

Gender Pay Gap Report 2026

Executive Summary: Gender Pay Gap Report 2026

Overview and Statutory Context

In accordance with mandatory government regulations for organisations with over 250 employees, the University of Sheffield has prepared its annual Gender Pay Gap (GPG) report based on snapshot data from March 2026 (to be published by March 2027).

This report measures the difference in average earnings between men and women across the entire workforce, regardless of role or level, and serves as an indicator of structural gender inequality within the institution.

Headline Pay Gap Figures

The 2026 snapshot data shows a divergence between mean and median trends:

- **Mean Gender Pay Gap:** Continues a downward trend, decreasing to **12.5%** from 13.5% in the previous year.
- **Comparison data for the 2025 snapshot** is now available and it is worth noting that the University continues to perform well within the Russell Group, ranking in the top five.
- **Median Gender Pay Gap:** Has increased to **10.9%** (up from 10.4% in 2025).
- **Comparison data for the 2025 snapshot** also shows that this upward trend in our median pay gap figures resulted in a drop to 8th place in the Russell Group rankings.

The discrepancy between these figures highlights that while overall average pay is improving, the mid-point earner's experience is shifting. We need to understand this discrepancy trend better to enable us to reflect if our actions in the Gender Equality Plan are fit for purpose.

Pay Quartile Analysis

The root cause of the pay gap remains vertical segregation, characterised by a higher proportion of women in lower-paid roles and men in senior positions.

Workforce Composition by Quartile (2026):

- **Lower:** 64.3% Female | 35.7% Male
- **Lower Middle:** 56.7% Female | 43.3% Male
- **Upper Middle:** 50.1% Female | 49.9% Male
- **Upper:** 44.5% Female | 55.5% Male

Positive trends include a continued increase in female representation within the **Upper Quartile** (up from 42.8% in 2025). However, there is still a marked decline in female representation as pay levels increase.

Bonus Pay and Recognition

The 2025-26 data indicates a significant gender bonus gap, largely driven by the Clinical Excellence Awards, which are tied to NHS terms and conditions outside of University control.

- **Mean Bonus Gap:** 60.6%.
- **Median Bonus Gap:** 0%.
- **Receipt of Awards:** A higher proportion of female staff (33%) received a bonus or recognition payment compared to male staff (27.7%).

Progress Against Targets

The University did not meet its ambitious 2020 target of a five-percentage-point reduction of the mean Gender Pay Gap by 2025, falling short by 2.2 percentage points. Further progress has been made against this target (the 2026 figures is 1.1 percentage points above the original 2025 target).

However, in the context of diverging mean and median targets, the University decided to focus future targets on the median GPG. Whilst the mean GPG is affected by outliers and extremes, a focus on the median GPG therefore allows us to monitor and address inequalities in the mid-point earner's experience.

Future Commitments:

- **New Target:** A **two-percentage-point** in the institutional **median** GPG by 2030. In the first year our median GPG has increased by 0.5 percentage points, so understanding and addressing this trend will be vital to achieve this target.
- **Interventions:** Our work continued to be delivered through our Gender Equality Action plan, which included a continued focus on inclusive recruitment, leadership development, targeted programmes for research academics returning from maternity leave and reviews of academic promotions.

Conclusion

While the declining mean GPG and improved female representation in the upper quartile are encouraging, the rising median gap necessitates a renewed focus on the distribution of female staff across middle-to-senior pay grades. Targeted faculty-level interventions and a shift toward median-based targets will be central to the University's strategy through to 2030.

1.1. Reporting

Regulations make it mandatory for all organisations with more than 250 employees to report their gender pay gap on an annual basis. Universities, along with other public sector bodies, are required to report their gender pay gap based on 31 March each year. The gender pay gap measures differences in pay between men and women across the entire workforce.

This report provides the outcomes of our gender pay gap reporting based on 2026 data. It reports on the following across our entire workforce:

- Proportion of males and females within pay quartiles
- Gender pay gap
- Gender bonus pay gap
- Proportion of individuals who received a bonus or recognition payment by gender

1.1.1. Reporting methodology

The University follows government guidance to calculate its Gender Pay Gap. Information about [how the pay gap is calculated](#) is available on the government web pages.

1.2. Gender Pay Quartiles

Pay quartiles show a breakdown of the percentage of men and women, when the workforce is split into 4 equally-sized groups, ranked from highest to lowest hourly pay.

The review of our gender pay quartiles broadly shows a declining representation of female colleagues across the pay quartiles from lower to upper pay quartiles, whilst conversely the representation of male colleagues is increasing (see Chart 1 and Table 1).

For context, at the University the pay quartiles broadly equate to the following grades:

- Lower = below 5.6
- Lower middle = between 5.6 and 7.3
- Upper middle = between 7.3 and 8.4
- Upper = above 8.4

Looking at the changes over time, we can observe a continued trend of increased female representation in the lower middle and upper quartiles, with a slight decline in female representation observed in the upper middle quartile (see Chart 2).

Chart 1: Percentage of males and females by pay quartile 2026

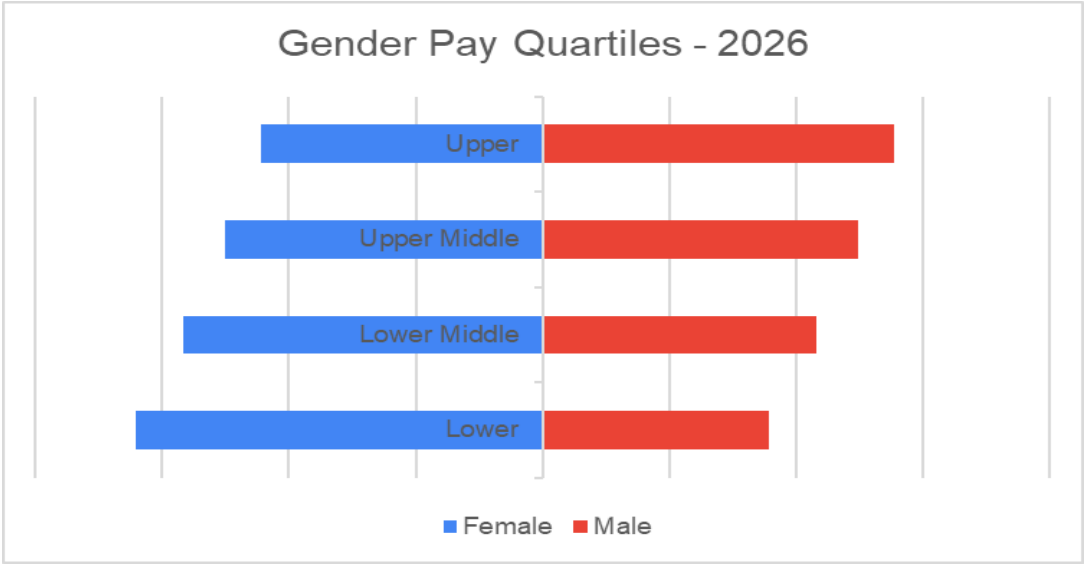
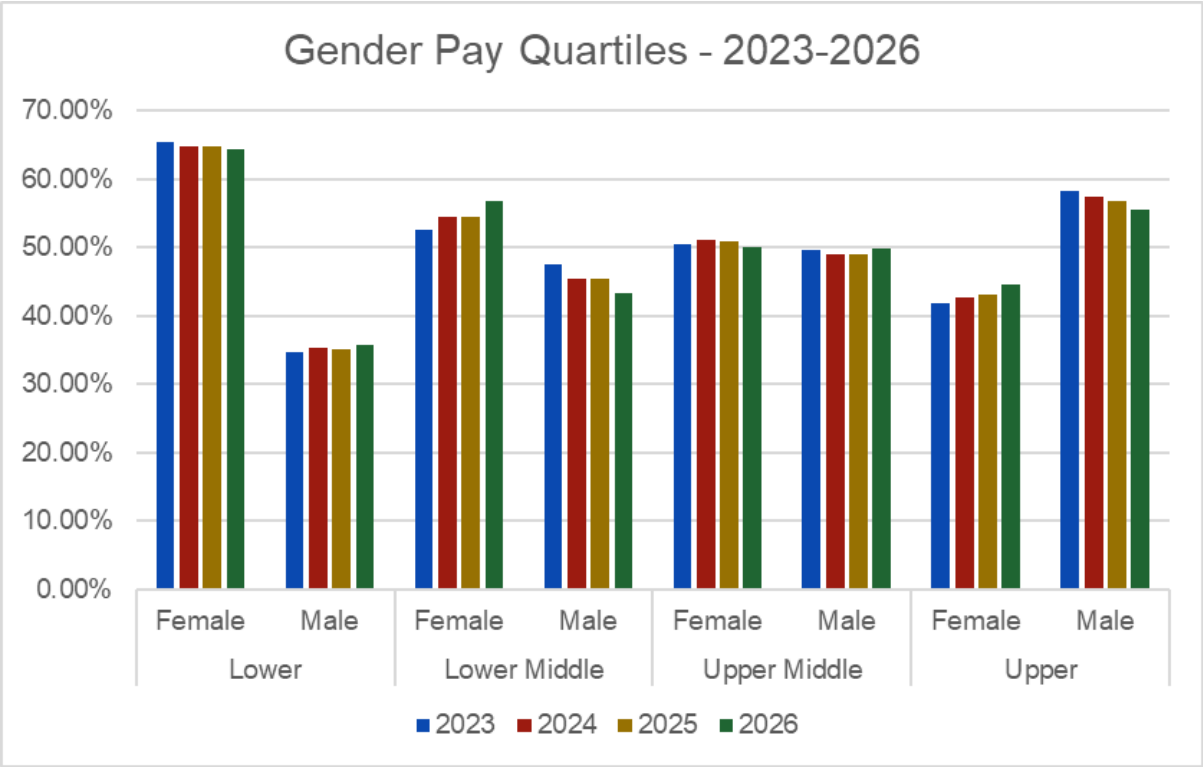


Table 1: Percentage of males and females by pay quartile 2025/2026:

University				
Pay Quartile and Gender	2025		2026	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
LOWER				
Female	1618	64.7%	1674	64.3%
Male	881	35.3%	929	35.7%
LOWER MIDDLE				
Female	1429	54.4%	1191	56.7%
Male	1197	45.6%	908	43.3%
UPPER MIDDLE				
Female	1183	50.9%	1223	50.1%
Male	1142	49.1%	1220	49.9%
UPPER				
Female	1056	42.8%	1004	44.5%
Male	1410	57.2%	1253	55.5%

Chart 2: Percentage of males and females by pay quartile 2023-2026



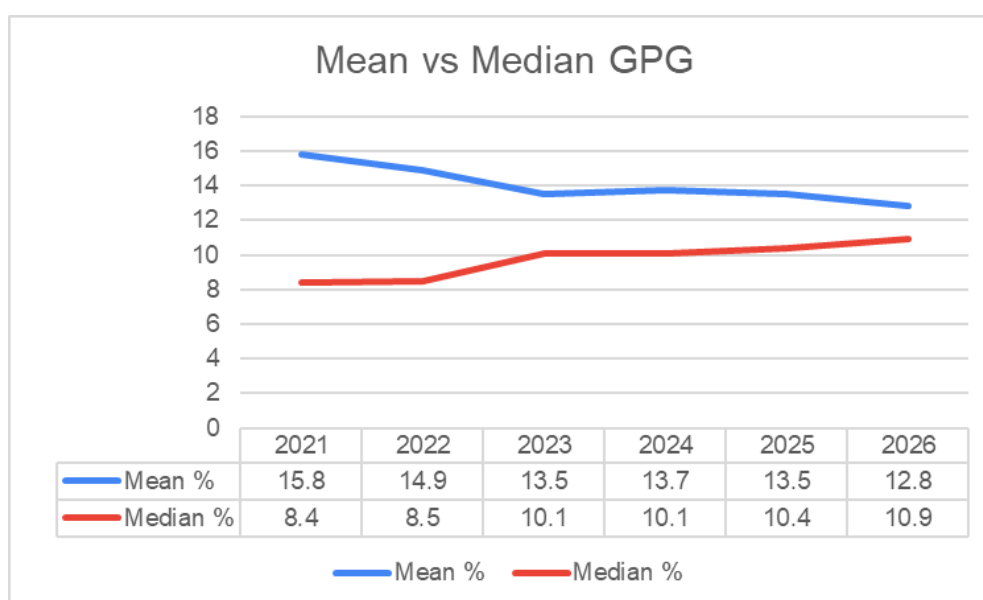
1.3. Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap shows the difference between the average (mean or median) earnings of men and women across the whole workforce, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings.

Gender Pay Gap Snapshot	Snapshot					
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
PAY GAP						
Mean %	12.5	13.5	13.7	13.5	14.9	15.8
Median %	10.9	10.4	10.1	10.1	8.5	8.4

Table 2: 2021-2026 mean and median gender pay gap. Mean = average, Median = the mid-point value of a sorted list of values.

Chart 3: Mean and median Gender Pay Gap over 2021-2026



Looking at the University's mean and median Gender Pay Gap over time shows that whilst our mean GPG is trending downwards, the median pay gap has seen an increase over time. Taking into account the distribution of the pay quartiles, this indicates that a better understanding of the changes in the median pay gap is needed to understand where the median pay gap comes from.

For 2026 the median hourly rate for male colleagues is £22.38 and for female colleagues it is £19.94 (see also Chart 4).

Chart 4: Median - hourly pay



1.4. Gender Bonus Gap

The gender bonus gap shows the difference between the average (mean or median) bonus received by men and women across the whole workforce. A positive bonus gap shows that males have received, on average, a higher bonus value than females.

Table 3: Mean and median bonus gap

	April 2025 - March 2026	April 2024 - March 2025	April 2023 - March 2024	April 2022 - March 2023	April 2021- March 2022
BONUS GAP					
Mean %	60.6	64.1	61.9	64.7	58.6
Median %	0.0	33.3	33.3	16.7	33.3

Table 4: Proportion of workforce by gender who received a bonus award

	April 2025 - March 2026	April 2024 - March 2025	April 2023 - March 2024	April 2022 - March 2023	April 2021- March 2022
PROPORTION RECEIVING BONUS					
Female	33.0	31.3	33.3	34.3	35.2
Male	27.7	23.3	27.2	26.4	27.2

In 2025-26, our bonus pay gap figures were based on the combined bonuses and awards paid from the schemes listed below:

Clinical Excellence Awards Scheme: This scheme applies to clinical academics in our employment but who are on NHS terms and conditions and pay scales which are not controlled by the University. We have classified these awards as bonus pay in line with the NHS.

Recognition Award Scheme: This scheme is available to all staff and enables departments to nominate individuals and teams to receive awards throughout the year for a job well done. In line with the legislation, this only includes monetary and voucher awards for individuals, not team awards or individual non-monetary gifts.

One-off Recognition Award Schemes: In 2024, we awarded a number of our colleagues for their hard work and efforts during the marking and assessment boycott.

The legislation requires us to combine and report on the bonus gap of the schemes together. The impact of combining these very different schemes is to create a higher overall mean bonus gap than if they were each assessed separately.

When the bonus gap of the schemes are calculated separately, the results are very different as the tables below show:

Table 5: Mean gender bonus gaps by scheme

Mean GPG	2025-2026	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022
All %	60.6	64.1	61.9	64.7	58.6
Senior %	7.7	16.1	-28.8	-9.9	-9.2
Clinical Excellence Awards %	-23.8	-20.9	4.2	-0.1	-2.4
Recognition Award Scheme %	-0.8	1.2	-5.0	0.0	4.5
One-off recognition scheme/other* %	-13.4	-13.1	19.8	N/A	N/A

Table 6: Median gender bonus gaps by scheme

Median GPG	2025-2026	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022
All %	0.0	33.3	33.3	16.7	33.3
Senior %	0.0	33.3	0.0	5.9	0.0
Clinical Excellence Awards %	-42.4	-54.6	-24.5	-36.6	-50.0
Recognition Award Scheme %	0.0	16.7	16.7	0.0	16.7
One-off recognition scheme/other %	-53.5	-40.6	20.6	N/A	N/A

Fluctuations in the mean or median bonus gap of the differing component schemes can have an impact on the overall bonus gap, particularly the median bonus gap.

More work is needed to understand the application of bonuses across the various schemes and how this impacts on the overall bonus gap.