

JNCC Gender Pay Gap Report 2024 to 2025



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Foreword

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) is the UK's statutory nature advisor. Our vision, set out in *Together for Nature*, is thriving nature for a sustainable future, recognising that a healthy natural environment underpins national security, economic prosperity and societal wellbeing. For over 30 years, we have worked with partners across the UK, the Overseas Territories, the Crown Dependencies and internationally to support nature conservation and recovery. JNCC is governed by the Joint Committee, with representation from conservation bodies for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and independent members appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and is supported by its People and Culture Committee on people-related matters.

JNCC is a Non-Departmental Public Body, led by an Executive Committee and supported by teams of scientific, analytical and corporate professionals. While our employees are public servants rather than civil servants, our pay grades are aligned to the Civil Service pay structure.

We are committed to being a diverse, equitable and inclusive organisation, with zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, bullying or prejudice. This report sets out JNCC's gender pay gap information for the year ending 31 March 2025.

In our fourth year of reporting, I am proud of the progress JNCC has made in closing its gender pay gap. As of 31 March 2025, we have achieved a 0.0% median hourly gender pay gap, meaning there is no difference between the midpoint hourly pay of women and men across the organisation. This represents a significant milestone and reflects the strength of our pay and progression arrangements. While our mean hourly gender pay gap is 7.4%, this continues to be driven by the distribution of women and men across grades rather than differences in pay for comparable roles.

As a relatively small organisation, our figures can be sensitive to modest changes in workforce composition, and this year's results highlight the importance of sustained, long-term action. Our bonus data tells a similarly nuanced story, with very high participation rates for both women and men and outcomes influenced largely by working patterns rather than pay policy. While the **median bonus pay gap increased to 4% this year**, our analysis shows that this is largely driven by higher levels of part-time working among women and the resulting pro-rata bonus payments. The **mean bonus pay gap of -1.6%** indicates that, on average, women received slightly higher total-value bonuses than men

Looking ahead, we are clear about where further progress is needed. Through the actions agreed with our People and Culture Committee, we will continue to strengthen leadership pathways through inclusive talent management, to review recruitment and retention practices, and to promote flexible and inclusive ways of working. These steps will help us build a more balanced workforce and support continued, sustainable progress in reducing our gender pay gap in the years ahead.

Dr Gemma Harper OBE
Chief Executive

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Gender Pay Gap legislation, introduced in April 2017, requires all public sector employers of 250 or more employees to publish their gender pay gap annually for workers in scope as of 31 March. JNCC reached this size for the first time in March 2022, and therefore this is the fourth year we are reporting our gender pay gap.

1.2. Definitions

1.2.1. The Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap is the difference in the average pay between all men and women in an organisation, expressed as a percentage. It is different to equal pay, which is about the difference in the actual earnings of men and women doing equal work (or work of equal value).

The gender pay gap is measured in several ways, including the hourly pay gap (mean and median) and the bonus pay gap.

1.2.2. Full-Pay Relevant Employees

Full-pay relevant employees are those who were not paid at a reduced rate (e.g. as a result of unpaid leave) during the 'relevant pay period', which for JNCC is the payroll month ending on the snapshot date of 31 March 2025.

1.2.3. The Mean Gender Pay Gap

The mean gender pay gap is the difference between the mean (average) hourly rate of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees.

1.2.4. The Median Gender Pay Gap

The median gender pay gap is the difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees. The median hourly rate is found by listing the hourly rates in order of value and selecting the middle value.

1.2.5. The Bonus Pay Gap

The bonus pay gap measures payments to reward performance, either as part of the annual pay award or throughout the year as either cash or gift vouchers. The mean bonus value is found by adding all bonus values together and dividing the total by how many people were paid bonuses. The median is the middle value if all bonuses were ordered from lowest to highest.

2. Scope

For the purposes of this report, and in accordance with the guidance, we have included all employees who were employed on the snapshot date of 31 March 2025. As a result, not all employees who were active on our March payroll are included, as some had left employment prior to the snapshot date. We have included employees who are on secondments to other organisations, even though their pay is determined by the partner organisation, and therefore outside of our control, as they remain our employees and on our payroll.

We note that, whilst our Committee Members are included in our payroll, they do not fall under the definition of an “employee,” so are excluded from the analysis.

In previous years’ reports, our analysis was based on employees’ legally registered gender, in line with payroll records. This year, we have updated our approach in accordance with the latest [gender pay gap reporting guidance](#). We have used employees’ declared gender, where this information has been provided in our HR system. Employees who do not self-identify as either gender have been excluded from the calculations.

3. JNCC’s Gender Profile

On the snapshot date of 31 March 2025, 73% of JNCC’s employees were female and 27% were male. This shows that our gender profile, which has been consistently weighted towards a higher female population, has become slightly more unequal over the past year. For the previous three years our gender profile had remained stable at 71 percent female and 29 percent male. Our percentage of female employees remains substantially higher than the Civil Service average of 54.6% female (see [Civil Service Statistics 2025](#)).

A breakdown of male and female staff by grade is provided in Figure 1 and Table 1. Overall, there are more women than men at all grades in JNCC, apart from SCS, where the numbers are equal.

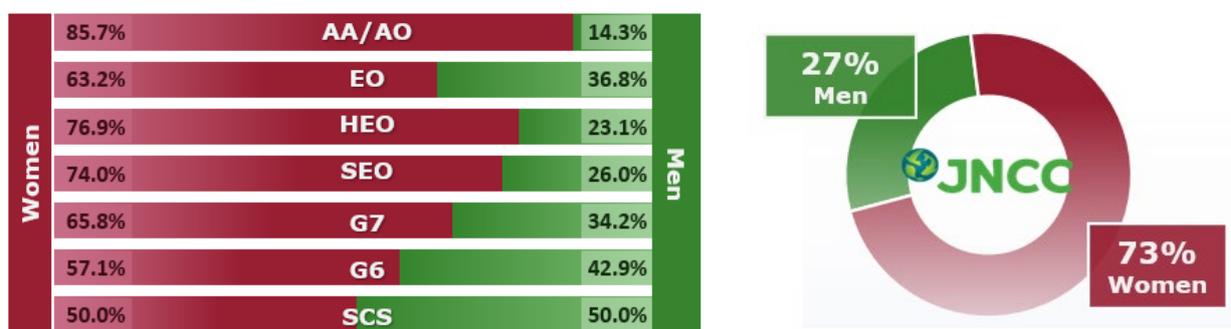


Figure 1. Proportions/percentages of male and female staff in JNCC at different pay grades, accompanied by the overall/total percentage of male and female staff. Values (in percent) are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Percentages of female and male staff at each grade within JNCC. Note: the sample sizes for our G6 and SCS grades are very small, at just seven and four employees respectively; due to the small sample size, our two grades of SCS 1 and SCS 2 have been combined in these figures.

Grade	Percentage of female staff (women)	Percentage of male staff (men)
AA/AO	85.7%	14.3%
EO	63.2%	36.8%
HEO	76.9%	23.1%
SEO	74.0%	26.0%
G7	65.8%	34.2%
G6	57.1%	42.9%
SCS (combines SCS1 and 2)	50.0%	50.0%
All grades	73%	27%

4. Analysis of Gender Pay Gap Data

Out of 293 employees with a recorded gender of male or female, 287 were defined under the guidance as “full-pay relevant” (see Section 1.2.2). This is a decrease in organisational size since 2024, when we reported 317 employees, of whom 313 were full-pay relevant.

4.1. Hourly Pay

4.1.1. Hourly Pay Quartiles

Pay quartiles show the distribution of earnings when looking at pay. The workforce is divided into four equal groups, ranging from the lowest to the highest paid individuals. Figure 2 and Table 2 show the proportion of male and female employees in each quartile.

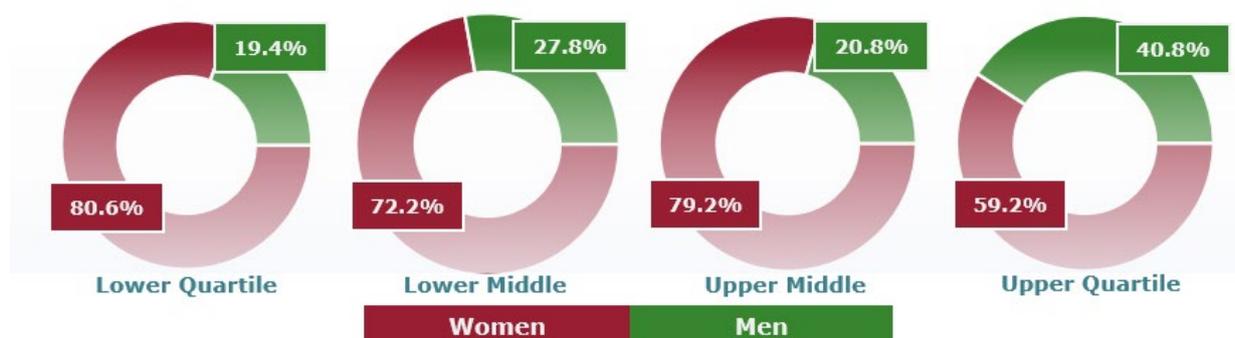


Figure 2. Percentages of male and female staff in each hourly pay quartile within JNCC. Values (in percent) are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Percentages of male and female staff in each hourly pay quartile within JNCC, with a comparison to the previous year.

Quartile	Percentage of female staff (women)			Percentage of male staff (men)		
	2024	2025	Direction of change (2024 to 2025)	2024	2025	Direction of change (2024 to 2025)
Lower	72.2%	80.6%	increase	27.8%	19.4%	decrease
Lower middle	73.1%	72.2%	decrease	26.9%	27.8%	increase
Upper middle	78.2%	79.2%	increase	21.8%	20.8%	decrease
Upper	61.5%	59.2%	decrease	38.5%	40.8%	increase

The hourly pay quartiles shown in Figure 2 and Table 2 demonstrate that women continue to form the majority of staff across all four pay quartiles in both 2024 and 2025. The largest change from 2024 to 2025 is in the lower quartile, where the proportion of women increased markedly from 72.2% to 80.6%, an increase of +8.4 percentage points.

In contrast, the upper quartile shows a small shift towards men, with women decreasing from 61.5% to 59.2%, a drop of -2.3 percentage points, and men increasing from 38.5% to 40.8%, an increase of +2.3 percentage points. This reflects our analysis of gender representation across pay grades, which showed that women in our senior leadership roles (Grade 7 and above) reduced from 65.3% in 2024 to 63.3% in March 2025.

The lower middle and upper middle quartiles are broadly stable year-on-year, with only minor movement (around 1 percentage point).

4.1.2. Hourly Pay Gender Pay Gap



Our mean hourly pay gender pay gap on 31 March 2025 is **7.4%**, and the median is **0.0%**. Compared to 2024, when the mean gap was 5.3% and the median was 0.6%, this reflects a small widening of the mean gap and a narrowing of the median gap. The mean gender pay gap shows the overall difference in average earnings across the workforce and indicates that, on average, male employees continue to earn more than female employees. The median gender pay gap compares the midpoint hourly pay for men and

women and is less affected by salaries at the extremes (high and low) of the distribution across the organisation. This year’s median result shows that the midpoint hourly pay for male and female employees is equivalent.

Our mean gender pay gap is now slightly higher than the Civil Service average for 2025 of 6.9%. However, our 0% median gender pay gap is significantly lower than the Civil Service median of 6.4% for 2025 (see [Civil Service Statistics 2025](#)).

4.1.3. Hourly Gender Pay Gap Year-on-Year Comparison

Over the four years that JNCC has reported its gender pay figures, the median hourly pay gap has reduced markedly, falling from 17.1% in 2022 to 0.0% in 2025. As noted in previous reports, our small number of male employees means that relatively minor changes in staffing can have a noticeable effect on the mean gender pay gap. This expected fluctuation has occurred in 2025, resulting in a small increase in the mean figure. When viewed across the four-year period, the mean gender pay gap averages 6.5%, which is lower than the current Civil Service mean.

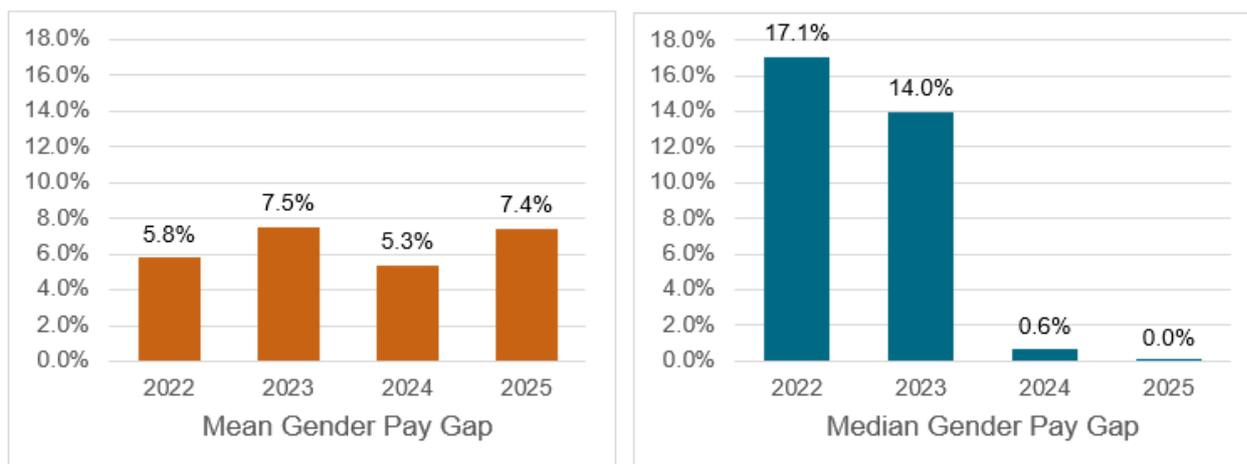


Figure 3. Graph showing our mean and median hourly gender pay gap values for the years 2022 to 2025.

4.1.4. Analysis of Mean Hourly Gender Pay Gap

Our analysis shows that the mean gender pay gap at JNCC continues to be shaped primarily by the gender distribution of employees across grades. The increase in mean gender pay gap, from 5.3% in 2024 to 7.4% in 2025 has been driven mainly by shifts in the proportion of women and men at each grade, rather than by widening differences in pay within grades or changes to the relative pay levels between grades.

Men remain over-represented in our senior grades (G7 and above), relative to their proportion in the organisation, and are under-represented in our AA, AO and HEO grades. Although men do not form the majority at senior levels, their proportion is still higher than their representation across JNCC overall. This pattern continues to influence the mean hourly gender pay gap.

During this period, our overall headcount reduced, and, relative to our organisational gender balance, we saw proportionally higher-paid female employees leaving and proportionally lower-paid male employees leaving. We also recruited more female staff at the lower grades. Together, these factors have contributed to the widening of the mean gap.

At senior levels, whilst there has been an increase in female representation in our Grade 6 roles (from 40% in 2024 to 57.1% in 2025), this was counterbalanced by a proportionate reduction in women in our grade 7 roles (from 70% to 65.8%). This has reduced the proportion of women in our senior leadership roles (Grade 7 and above) overall from 65.3% in 2024 to 63.3% in March 2025, which has also contributed to the increase in mean gender pay gap.

A further contributor to the mean gender pay gap, although less influential than grade distribution, is the continued disproportionate number of men in roles that receive Recruitment and Retention Allowances. This reflects the concentration of Recruitment and Retention Allowances in certain technical roles, which attract higher salaries in the open market than those available within JNCC pay scales and are currently held by a higher proportion of men. The impact of this has reduced since 2024, and analysis and work undertaken during 2025 is expected to support further improvement in this area during 2026.

Overall, the evidence shows that our pay policies continue to limit gender pay disparities within grades. The widening of the overall mean gender pay gap this year reflects the combined effect of workforce movements in a small organisation, where relatively modest staffing changes can have a notable impact on the aggregated figures.

4.1.5. Analysis of Median Hourly Gender Pay Gap

Our median hourly gender pay gap has reduced from 0.6% in 2024 to 0.0% in 2025. This year's result therefore shows that there is no difference in the midpoint hourly pay for men and women in JNCC.

The median figure is generally considered the most representative measure of typical pay, as it is less affected by extremes within the data. Therefore, the elimination of a gender pay gap from a starting point of 17.1% in 2022 to attaining 0.0% in 2025 is a significant achievement.

However, our analysis indicates that the median pay gap could shift by several percentage points in either direction if only a small number of employees changed grade or left the organisation. Continued focus on the representation of women and men at all grades, as well as equitable progression opportunities, remains essential to ensuring long-term and sustainable improvements.

4.2. Bonus Pay

4.2.1. Percentage of Men and Women Receiving Bonus Pay

In the twelve months ending on our snapshot date of 31 March 2025, 95.8% of female staff and 96.2% of male staff received a bonus (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Illustration showing the percentages of male and female staff receiving a bonus in the twelve months ending on 31 March 2025.

4.2.2. Bonus Pay Gender Pay Gap



The mean bonus gender pay gap for 2025 was -1.6% (a reduction from 10% in 2024) and the median bonus gender pay gap was 4% (an increase from 0% in 2024).

Our analysis shows that the negative mean bonus gap, which indicates that female employees have on average received higher total-value bonuses than male employees, is largely driven by Senior Civil Service (SCS) bonuses. If these were excluded, the mean bonus gap would be 3.86%, which is much closer to the median figure. We can therefore conclude that the median bonus gap of 4% is a more representative indication of our bonus pay gender pay gap this year, and that this has increased since 2024.

The primary contributor to the bonus pay gap in 2025 has been the higher proportion of female employees working part-time, and therefore receiving pro-rata bonus awards, compared with male employees.

5. Taking Action to Close the Gender Pay Gap

Over the past year, we have continued to build on JNCC's strengths and take deliberate action to foster an inclusive organisation and reduce our gender pay gap. These efforts are reflected in our progress this year, while also reinforcing the need for sustained focus to secure long-term change.

5.1. Working patterns and flexible working

Flexible working remains a key feature of our approach. Many of our staff, including those in senior positions, undertake their roles on a flexible basis, and all employees can

access hybrid working arrangements to support work-life balance. Evidence shows that well-designed flexible working can help reduce gender inequality by supporting retention and progression, particularly for those with caring responsibilities, and we remain committed to embedding this as standard practice across the organisation.

5.2. Strengthening policy and governance

During 2026/27, we will review our policies and practices to understand how we can better support flexible and part-time working for all employees, including encouraging greater take-up of part-time working among men, recognising its potential impact on bonus outcomes. We have strengthened governance by introducing a new employment policy template that requires equality analysis for all new policies, alongside a programme to review and complete equality analyses for existing policies. This work provides greater assurance that our policies and practices support fairness and consistency.

5.3. Fair and inclusive recruitment

Our recruitment and selection processes are based on merit and fair and open competition. We continue to use structured interviews, anonymised applications, trained interview panels and diverse panel membership to support fair decision-making and strengthen diversity across our workforce. We have recently embarked upon a recruitment review to further strengthen our processes and make sure they are inclusive. As part of this work, we will explore targeted actions to improve our overall gender balance, including increasing the recruitment and retention of male staff at AA to O grades, where they are currently under-represented.

5.4. Embedding diversity, equity and inclusion

We have sustained strong momentum in our diversity, equity and inclusion activity. Our active DEI working group has supported the achievement of TIDE Bronze accreditation for a second consecutive year, with a clear ambition to reach Gold within three years. In 2024, we also established White Ribbon at JNCC, delivering sessions to more than 100 colleagues and raising awareness across the organisation. During 2025–2026, we will integrate White Ribbon commitments into our values, leadership expectations and organisational processes.

5.5. Reviewing pay, allowances and incentives

Looking ahead, we will continue to work with our People and Culture Committee to address the remaining drivers of our gender pay gap. This includes embedding equality analysis into reviews of all allowances, particularly Recruitment and Retention Allowances, following a review completed in July 2025. We expect to see results of this review in our Gender Pay Gap assessment in 2026/27. We are also taking targeted action to attract more women into IT, digital, data and technology roles. We will continue to review Recruitment and Retention Allowances to ensure they are applied equitably, support and encourage female applicants for roles where allowances apply and assess whether allowances are appropriately targeted across a wider range of roles, including those more commonly held by women.

5.6. Developing future leaders

We remain committed to developing our people at all stages of their careers. We will continue to develop leadership capability among female staff, with a particular focus on progression to G7 and G6 middle to senior management roles, to strengthen gender balance at senior levels. Alongside our established middle management leadership programme, we have launched new initiatives including our G7 leadership programme and CoMeSh (Coaching, Mentoring and Shadowing). Building on their early success, we are now scoping development opportunities for H and O grades. We will continue to ensure that participation is accessible, including through flexible and virtual delivery where possible.

6. Declaration

We confirm that data reported by JNCC are accurate and have been calculated according to the requirements and methodology set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

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Chief Operating Officer

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