented, showing some fluctuations over the 5-year period
- 3.4.5 **Band H** - Female representation shows a gentle upward movement, while male numbers remain stable
- 3.4.6 **Band G** - Female numbers trend upward overall, while males remain broadly stable despite mid period dips

## 4. Publication

- 4.1 Once approved, the gender pay data for 2025/26 will be published on the Council's website, together with a summary supporting narrative.