

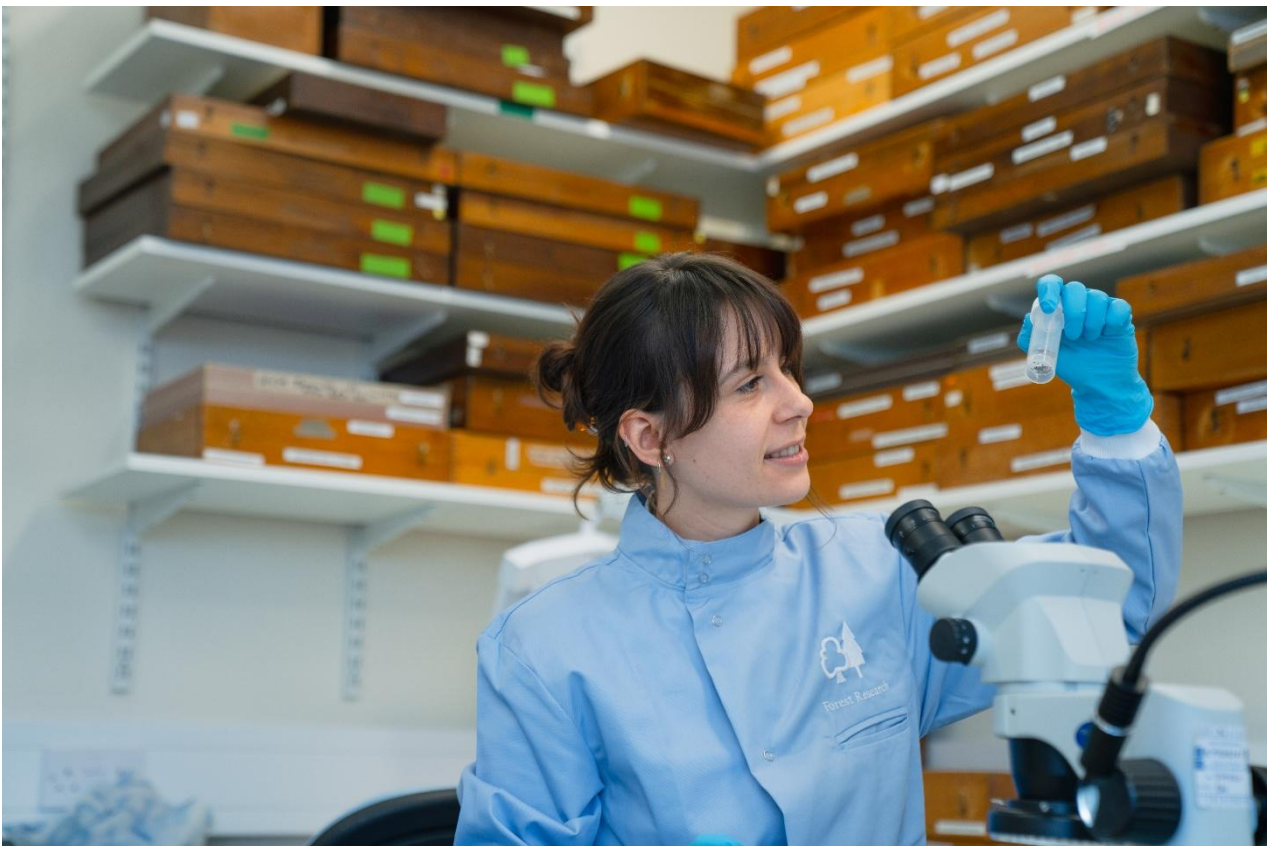
Gender Pay Gap Report 2025

Published March 2026



Contents

Executive summary	3
About this report	4
Forestry Commission Gender Mix	5
FC Gender Pay Gap	5
Causes of the Gender Pay Gap at the Forestry Commission	7
Working to reduce the Gender Pay Gap	7
Narrowing of Pay Ranges	7
Women’s staff network	7
Everyone Belongs Board	7
Policies and Procedures	8
Diversity and Inclusion training	8
Leadership and management development	9
Conclusion	10



Executive summary

This Gender Pay Gap Report covers the Forestry Commission's data for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and demonstrates continued progress toward reducing pay disparities between men and women across the organisation. As of March 2025, women represent **46.7%** of the workforce, reflecting long-term improvements in gender representation across historically male-dominated operational roles.

For the third consecutive year, the **median gender pay gap remains at 0%**, indicating that the midpoint salary for men and women is equivalent. The **mean gender pay gap has reduced to 1.88%**, an improvement on the previous year's figure of 2.96%, showing that overall average pay continues to move toward greater parity.

Bonus pay data is not included due to the very small number of employees eligible for bonus schemes, which would make comparisons unreliable. The distribution of men and women across pay quartiles remains broadly aligned with overall workforce proportions, though some variation persists in lower quartiles due to a higher number of men in operational roles that include additional contractual hours.

The Forestry Commission continues to implement a range of initiatives designed to address structural drivers of the pay gap. Key actions include the transition to spot salaries to reduce legacy pay variation, the growth and activity of the Women's Staff Network, strengthened diversity and inclusion governance through the Everyone Belongs Board, and training programmes aligned with new legal responsibilities introduced by the Worker Protection Act 2023.

Significant investment in leadership and management development—through the Professional Manager Programme and the Senior Leadership Programme—is further strengthening inclusive behaviours, fair decision-making and equitable development pathways, all of which support long-term gender parity.

The Forestry Commission remains committed to fostering an inclusive workplace where everyone can grow, progress and contribute. With a zero median pay gap, a continued reduction in the mean pay gap, and ambitious organisational programmes underway, the organisation is well positioned to make further progress toward eliminating the gender pay gap entirely.

About this report

This gender pay gap report for the Forestry Commission covers the period 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025. It publishes the mean and median gender pay gaps, the bonus pay gap and the proportions of male and female employees in each pay quartile.

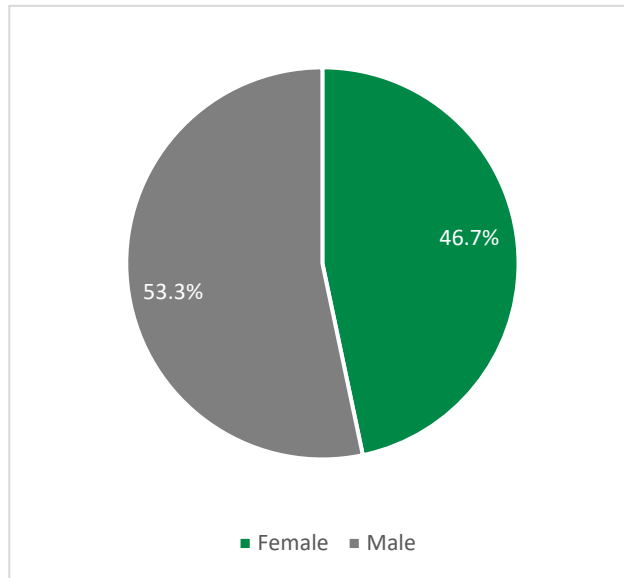
The gender pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between all men and women in a workforce. If a workforce has a particularly high gender pay gap, this can indicate issues to address such as less women working in higher pay bands.

The gender pay gap is different to equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. It is unlawful to pay people unequally because they are a man or a woman.

The Forestry Commission is committed to equality of opportunity for all and will continuously strive to reduce the gender pay gap.



Forestry Commission Gender Mix



As at 31st March 2025, **46.7%** of the Forestry Commission workforce is female, which is a minor decrease of 0.3% from the previous year.

FC Gender Pay Gap

Year	Mean Pay Gap	Median Pay Gap
2025	1.88%	0.00%
2024	2.96%	0.00%
2023	2.84%	0.00%
2022	3.07%	-0.28%
2021	4.6%	6.1%

The average (mean) hourly rate for males is **1.88%** higher than for females. The median gender pay gap remains at **0%** for the third consecutive year.

The mean pay gap has decreased since the previous year where it was 2.96%.

The median shows that of all the male and female employees of the Forestry Commission, the middle female salary is equivalent to the middle male salary. The median equates to a full time pay band 5 (executive officer) contract for both sexes.

Bonus Pay Gap

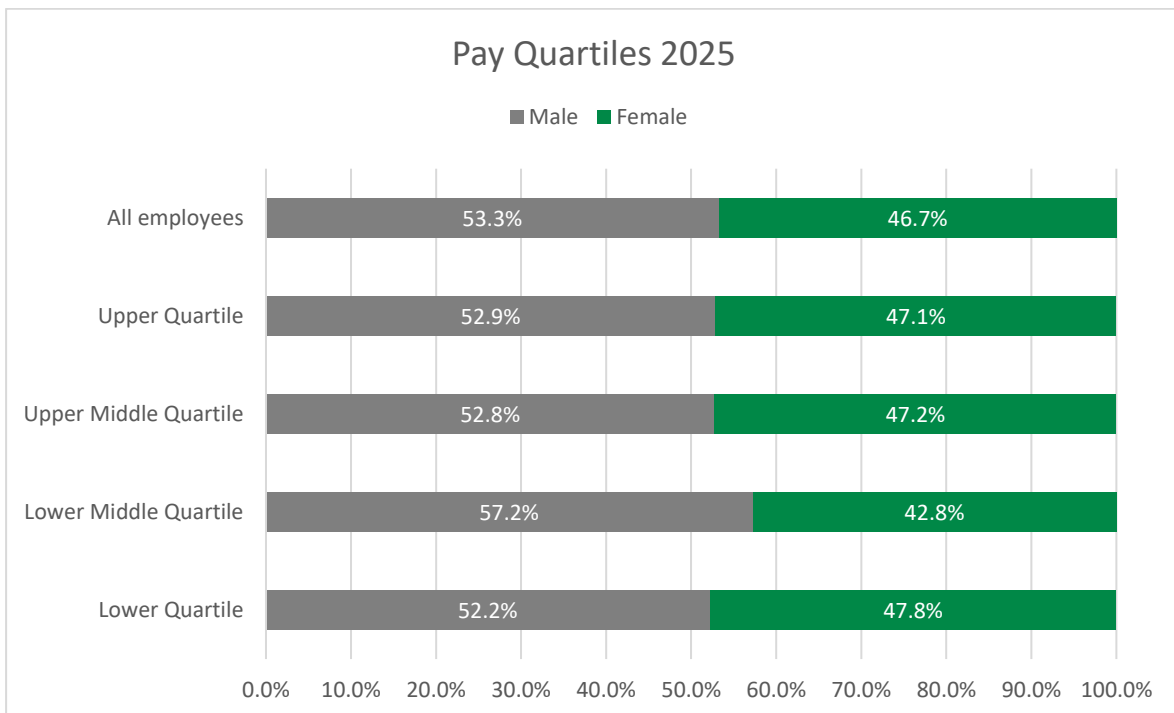
There are two bonus schemes within the Forestry Commission, however they are only available to a small section of employees:

- 1) Performance bonuses are only available for the Senior Civil Servant grades. (9 employees total as at March 2025)
- 2) Promotion bonus to employees that are promoted from operational to non-operational grades, where the difference in salary is less than a 10% uplift.

The Forestry Commission does not usually include the bonus pay gap percentages in its report due to the low numbers of employees impacted. Additionally, the majority of the promotion bonuses are minor amounts (less than £15). While the Senior Civil Servant performance bonuses are larger amounts no more than 4 have been paid each year, this creates significant volatility when trying to compare the mean and median changes.

Pay Quartiles

Proportion of men and women in each hourly pay quartile



The upper and upper middle quartiles are largely in-line with overall headcount distribution. However there is some deviation within the lower and lower middle quartile. This is likely due to the fact there are more males working operational contracts. Operational grades only exist at supervisor/junior line management/junior professional level and attract a higher salary for working additional contractual hours above their non-operational counterparts.

Causes of the Gender Pay Gap at the Forestry Commission

Forestry work has historically attracted fewer female candidates than male candidates. This is particularly the case in forestry operational roles. This imbalance is improving and the proportion of female employees has increased over the past few years from 35% to 46.7%. In 2005 the gender pay gap at the Forestry Commission was 21%. Significant work has been undertaken over recent years to reduce this to the current position.

Working to reduce the Gender Pay Gap

The Forestry Commission is committed to improving our gender pay gap and has several programmes underway looking to reduce it, these include:

Narrowing of Pay Ranges

Historical salary progression within a grade was removed across the Civil Service and recruiting external staff to the bottom of the pay band became the standard procedure. As a result of this, staff with a longer length of service within the same grade would often be paid more by virtue of being employed before the policy change. The Forestry Commission has sought to resolve this by moving from pay grade scales to spot points, whereby all employees within a grade are paid the same salary.

As of the October 2025 pay award, 89% of employees are now on a spot salary, or at the bottom of their pay range. It is anticipated that this will have a positive impact on next year's pay gap report.

Women's staff network

The Forestry Commission Women's Staff Network was launched in November 2022 and has 267 members at the time of writing this report. The network hosts regular events and also has a Forestry Flushes menopause support group.

Event topics have included mindfulness, male allyship, neurodiversity, menopause, menstrual health, and psychological safety at work.

More recently, the network has been focusing on supporting women in leadership and through career development.

Everyone Belongs Board

The Everyone Belongs Board was launched in July 2023 with engaged members, including the co-chairs of the Women's staff network, who are passionate about championing diversity and inclusion within the organisation.

The board provides oversight, assurance and co-ordination of the Forestry Commission's compliance with EDI legal and government requirements, and championing a culture where everyone is welcome and included.

The programmes cover staff, volunteers, visitors, communities and other stakeholders, and includes:

- Ensuring the Forestry Commission's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Supporting the delivery of the Forestry Commission's Inclusion Strategy.
- Supporting the delivery of the Forests for Everyone programme.

Policies and Procedures

Through the application of our policies and procedures we are continuously striving to reduce the gender pay gap. For example, we have been considering the language used in job adverts across the board but particularly in senior roles. We want to widen the pool of who applies for senior roles. In Forest Research, there are science promotion procedures. We are ensuring that the panel is balanced and checks are made at each stage of the process to check for fairness (e.g. part time working/career breaks).

Diversity and Inclusion training

The Workers Protection Act 2023 introduced new employer responsibilities which came into effect on 26 October 2024. The Act requires employers to take active steps to safeguard employees and strengthen existing protections against workplace sexual harassment.

To support the changes, we introduced training to help staff to understand and be confident about their role in preventing sexual harassment and fostering a positive work environment for everyone.

All Forestry Commission staff now have access to the Preventing sexual harassment eLearning on our Forestry eLearning platform.

The eLearning was developed using real, anonymised experiences shared by members of the Forestry Commission's Women's Staff Network.

The stories highlight the different ways sexual harassment can and has happened – from inappropriate comments and unwanted touching to persistent messages and subtle gender-based discrimination.

This training is part of our commitment to create a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace for everyone. It followed the launch of our preventing sexual harassment at work guidance in January 2025 and live managers' training in July 2025.

Staff also have access to a workshop called Creating an inclusive workplace. This is a half-day session delivered by the Diversity and Wellbeing Manager and the Forests for Everyone Community Programme Manager.

It covers a range of topics including unconscious bias, gender stereotypes, microaggressions, privilege, allyship inclusive language and diversity in recruitment.

This will ensure that all employees understand the importance of diversity within their teams and will challenge any bias, stereotypes or discrimination, including around gender.

Leadership and management development

The Forestry Commission continues to invest in developing inclusive, confident and capable leaders at all levels, recognising that high-quality leadership is fundamental to reducing structural inequalities, including those that contribute to the gender pay gap. Our **Professional Manager Programme (PMP)** provides managers with the behavioural, leadership and management skills required to lead with confidence, foster psychologically safe teams and apply people processes fairly and consistently.

Through modules focused on coaching, honest performance conversations, inclusive team-building and mental health awareness, the PMP equips managers with the practical tools needed to tackle bias, ensure equitable access to development opportunities and support progression for women and gender-diverse colleagues across progression grades. These improvements in day-to-day people management are essential in addressing known drivers of the gender pay gap, such as inconsistent performance evaluation, unequal allocation of stretch assignments and barriers to progression into higher-paid roles.

At senior levels, the Forestry Commission's **Senior Leadership Programme (SLP)** is helping leaders at pay bands 2 and 1 to lead with clarity, compassion and courage. The programme focuses on empathetic, human-centred leadership and has already resulted in leaders demonstrating stronger listening skills, more transparent decision-making and more collaborative team cultures. The SLP supports leaders to use evidence-based frameworks—such as [SCARF](#) and [BRAVING](#)—to hold honest conversations, build trust and create psychologically safe environments. Participants report increased self-awareness, confidence and the ability to support teams through uncertainty, all of which contribute to a more inclusive leadership culture.

Strengthening senior leadership capability in these areas is crucial for addressing systemic drivers of the gender pay gap, ensuring that high-level decisions are fair, transparent and responsive to the needs and experiences of women across the organisation.

Together, these programmes form a comprehensive leadership development pathway that reinforces an organisational culture where inclusion, equity and fairness are embedded at every level. By equipping managers and senior leaders with the skills to recognise and challenge bias, support diverse talent pipelines and create positive, empowering team environments, both the PMP and SLP directly support efforts to close the gender pay gap. They ensure that all colleagues—regardless of gender—have equal opportunity to grow, contribute and progress within the Forestry Commission.

Conclusion

The Forestry Commission remains strongly committed to reducing the gender pay gap and creating a workplace where everyone can thrive. The continued median pay gap of 0% demonstrates sustained progress toward pay parity, while the reduction in the mean pay gap to 1.88% reflects the positive impact of ongoing actions to address structural barriers and support fair, consistent pay practices.

Initiatives such as the move toward spot salaries, strengthened leadership development programmes, and the growing influence of the Women's Staff Network continue to make a meaningful difference. Increased female representation and improvements seen through staff engagement also highlight the value of our focus on inclusion, transparency and equitable opportunities.

Looking ahead, the Forestry Commission will continue to build on this progress by embedding inclusive behaviours across all levels of leadership, supporting diverse talent pipelines, and ensuring policies and processes actively promote fairness. By maintaining momentum and continuing to learn from staff experiences, the organisation is well-placed to drive further improvements and move closer to eliminating the gender pay gap entirely.

