

EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT

An equality analysis of the workforce of
Herefordshire Council

2024-2025



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1. INTRODUCTION

Herefordshire Council is committed to employing a diverse workforce to help the organisation understand and relate to the community we serve.

As part of our ongoing commitment to creating a workplace where everyone thrives, we have a new set of values and behaviours that are key to shaping our culture. Our new values of Trust, Honesty, Respect, Inclusivity, Value and Empathy will help us champion diversity and fairness in all aspects of our work.

This document fulfils the requirement of the Equality Act 2010 that all public organisations with more than 150 employees publish the diversity data of their workforce. It also includes additional information which is not statutory.

Information from the 2021 Census has been used for comparative purposes where possible.

What's going to happen to this report?

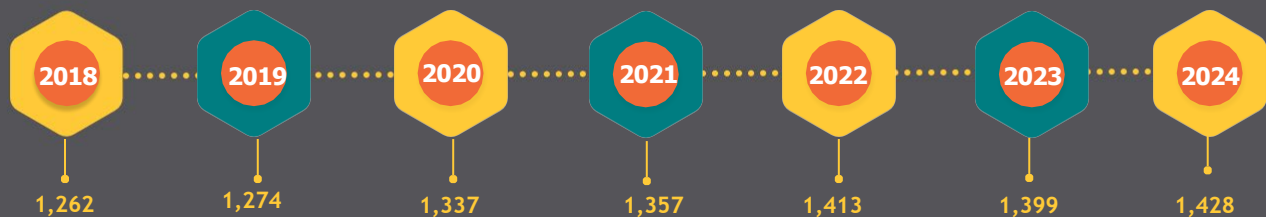
Externally: This report will be published on the council's website, in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Internally: This report will be available to all employees and used to raise awareness of the need to record their information. It also provides baseline data to develop our workforce strategy.

2. WORKFORCE DIVERSITY PROFILE

- The following statistics relate to Herefordshire Council employees, and were correct as at 31 March 2024.
- Within some characteristic groups where we have a group of fewer than 5, **to avoid identifying individuals and protect anonymity these will be represented as <5.**
- The percentage reporting has been rounded to 1 decimal point.
- The Census columns relate to the 2021 Census for Herefordshire. More information about Herefordshire can be found on our '[Understanding Herefordshire](#)' site.
- The Census figures are correct for the whole of the Herefordshire population, and have not been adjusted to show only the working age population – they are therefore only an indicative comparison with the council's workforce figures.
- In January 2024 we made changes to our reporting system to record caring responsibilities and identified gender. The information shared by employees has been included in this report, noting it is a short reporting window.
- Data on gender reassignment is currently not available.

Number of people (non-school based) employed by the council



Herefordshire Population 189,900

ETHNICITY

Ethnicity (total workforce)	No.	%	Census %
Information not obtained	379	26.5	-
Prefer not to say	75	5.3	-
Any Other Ethnic Group	<5	0.2	1.6
Asian or Asian British – Chinese, Pakistani, Indian	15	1.1	0.8
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	14	1.0	0.3
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	9	0.6	1.1
White - British	881	61.7	91.1
White - Any other White background	52	3.6	5.4

In Herefordshire, Global Majority people make up approximately 3.8% of the working age population (2021 Census). This compares to 2.9% of the Council's overall workforce as at 31 March 2024, up from last year's 2.7%.

When focusing on those who have disclosed their ethnicity rather than the total workforce, to offer a more accurate view of workforce diversity, the demographics change as shown below.

Ethnicity (of 1050 responses)	%
Global majority	4
White - British	83.9
White - Any other White background	5
Prefer not to say	7.1

We have seen an increase in the 'information not obtained' category. To address this we will consider how we can reinforce the importance of self disclosure and work with our staff networks to build trust and confidence in how this information is used.

We work closely with our Black and Asian Networking Staff Group to listen and learn on what key measures we can make as a whole to amend our working practices where everyone feels like they belong.

NATIONALITY

Nationality (total workforce)	No.	%
Any other nationality	<5	0.2
African / South East Asia	10	0.7
European	16	1.1
British	472	33.1
English	151	10.6
Irish, Scottish or Welsh	40	2.8
Prefer not to say	469	32.9
Information not obtained	268	18.8

This table shows how our workforce identifies with a particular nationality.

From previous years we have seen an overall increase in our workforce and this has been reflected across all nationality types.

Another positive trend in this years figures is that those who prefer not to say has continued to reduce from 39.5% last year to 32.9%. This is a positive response to the work we have done to encourage our employees to complete their equality data and is indicative of an inclusive workforce and a culture where people are happy to share information about themselves and help us understand our workforce better.

RELIGION

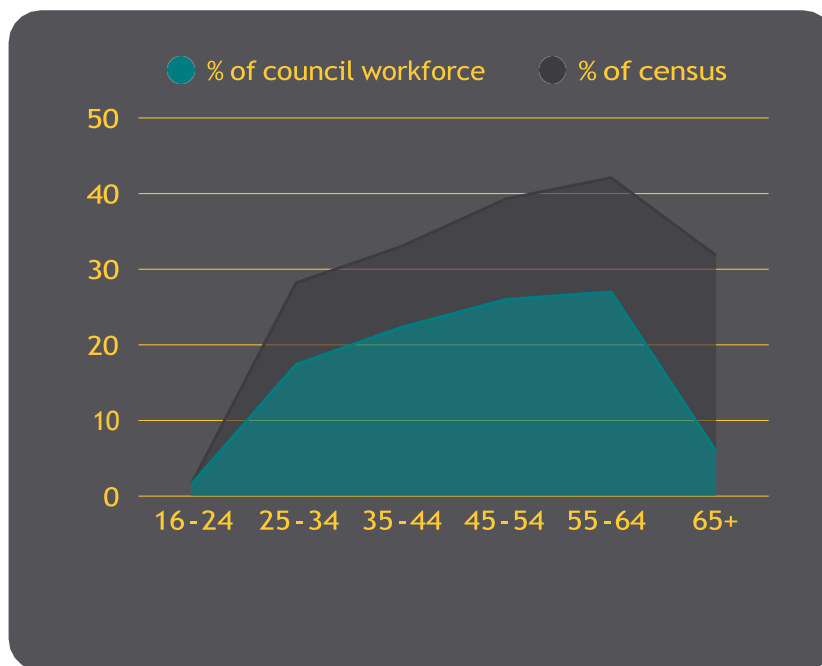
Religion (total workforce)	No.	%	Census %
Agnostic	73	5.1	-
Atheist	135	9.5	-
Buddhist	<5	0.3	0.3
Christian	455	31.9	54.9
Hindu	<5	0.1	0.1
Humanist	<5	0.1	-
Jewish	<5	0.1	0.1
Muslim	5	0.4	0.4
No religion or belief	159	11.1	36.6
Other	14	1.0	0.5
Pagan	5	0.4	-
Sikh	2	0.1	0.1
Prefer not to say	274	19.2	-
Information not obtained	298	20.9	6.9

Over recent years the religious and belief profile of our workforce has remained relatively stable, with a range of faiths represented. However, this year has seen the most notable shifts to date. Two previously recorded religions - Rastafarian and Zoroastrian - are no longer represented, while Hinduism has appeared in our data for the first time. At the same time, one of the most significant increases has been in the number of declarations marked as 'information not obtained', which limits our understanding of the full diversity in the workforce.



AGE

Age (total workforce)	No.	%	Census %
16 - 24	22	1.5	-
25 - 34	248	17.4	10.8
35 - 44	318	22.3	10.7
45 - 54	371	26.0	13.3
55 - 64	385	27	15.1
65 +	84	5.9	25.9



This year we have seen a decline in the number of employees in the younger age brackets compared to previous years. While this may reflect broader demographic trends, it also highlights a gradual shift in the age profile of our workforce.

With this, we need to consider different approaches to the requirements of managing an ageing workforce.

DISABILITY

Disability total workforce)	No.	%	Census %
Prefer not to say	25	1.8	-
Information not obtained	511	35.8	-
Yes	75	5.3	17.0
No	817	57.2	83.0

As the shape and size of our workforce changes the figures makes trend analysis less reliable, but one noticeable change is that there has been a increase in the number of employees reporting they have a disability.

Due to a high proportion of the workforce not declaring whether they have a disability or not, it is unlikely that this is a true reflection of the number of employees with disabilities. It is also important to note that employees are asked to self-report if they consider themselves to have a disability and this is voluntary. We support employees who are or become disabled and refreshed our reasonable adjustment guidance and process during 2024.

SEX

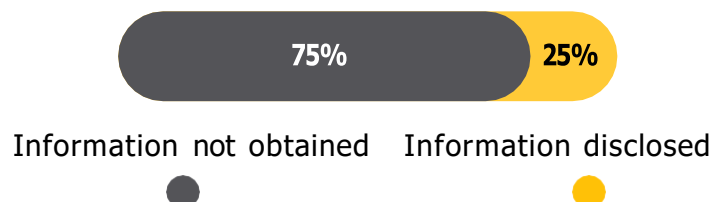
Sex (total workforce)	No.	%	Census %
Male	348	24.4	49.1
Female	1080	75.6	50.9

Sex is a protected characteristic that has full disclosure from the workforce of Herefordshire Council.

In January 2024 we introduced the option for employees to disclose the gender they identify with. Despite the short timeframe available during the data capture period, 25% of our workforce chose to provide this information. We're encouraged by this level of engagement and look forward to seeing even greater participation in the future.



GENDER



MARITAL STATUS

Marital status (total workforce)	No.	%	Census %
Prefer not to say	514	36.0	-
Information not obtained	299	20.9	-
Married	353	24.7	49.6
Single	167	11.7	30.4
Divorced	53	3.7	10.2
Separated	18	1.3	2.1
Civil Partnership	19	1.3	0.3
Widowed	5	0.4	7.4

There has been an increase across nearly all of marital status categories, with the only category seeing a decrease being 'prefer not to say'. What our figures don't yet tell us is how many in these categories are same sex relationships and we will look to develop the ability for employees to self-disclose this in the future to continue to align with best practice.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation (total workforce)	No.	%	Census %
Prefer not to say	251	17.6	-
Information not obtained	282	19.7	8.1
Heterosexual	851	59.6	89.7
Lesbian	13	0.9	2.18
Bisexual	14	1.0	
Gay	14	1.0	
Other	<5	0.2	-

2% of our workforce have identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or 'other'. This has remained fairly static since last years report. Our figure for 'prefer not to say' has decreased from last year which is a positive step in staff sharing information about themselves.

VETERANS

Armed forces and reserves (total workforce)	No.	%
Veteran	8	0.6
Reservist	<5	0.1
Services Cadet Force volunteer	<5	0.1
Military charity volunteer	<5	0.2
Immediate family member serving UK Armed Forces	24	1.7

Herefordshire has a strong link with our [Armed Forces community](#), and in April 2023, it was estimated that there were 1,750 members of Regular Armed Forces stationed in Herefordshire, representing 6.1% of the overall resident population.

We have an established staff Armed Forces Network which provides support and friendship to members of the Armed Forces community, and we are proud to support the Armed Forces Covenant gold employer standard by offering flexibility and time off for employees and service partners before, during and after deployment and mobilisation. We advertise all of our vacancies with Forces Families jobs to promote our commitment to being a forces friendly employer and offer career support for those looking to end their time in the services.

CARERS

In January 2024 we introduced the option for employees to share with us information about their caring responsibilities. Although there has been a brief timeframe to collect this data, we've seen 2% of our workforce respond. We look forward to greater participation over time, enabling us to better understand and support the needs of our employees.

3. RECRUITMENT PROFILE

To continuously improve our transparency and reporting on diversity, we continue to include diversity information on all job applicants, shortlisted applicants, and placed applicants for the first time, building on our commitment we made in our 2023 report.

The data below is from April 2023 to March 2024. While this provides a more complete view than last year, it is important to note that some shortlisting and placement activity was done outside of our main recruitment system called E-plot. As such, the figures presented here do not fully represent all recruitment activity across the council. Nevertheless, this data continues to provide a valuable baseline to monitor workforce diversity and inform our recruitment strategy.

We pride ourselves in what we offer as an employer as well as supporting many schemes for access to employment and being an Equal Opportunities Employer. We are a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer, and aim to become a Level 3, Disability Confident Leader when our award is due to be renewed in 2027. We are also an Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award Employer, supporting employment opportunities to members of the Armed Forces; and supporting employment opportunities for care leavers under our own Care Leaver Covenant.

The data that follows shows how each of the characteristics had progressed through each stage of the recruitment process.



DISABILITY

Disability	Applications received	Shortlisted applicants	Recruited Applicants
Information not obtained	407	72	12
No	4218	480	318
Yes	208	73	45
Prefer not to say	151	13	4

From those who declared a disability at the application stage, 35.9% were shortlisted; 61.6% of the shortlisted candidates were then recruited. We share this information with recruiting managers as part of our commitment to providing a guaranteed interview to any candidate declaring a disability that meets the essential criteria of the advertised role.

SEX

Sex	Applications received	Shortlisted applicants	Recruited Applicants
Information not obtained	461	82	24
Male	1647	184	80
Female	3113	368	272
Prefer not to say	39	4	3

From those who applied for vacancies, more than half of the applicants were female (59.1%) compared to 31.3% of male applicants.

Of the female applicants, 12% were shortlisted and of those shortlisted, 74% were recruited. When looking at male applicants, 11% were shortlisted and 43% of those shortlisted were recruited.

There is no evidence to suggest from these figures of any bias or subconscious discrimination, and our workforce has been largely made up by women for a number of years.

A survey of new joiners during the calendar year of 2024 was undertaken and asked what was their most important factor when joining Herefordshire Council. Of 167 responses, 62% told us that the flexibility offered was the most important consideration. Flexible working and roles offering part-time hours, remote work or adaptable work patterns has long held an appeal for women, largely due to balancing responsibilities outside of the workplace.

ETHNICITY

Ethnicity	Applications received	Shortlisted applicants	Recruited Applicants
Any other ethnic group	54	1	1
Asian or Asian British	325	23	13
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	745	38	6
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	101	7	6
White - British	1070	170	110
White - Any other White background	2383	309	214
Prefer not to say	98	8	4
Information not obtained	484	82	25

Based on the 2021 Census, 9.2% of the local population of Herefordshire identified as Global Majority. In comparison, 23.3% of our applicants during the reporting period were from Global Majority backgrounds. This indicates that we are successful in attracting candidates from a wide range of backgrounds, which we welcome to strengthen our workforce by bringing different lived experiences and fostering an inclusive environment.

While direct comparisons with last years report are limited - as the previous data set did not cover a full year - we continue to see successful outcomes across all demographic categories.

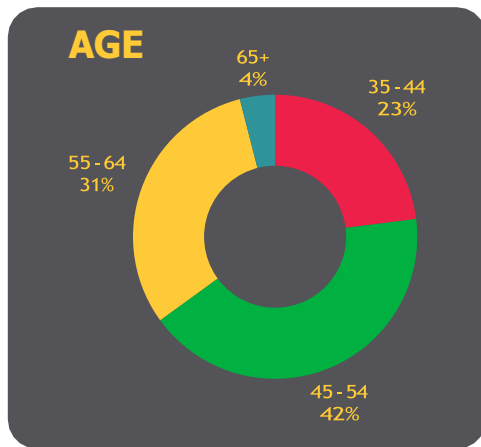
These figures do not suggest any form of discrimination or bias within our recruitment processes and this information is not shared with recruiting managers.

We also have an established BAME staff network, providing a safe and confidential space for colleagues to connect, share experiences, and access support or advice.

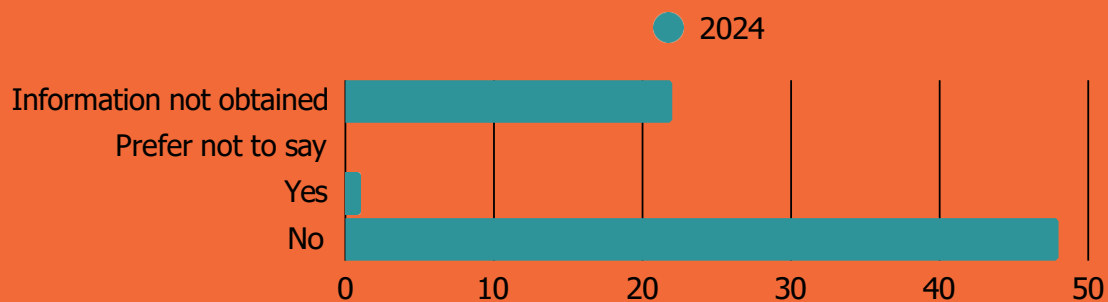
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TOP 5 % EARNERS

71 employees in top 5%



DISABILITY



ETHNICITY



5.

GENDER PAY GAP

Introduction

Herefordshire Council is a large employer with over 250 employees and operates within the public sector, and as such is required to report on its gender pay gap and gender bonus gap.

The gender pay gap is an equality measure to show the difference in earnings between women and men.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) report that among full-time and part-time employees the gender pay gap in April 2024 was 13.1%, which has been declining slowly over time, falling by approximately a quarter over the last decade.

The gender pay gap does not show the difference in pay for comparable jobs, unequal pay has been illegal since the introduction of the Equal Pay Act 1970.

Herefordshire Council operates a formal Job Evaluation Scheme, which ensures pay and grading of job is fair and non-discriminatory.

As a local authority and unlike most employers who operate and will be analysing their pay in a single sector, Herefordshire Council's pay structure covers a multitude of diverse services. Grades vary according to the level of responsibility and each grade is made up of a number of incremental points which employees progress through annually until they reach the top of the grade, with the exception of the Chief Executive, and certain Statutory Directors who receive a spot salary.

In line with Government requirements, Herefordshire Council must calculate and report the following six calculations:

1. percentage of men and women in each hourly pay quarter
2. mean (average) gender pay gap using hourly pay
3. median gender pay gap using hourly pay
4. percentage of men and women receiving bonus pay
5. mean (average) gender pay gap using bonus pay
6. median gender pay gap using bonus pay

Total workforce demographic

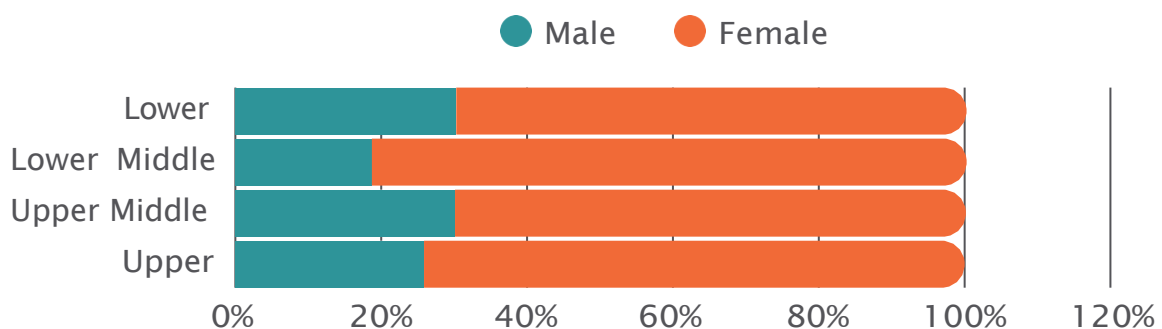
As at 31st March 2024, Herefordshire Council had 1499 relevant employees as per the definition of the statutory guidance to report; of which, 393 were men and 1106 were women. The hourly rate for full pay is included in the calculations, meaning that only those employees receiving their full or ordinary pay for the period are included in the calculations.

Employees per quartile

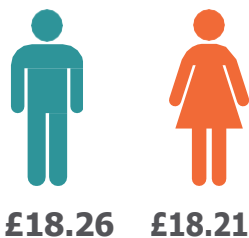
The 1499 employee records were sorted highest to lowest by hourly pay and split in to quartiles, as these do not easily fit as the number of staff we have cannot be easily divided by four equal parts, 375 employees sitting in the three lowest quartiles and 374 in quartile 4.

Percentage of males and females per quartile

Across the dividing lines of the quartiles, there were three rates of hourly pay that were divided across the quartiles; these were then analysed further to ensure that men and women receiving this hourly pay were distributed evenly in to the 4 quarters, as per .gov guidance. When the data had been organised it was determined that per quartile the percentage of men and women in each quarter were:



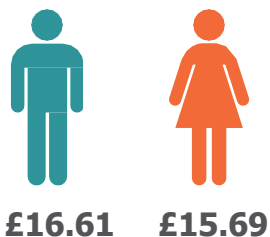
The mean Gender Pay Gap (hourly rate)



The mean Gender Pay Gap equates to 0.28%

This means that for every £1 a male employee earns, a female employee earns 99p.

The median Gender Pay Gap (hourly rate)



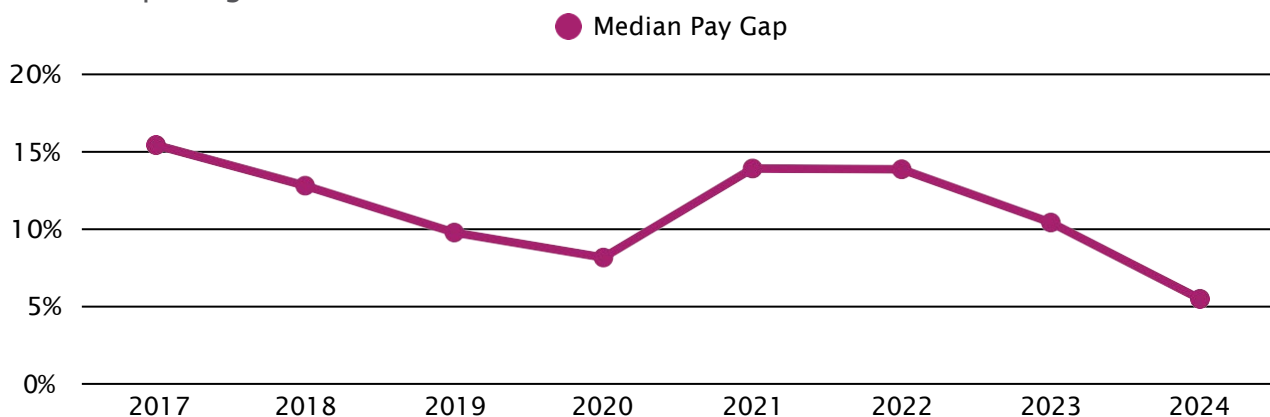
The median Gender Pay Gap equates to 5.55%

This means that for every £1 a male employee earns, a female employee earns 94p.

The government asks us to calculate both the mean and the median pay gap. However, it is the median figure that tends to be reported and used for comparisons as this doesn't get distorted by very high or low numbers.

The median pay gap has reduced from the 2023 figure of 10.4%. A reduction and the lowest pay gap we have seen since first reporting, it is reflective of what has been reported nationally against all sectors, this is certainly heading in the right direction.

The graph below shows how the median gender pay gap has fluctuated since we first started reporting.



The Gender Bonus Pay Gap

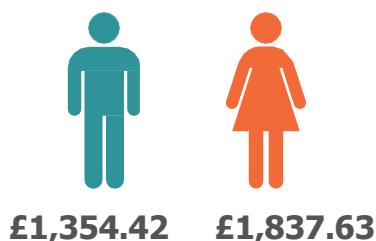
Whilst the council does not operate a bonus scheme as such, the definition of a bonus for the purpose of Gender Pay Gap reporting includes welcome payments, retention payments for hard-to-fill posts, and one-off honoraria payments awarded for a specific contribution. More information on our policy and approach to pay can be found in the [Pay Policy Statement](#).

For the purposes of reporting, government guidance states that the Gender Bonus Pay gap is reported on a period over 12 months, so for this year's calculation the period used is April 2023 – March 2024 and our figures capture the payments received by employees during this period.

During this period, 5 male employee received a relevant 'bonus' payment and 27 female employees received a relevant 'bonus' payment.

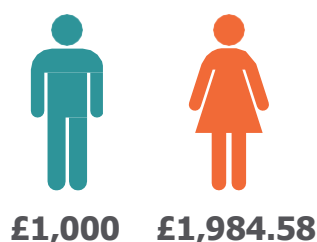
The Gender Bonus Pay Gap also does not refer to hourly rate, but the total payments made over the period. Due to the variety of reasons we include in calculating a bonus payment, means that there is an influence in the proportional value of the payments and a combination in factors that influence these payments being made.

The mean Gender Bonus Pay Gap



The mean Gender Bonus Pay Gap equates to -35.68%

The median Gender Bonus Pay Gap



The median Gender Pay Gap equates to 98.46%

How we compare

In England and Wales there is an overall median pay gap of 13.1% (source: [Gender Pay Gap in the UK 2024](#)). This figure is across all industry sectors and includes full and part-time workers. This shows that a woman, on average, earns around 86p for every £1 earned by a man. The following comparisons help to put Herefordshire Council's data into further context by looking at the pay gap data published by our neighbouring councils for a snapshot date of 31st March 2024.

Local Authority	Median pay gap - i.e. Women's hourly pay is:
Herefordshire Council	10.4% lower
Shropshire Council	13.7% lower
Worcestershire County Council	8.9% lower
Geographical comparisons	
West Midlands, all sectors (provisional)	15.4%
Wye Valley NHS Trust	25.4%
Industry comparison	
UK Public Sector	14.3%

Organisational context

The data shows that Herefordshire council's workforce is made up of more females than males across every quartile.

We are confident that our median Gender Pay Gap does not stem from paying male and female employees differently for the same or equivalent work. The gender pay gap is the result of roles in which males and females currently work and the salaries these roles attract.

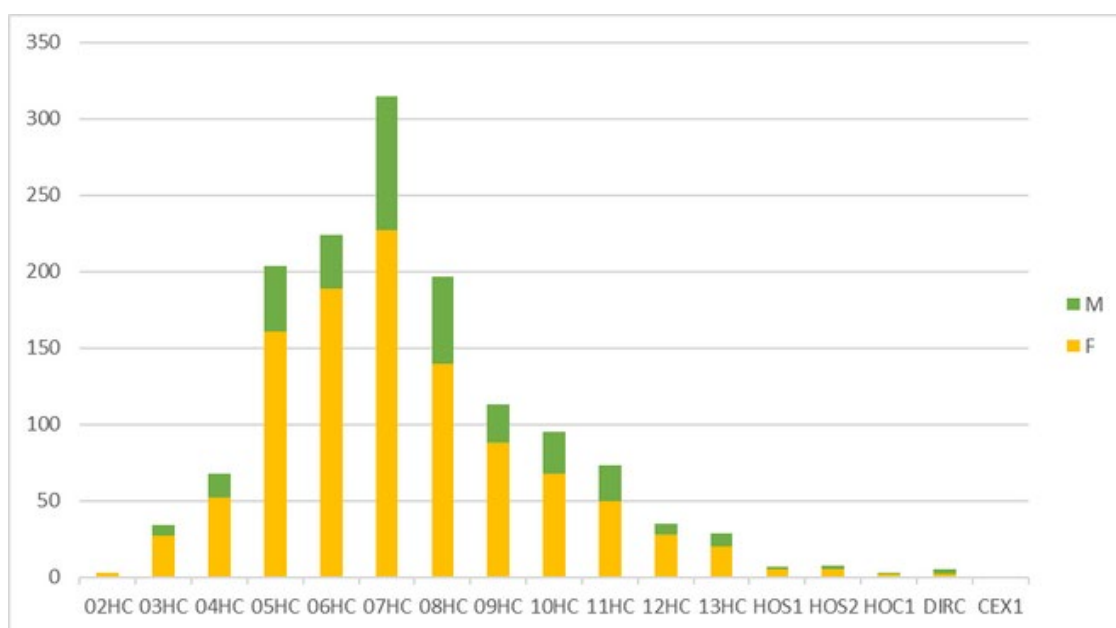
Our gender pay gap is reflective of the causes being at a societal level. Research shows that caring responsibilities and part time jobs continue to be shared/occupied unequally and that it is women who are predominantly drawn to part time jobs.

The opportunity to work part time in all other posts across the Council's structure, is supported by an array of family friendly policies that offer men and women the opportunity to find a balance between work, leisure, family and caring responsibilities.

Organisational context continued ...

Flexible working and agile working methodologies are intrinsic in supporting the reduction of the gender pay gap. The Council offers numerous benefits aimed at making it easier for employees to balance home and work life commitments including agile working opportunities, flexible working, home working, career breaks, adoption leave, carers leave, a flexible working hours scheme, job share, parental, shared parental and paternity leave, part time working, and term time only working opportunities.

Although these policies are available to both males and females, it remains the case that far more women than men have taken up the opportunities that these policies present, as at March 2024, 88% of our staff who worked less than 37 hours were female. Whilst the Council continues to deliver diverse services with a very high concentration of part time posts in the lower earnings quartile, the opportunity to close our gender pay gap will be limited based on the pure number of women that currently occupy and continue to be attracted to these posts; this is reflective in the gender distribution across our grades, demonstrated in the table below.



Actions to address the gap

The council is transparently opposed to discrimination in any form and our Elected Members and employees work to ensure that everyone in the communities we serve has access to and benefit from the full range of services, regardless of their individual circumstances or backgrounds. The council is committed to doing all that it can to respect the diverse nature of those who live in, work in and visit the County.

We truly value our workforce and we put equality, inclusion and well-being at the very heart of everything we do. We continue to champion diversity and challenge conscious and unconscious bias in our decision making and we will strive to ensure all groups are fairly represented across the organisation.

We are committed to developing a healthy organisation, one which provides an environment that nurtures employees, provides opportunity for personal and professional development and recognises excellence.

We continue with our 'Flexible Futures' programme first launched in 2022, which was created to transform the way the council operates, and empower our workforce to deliver our services and support functions remotely or flexibly where service need can still be met and without compromise to the quality of service delivered. In 2024 we surveyed every new starter joining us what made them choose us, 62% of the respondents told us that flexibility was the most important factor. When we asked our employees to rank which aspects of flexible working are most important to them, the majority stated the ability to work from home and flexibility in working patterns and flexibility in working hours were the most important.

We also understand that the well-being of our workforce is crucial, and part of this is promoting a strong work-life balance. As well as the promotion of flexible working, we offer all employees 31 days annual leave and the option to purchase up to 10 days additional leave.

In 2024 we re-launched our employee survey to ensure we continue to be an employer of choice, the results tell us we have a workforce that feels trusted, empowered to work flexibly, committed to quality and supported in their learning and development. Our goal is to 'be the difference' and have developed an action plan from 2024 to 2026 based on the results of our survey.

We have a strong mandatory e-learning offering for staff and managers which includes health, well being and equality training, with a further review being undertaken to include any feedback from our recent employee survey.

We also ensure that all requests and policies in relation to the right to request flexible working are managed fairly and free from bias.

The council is going through a period of change and transformation and is now looking ahead as to how the new culture and vision can be embedded. This encompasses a large work package to review and / or implement the following:

- Ensuring that our commitment to flexible working is highlighted in job adverts.
- Improving the workforce data that we hold to understand our workforce and the disparity in pay even further.
- Strengthening out induction offer and have introduced dedicated 'line manager' induction which receive positive feedback from attendees, and both of which have equality and equality reporting embedded.
- Producing guidance for Council managers on recruitment best practice which encourages skills based assessment tasks and structured interview processes. Structured interviews which have common interview questions for all candidates are less likely to allow unconscious bias to feature in selection decisions.
- Encouraging salary negotiation by showing the salary range in the job advert. Women are less likely to negotiate their pay. Advertising the salary range for a job encourages salary negotiation.
- Being transparent about pay and promotion processes by ensuring all promotional opportunities are advertised and ensuring Herefordshire Council is open about decisions related to pay. Being open about processes, policies and criteria for decision making means employees are clear what is involved, and managers understand that their decisions need to be objective and evidence-based because those decisions can be reviewed by others. In Herefordshire Council this particularly applies to secondment opportunities and internal promotions
- Encouraging the uptake of shared parental leave. The gender pay gap widens dramatically after women have children, but this could be reduced if men and women shared childcare more equally
- Offering mentoring and networking opportunities for women at work. Formal development opportunities for women at work are proven to be effective for improving career opportunities for some women.

Contact information:

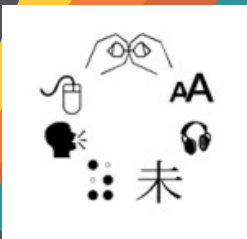
Human Resources Dept

Plough Lane

HR4 OLE

email: hrbusinesspartnering@hoopleltd.co.uk

Equality in Employment 2024-2025



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