

# **DARTFORD**

## **BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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### **Gender Pay Gap Report**

**February 2026**

## Gender Pay Gap Legislation

As an employer of over 250 people, Dartford Borough Council is legally required to publish annual Gender Pay Gap data under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017. These regulations aim to increase transparency and support the Government's ambition to eliminate the gender pay gap within a generation.

Gender pay gap reporting involves carrying out calculations that show the difference between the average earnings of men and women within the Council. It does not involve publishing individual employees' data.

This report sets out the Council's gender pay gap as at the snapshot date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, explains the factors influencing our figures, and outlines the steps we are taking to reduce the gap over time.

A **Gender Pay Gap** and **Equal Pay** are often confused and are not the same. It is important to distinguish between the two:

**Equal Pay:** Men and women being paid the same for doing the same or equivalent work.

**Gender Pay Gap:** The average difference in pay between men and women across an organisation, regardless of role.

The Council is committed to equal pay. We use a robust job evaluation system (Hay) to assess the relative value of each post, ensuring that men and women receive equal pay for equal work. Our gender pay gap does not arise from unequal pay, but from the distribution of men and women across different roles and grades.

## Reporting Requirements

The Regulations clearly define what gender pay gap figures need to be calculated and what pay data should and should not be included. The calculations required involve determining an hourly rate for all employees (on full-pay) on the snapshot date using their basic salary and other relevant payments including shift allowance and call-out. The calculations do not include things like overtime or redundancy payments.

The overall gender pay gap is defined as the difference between the median (actual midpoint) or mean (average) of the basic annual earnings of men and women expressed as a percentage of the median or mean basic annual earnings of men.

There are six basic calculations:

Mean Gender Pay Gap	The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of full-pay male employees and that of full-pay female employees.
Median Gender Pay Gap	The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of full-pay male employees and that of full-pay female employees.
Quartile Pay Bands	The proportions of male and female full-pay employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands.
Mean Bonus Gap	The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees.
Median Bonus Gap	The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees.
Bonus Proportions	The proportions of male and female full-pay employees who were paid any bonus pay during the relevant period.

## Dartford Borough Council Gender Pay Gap Figures

### Workforce Profile

The total headcount for the Council was 328 employees, made up of 202 females and 126 males.

♀	♂
61.59%	38.41%
Female	Male

This gender distribution plays a significant role in shaping the Council's gender pay gap, particularly because women are more heavily represented in lower graded roles, while some traditionally male dominated roles are contracted out and therefore not included in Council pay data.

### Mean Gender Pay Gap

The average mean hourly rate of pay for a male was £22.87. For a female the average mean hourly rate of pay was £19.13.

A 'mean' average involves adding up all the relevant pay and dividing the total by the number of employees.	Mean Gender Pay Gap: <b>16.35%</b>	The UK Public Sector national average is 12.3% <sup>i</sup>
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### Median Gender Pay Gap

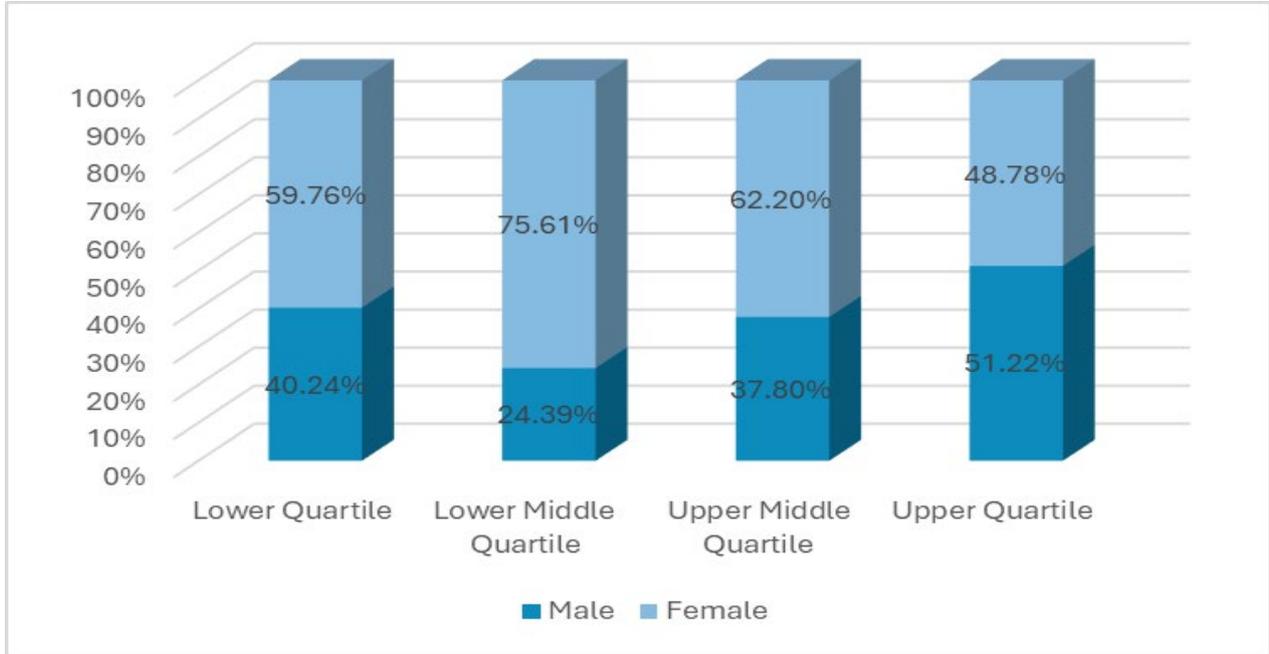
The average median hourly rate was £21.23 for a male and £16.91 for a female.

A median average involves listing all employees in numerical order of pay and the median average is the middle one.	Median Gender Pay Gap: <b>20.35%</b>	The UK Public Sector national average is 13.5% <sup>ii</sup>
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Although there has been a slight increase in the gender pay gap compared to last year, the Council has reduced its mean gender pay gap by 7.45% and its median gap by 7.15% since 2018. In smaller organisations, year-to-year changes can be influenced by individual appointments or structural changes, so long-term trends provide a more reliable indication of progress.

## Quartile Pay Bands

The workforce is divided into four quartiles, each containing 82 staff. The quartile distribution helps illustrate how men and women are spread across the Council’s pay structure.



Number of employees in each quartile:

	Lower Quartile	Lower Middle Quartile	Upper Middle Quartile	Upper Quartile
Male	33	20	30	42
Female	49	62	51	40
Total	82	82	82	82

The data shows that:

- Women are more concentrated in the lower and lower-middle quartiles.
- Gender representation is more balanced in the upper quartile, with nearly half of the highest-paid roles occupied by women.

It is important to note that four of the Council’s top ten salaries are held by women, including two of the three directors.

## Bonus Payments

The requirement to report on differences in bonus payments does not apply as the Council does not pay any bonus payments.

## Factors Influencing the Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap is not the same as unequal pay. At the Council, men and women are paid equally for the same or equivalent roles.

The Council's gender pay gap reflects structural, workforce, and labour market factors rather than equal pay concerns.

## Factors Outside the Council's Direct Control

- **Occupational Segregation**

Nationally, women are underrepresented in higher paid technical and senior roles. Within the Council women are more concentrated in administrative, customer service and part-time roles, which fall in lower pay bands.

- **Work Patterns and Part-Time Roles**

Women are more likely to work part-time or take career breaks for family reasons. Of all part-time staff within the Council, 75.86% are women, representing 32.67% of all female employees. As part-time roles are predominantly within lower graded posts, this significantly impacts the gender pay gap.

- **Personal Choice and Workforce Stability**

Many employees (particularly long-serving or older staff) value flexibility, predictable hours, a good work-life balance and job security over progression. This reduces movement into higher-paid roles.

- **Contracted-Out Services**

Many traditionally male dominated operational services (e.g. refuse collection and street cleansing) are outsourced. These lower paid posts therefore do not appear in the Council's data, reducing the number of men in the lower quartiles compared to other local authorities and widening the gender pay gap.

## Factors Within the Council's Control

The Council has continued to strengthen its approach to equal opportunity, professional development, and workplace flexibility.

Current measures include:

- **Fair and Transparent Pay Framework**

- Robust Hay job evaluation ensuring equal pay
- All employees start at the bottom of the grade, except in exceptional circumstances
- Commitment to pay The Living Wage Foundation UK Living Wage, which is higher than the Government's National Living Wage

- **Recruitment Practices**

- Name-blind recruitment
- Unconscious bias training
- Gender-neutral language in all job adverts
- Inclusive advertising to encourage more male applicants for lower graded roles
- All new roles are advertised with clear information on available flexibility unless there is a genuine service reason not to

- **Family-Friendly and Flexible Working**

- Enhanced parental leave (maternity, adoption, shared parental, paternity)
- Multiple flexible working options, including hybrid arrangements
- Promotion of flexibility at recruitment, induction, and through internal channels
- Staff returning from extended leave are offered phased return, skills refreshers, and structured check-ins to support a smooth and confident return

- **Development and Progression**

- Apprenticeships for both internal staff and external applicants
- Career-graded roles
- Support for professional learning and qualifications
- Regular one-to-one meetings that explore career aspirations
- Highlighting internal success stories to encourage progression
- Ensuring equal access for part-time staff to development opportunities through offering training sessions at varying times, including virtual and e-learning options
- Monitoring of workforce demographics and exit interviews to identify barriers

## **Future Actions**

To continue reducing the gender pay gap in a sustainable and realistic way, the Council will focus on actions that strengthen workforce capability, support staff mobility, and improve equality of opportunity across all services. Over the next two years, the focus will be on embedding measures that provide clear benefits for employees and help staff develop the skills and confidence needed for future opportunities.

- **Recruitment and Attraction**

- **Biannual monitoring of recruitment data** to track gender representation at each stage of the recruitment process (applications, shortlisting, appointments) and identify where targeted action may be required.
- **Review of job profiles and adverts** in lower graded, female dominated roles to ensure requirements and language do not unintentionally discourage male applicants.
- **Use of varied advertising channels** to broaden applicant pools where gender imbalance is identified.

- **Career Development and Internal Progression**

- **Expansion of career-graded posts** where appropriate, offering clearer development pathways and supporting progression from lower graded roles.
- **Soft-skills development sessions** to build confidence, communication, and readiness for progression.
- **Annual analysis of exit interview themes** to identify any gender related barriers and inform adjustments to development or recruitment practices.

## Summary and Key Points

- The Council is committed to equal pay and equal opportunity for all employees.
- The gender pay gap reflects the distribution of roles and the labour market context, not unequal pay for the same work.
- Women are well represented at senior levels, with nearly half of the highest-paid roles occupied by women including four of the top ten roles.
- The gender pay gap has slightly increased in the last year but shows a significant downward trend since 2018.
- The Council continues to implement actions to support career progression, promote flexibility, and encourage greater gender balance across all grades.

## Conclusion

The Council recognises that while some factors influencing the gender pay gap are outside its immediate control, proactive steps continue to be taken to support a fair, inclusive, and equitable workplace. We remain committed to reducing the gender pay gap responsibly and sustainably over time and to ensuring that all staff have equal access to opportunity, development, and career progression.

The Council will continue to monitor its gender pay gap closely and take proportionate, evidence-based action each year.

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<sup>i</sup> Source: Office for National Statistics – ASHE PubPri Table: Gender Pay Gap 2025

<sup>ii</sup> Source: Office for National Statistics – ASHE PubPri Table: Gender Pay Gap 2025