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The gender pay gap



Summary

- 1 What is the gender pay gap?
- 2 How big is the gender pay gap?
- 3 Age and the gender pay gap
- 4 Occupation
- 5 Industry
- 6 Public and private sector
- 7 Region and country
- 8 Higher-paid and lower-paid employees

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Contents

Summary	4
1 What is the gender pay gap?	7
2 How big is the gender pay gap?	9
2.1 The gender pay gap and hours worked	9
2.2 How has the gap changed over time?	10
2.3 Employers reporting gender pay gap data	11
3 Age and the gender pay gap	14
3.1 Motherhood and the gender pay gap	15
3.2 Pay gap varies by generation and education	18
3.3 Where women work	19
4 Occupation	21
5 Industry	25
6 Public and private sector	27
7 Region and country	29
8 Higher-paid and lower-paid employees	31

Summary

The gender pay gap measures the difference between average (median) hourly earnings of men and women, usually shown by the percentage men earn more than women.

This briefing provides statistics on the size of the gender pay gap in the UK and looks at some of the reasons why there is a gender pay gap.

Note that figures for 2020 and 2021 should be treated with some caution. Some people were on furlough with reduced pay and figures for 2020 were particularly affected by disruptions to the collection of data from businesses.

How big is the gender pay gap in the UK?

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), median hourly pay for full-time employees was 7.0% less for women than for men in April 2024, while median hourly pay for part-time employees was 3.0% higher for women than for men (figures exclude overtime pay). The median is the point at which half of employees earn more and half earn less. It is regarded a better measure of pay of the 'typical' employee than taking an average.

Because a larger proportion of women are employed part-time, and part-time workers tend to earn less per hour, the gender pay gap for all employees is considerably larger than the full-time and part-time gaps. Median pay for all employees was 13.1% less for women than for men in April 2024.

The full-time pay gap has been getting smaller since 1997 and the overall pay gap has also decreased over the period. The part-time pay gap has generally remained small and negative, with women earning more than men on average.

The gender pay gap has decreased over the past twenty years

% difference in median hourly pay excluding overtime for men and women employees



Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings time series of selected estimates](#) – Table 6

Why is there a gender pay gap?

The size of the gender pay gap depends on several factors, including:

- **Age:** There is little difference in median hourly pay for male and female full-time employees aged in their 20s and 30s, but a substantial gap emerges among full-time employees aged 40 and over. This links to parenthood - the gap between male and female hourly earnings grows gradually but steadily in the years after parents have their first child.
- **Occupation:** The gap tends to be smaller for occupation groups where a larger proportion of employees are women;
- **Industry:** The pay gap is largest in the financial and insurance industry, and smallest in the transportation and storage industry;
- **Public and private sector:** For full-time workers, the pay gap is slightly smaller in the public sector than the private sector. There is a negligible gender pay gap for part-time workers in the private sector, which contrasts with a large part-time pay gap in the public sector;
- **Region and nation:** The full-time gender pay gap is highest in the South East and London and lowest in Northern Ireland;
- **Pay:** The highest earners have a larger pay gap than the lowest earners.

Gender pay gap reporting

Since 2017/18, [public and private sector employers with 250 or more employees have been required annually to publish data on the gender pay gap](#) within their organisations.

In 2022/23, 78% of reporting employers stated that median hourly pay was higher for men than for women in their organisation, while 14% of employers stated median hourly pay was higher for women. 8% stated that median hourly pay was the same for women as for men.

1

What is the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is generally defined as the difference between the median hourly earnings of men and of women, as a percentage of men's earnings.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) defines the gender pay gap as the gap between the median hourly earnings, excluding overtime, of men and women:

- The median is the point at which half of employees earn more and half earn less. It is preferred to the mean (simple average) as a better measure of pay of the 'typical' employee; otherwise, results may be affected by a small number of people on very high levels of pay.
- Overtime is excluded because men work more overtime than women.
- Hourly earnings are used so that results are not affected by differences in hours worked by men and women.

Median hourly pay offers a useful comparison of men's and women's earnings, but it is too broad to be a measure of the differences in rates of pay for similar jobs and does not take account of the different employment characteristics of men and women, such as the amount they work.

In particular, the gender pay gap looks very different depending on whether we look at the gap among all employees, full-time employees only or part-time employees only, as discussed in section 2. Women are much more likely than men to work part-time and part-time employees tend to have lower pay and work in different roles to full-time employees.

Since the overall gap is strongly dependent on these differences between part-time and full-time employees, analysis often focuses on full-time and part-time employees separately (as does much of this briefing). However, the reasons women are more likely to work part time are often integral to understanding gender pay differences, so the overall gender pay gap is still a valuable comparison.

The gender pay gap is different to equal pay: unlike the gender pay gap, which concerns the difference in average pay between men and women, equal pay is concerned with difference in pay between specific workers who do like work, work rates as equivalent or work of equal value. The Women and Equalities Committee's 2016 report, [Gender Pay Gap](#), explains that while unequal pay is a cause of the pay gap, there are also other contributing factors. It says:

“The causes of the gender pay gap are complex and varied. Direct discrimination plays a part in women’s lower wages, particularly for older women who entered the labour market on less equal terms to men and who may face dual discrimination on the grounds of age and gender. However, structural factors are the key cause of the gender pay gap. These include occupational segregation; the part-time pay penalty; women’s disproportionate responsibility for unpaid caring; and women’s concentration in low-paid, highly feminised sectors.”¹

¹ House of Commons, Women and Equalities Committee, [Gender Pay Gap, Second report of session 2016/16](#), 16 March 2016

2

How big is the gender pay gap?

2.1

The gender pay gap and hours worked

The gender pay gap for all employees was 13.1% in 2024.

The full-time pay gap was 7.0%.

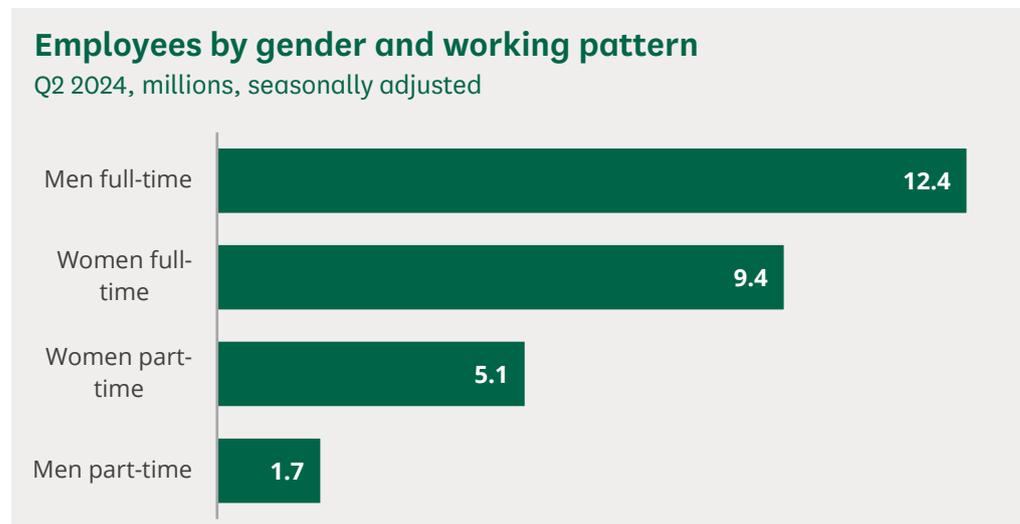
The part-time pay gap was -3.0% (women earned more).

Median hourly pay for full-time employees was 7.0% less for women than for men in April 2024, while median hourly pay for part-time employees was 3.0% higher for women than for men (figures exclude overtime pay).

Because a larger proportion of women are employed part-time, and part-time workers tend to earn less per hour, the gender pay gap for all employees is considerably larger than the full-time and part-time gaps. Median pay for all employees was 13.1% less for women than for men in April 2024.²

This reflects the fact that part-time workers tend to earn less than full-time workers and women are more likely to work part-time: in April to June 2024, 35% of female employees were working part-time compared to 12% of male employees.³

Median hourly pay for full-time employees in April 2024 was £18.64 (excluding overtime), compared with £13.26 for part-time employees.⁴



Source: Office for National Statistics, Labour Force Survey – table [EMP01](#)

² Office for National Statistics, [Gender pay gap in the UK: 2024](#), 29 October 2024

³ Office for National Statistics, Labour Force Survey – table [EMP01](#). These figures are seasonally adjusted – this means that they have been adjusted to remove changes that happen at the same time each year.

⁴ Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, via [Nomis](#)

2.2

How has the gap changed over time?

Data during the coronavirus pandemic

Figures for 2020, especially, and 2021 should be treated with caution, because:

- some people were on furlough with reduced pay
- figures for 2020 were particularly affected by disruptions to data collection from businesses.

In April 2020, around 8.8 million employees were furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and in April 2021 around 3.7 million employees were furloughed.

Estimates for pay include pay for people on furlough, based on their usual hours of work. A slightly higher proportion of men than women were furloughed with reduced pay in April 2020, but by April 2021, the proportions were much the same. For both men and women, most of these employees were in the lowest-paying jobs.

The Library briefing, [Coronavirus: Impact on the labour market](#) discusses the effect of the pandemic on women in the labour market.

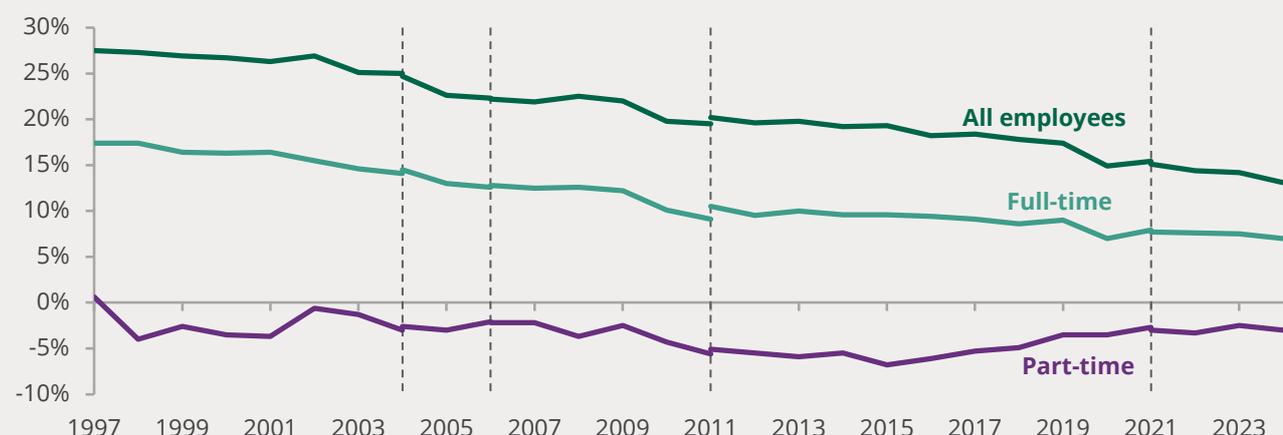
The gender pay gap for full-time employees has been gradually decreasing since 1997. Over the same period, the part-time gender pay gap has stayed small or negative (meaning that men earn less than women).

The proportion of full-time employees who are women increased between 1997 and 2024, from 34% to 41%. At the same time the share of part-time employees who are men increased, from 16% in 1997 to 25% in 2024.⁵ These changes have led to a decrease in the overall gender pay gap.

⁵ Office for National Statistics, Labour Force Survey – table [EMP01](#). Data at April-June.

The gender pay gap has decreased over the past twenty years

% difference in median hourly pay excluding overtime for men and women employees



Note: Dashed lines indicate breaks in the series in 2004, 2006 and 2011

Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings time series of selected estimates](#) – Table 6

2.3 Employers reporting gender pay gap data

Large employers are required to report gender pay gap information for their company since 2017/18

Since 2017/18, public and private sector employers with 250 or more employees have been required to publish data on the gender pay gap within their organisation..

The requirements only apply to businesses with at least 250 employees, although some smaller employers have reported their gender pay gap on a voluntary basis.⁶ At the start of 2024, UK businesses and other organisations with at least 250 employees accounted for 17.8 million employee jobs. This represented around 50% of all employee jobs in the UK.⁷

The figures in this section are based on reported data from employers.

More than 10,000 employers reported data each year since 2017, except for 2019.⁸ Due to the coronavirus outbreak, employers did not have to report their gender pay gap information for 2019.⁹

In 2023/24, 78% of reporting employers stated that median hourly pay was higher for men than for women in their organisation, while 14% of employers

⁶ Reporting data is published on the Gov.uk, [Download gender pay gap data](#) (accessed 8 November 2024). Figures include businesses who reported after the deadline.

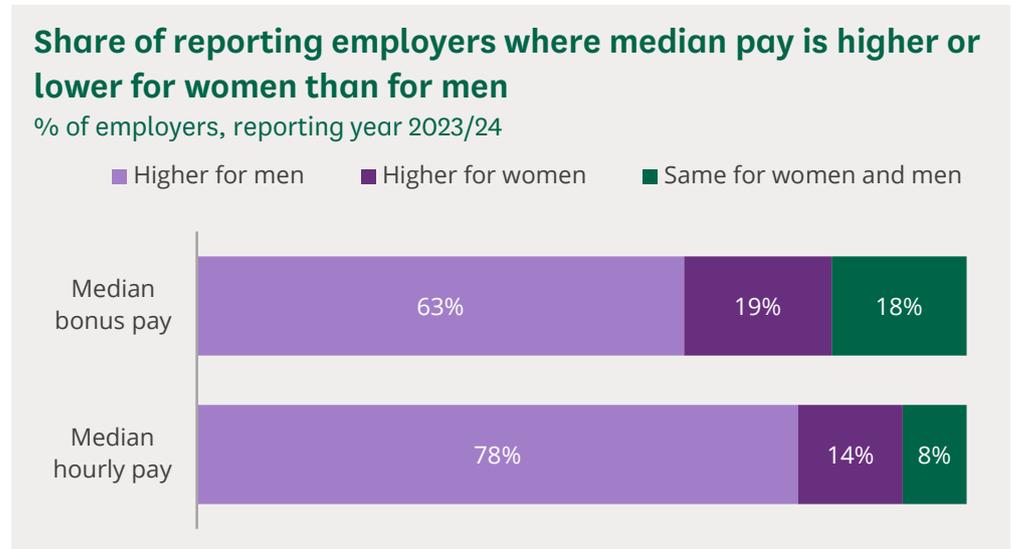
⁷ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, [Business population estimates for the UK and regions 2024](#), 3 October 2024, Table 2

⁸ Gov.uk, [Download gender pay gap data](#)

⁹ Gov.uk, [Gender pay gap reporting: changes to enforcement](#), 23 February 2021

stated median hourly pay was higher for women. 8% stated that median hourly pay was the same for women as for men.

Across all employers who reported, the gender pay gap averaged 11.5% based on median hourly pay.¹⁰ By comparison, the gap in median hourly pay (excluding overtime) across employers of all sizes was 13.1% at April 2024, based on estimates from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.¹¹



Source: Gov.uk, [Download gender pay gap data](#). bonus data only for companies that provided figures

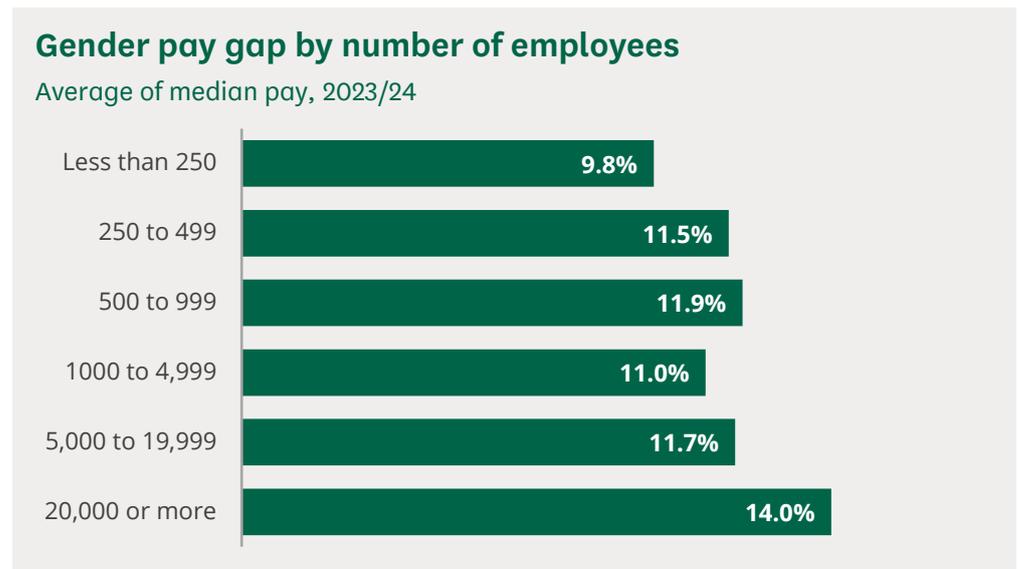
These figures hide very wide variation in the gender pay gaps reported by individual employers. For a quarter of reporting employers (25%), median hourly pay for men was at least 20% higher than for women.¹²

The gap in median hourly pay tended to be slightly higher for the largest employers. The average pay gap in businesses with at least 20,000 employees was 14.0%, compared to 11.5% in employers with 250 to 499 employees.

¹⁰ Figures are the mean average of the median pay gap for reporting employers. Other analyses may provide different figures, particularly where they take a median average across all employers.

¹¹ Office for National Statistics, [Gender pay gap in the UK: 2024](#), 29 October 2024

¹² Gov.uk, [Download gender pay gap data](#)



Source: Gov.uk, [Download gender pay gap data](#), 2022/23

Across all reporting employers, the average proportion of male employees receiving bonuses was 40% in 2023/24. The average proportion of female employees receiving bonuses around the same at 39%. For businesses with at least 20,000 employees, 44% of men and 43 % of women received bonuses.¹³

¹³ Gov.uk, [Download gender pay gap data](#)

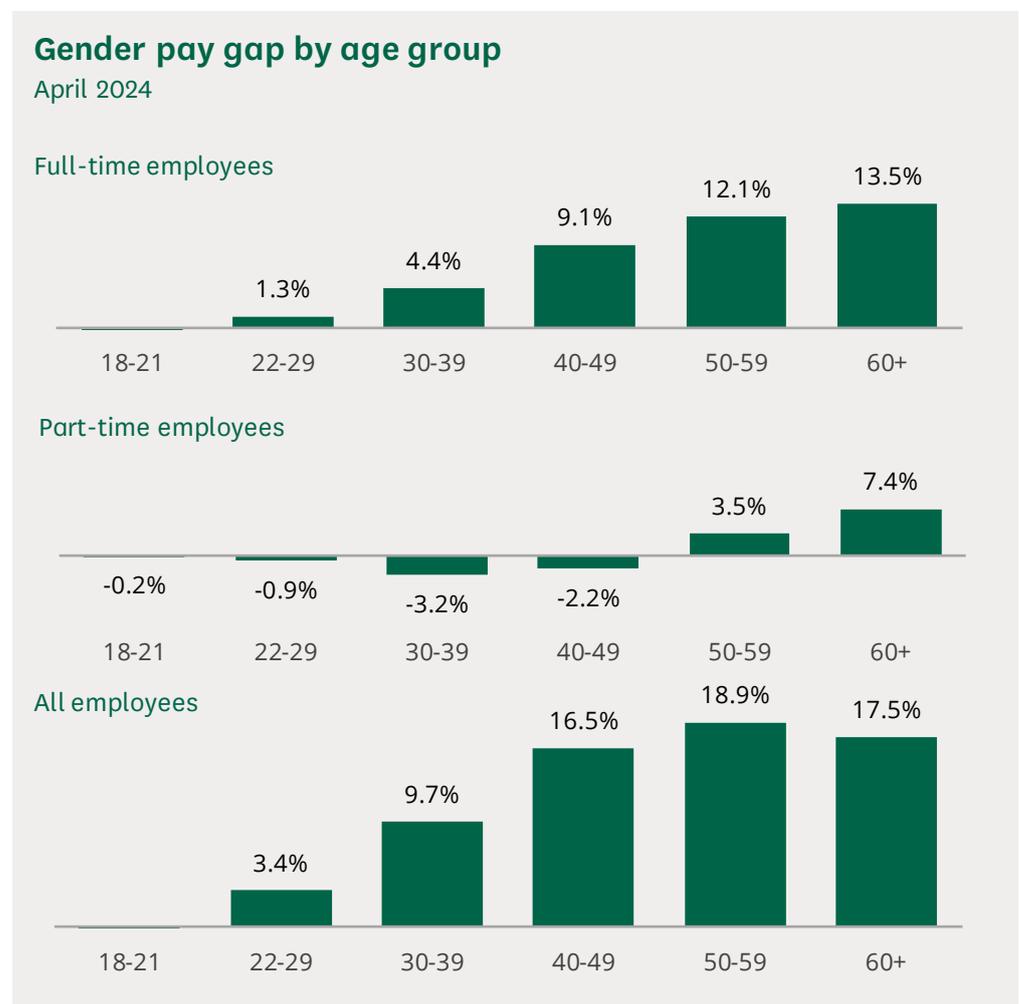
3

Age and the gender pay gap

There is little or no gender pay gap for full-time employees under 40.

The gender pay gap varies markedly by age. The gap is small or negative for full-time and part-time employees in their 20s or 30s. Among full-time employees aged 40 and over, the gap widens considerably.

Nevertheless, since women are more likely than men to work part-time across all age groups and since part-time jobs tend to pay less per hour than full-time jobs, the gender pay gap for **all employees** in their 30s is still 9.7%. This is despite the small full-time and part-time pay gaps.



Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Gender pay gap data](#), Table 6.12

One reason for the age differences in the gender pay gap is that factors affecting women's employment and earnings opportunities become more evident when women are in their 30s and 40s. For example, time spent out of the labour market to care for children or elderly relatives could affect future earnings when a person returns to work.

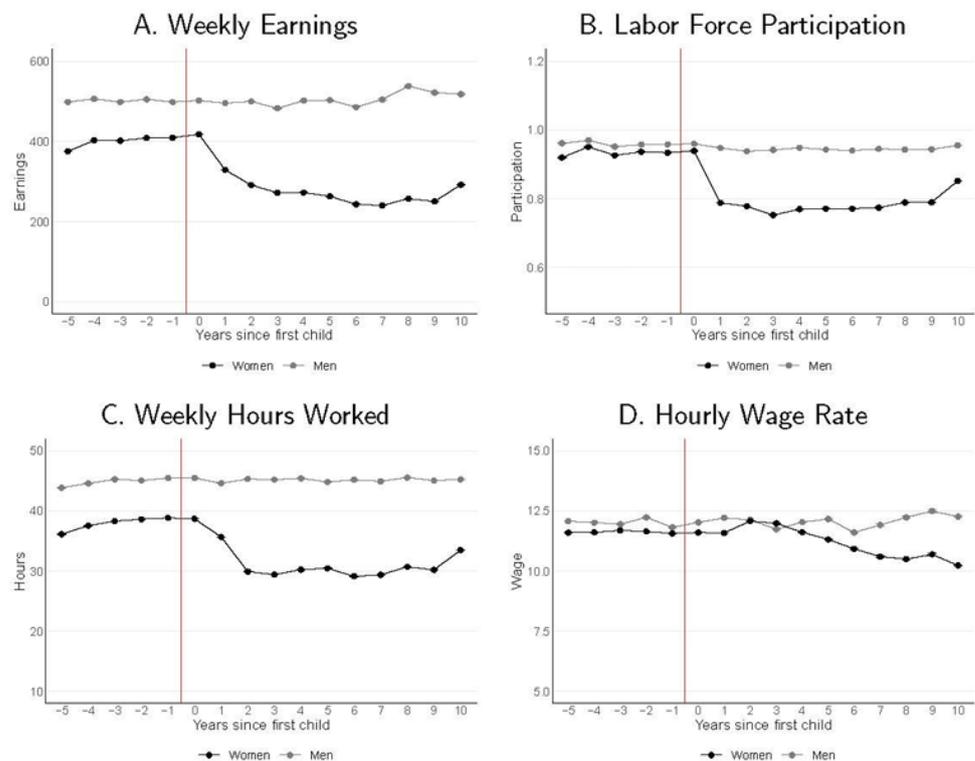
3.1

Motherhood and the gender pay gap

Analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) found in 2021 that most of the gender pay gaps can be traced to ‘child penalties’, or parenthood. It finds the average earnings of men are almost completely unaffected by parenthood, but women’s earnings fall sharply when they become parents and then stabilise at a much lower level with little growth.

The IFS found that seven years after the birth of a first child, women’s earnings are on average less than half of men’s. The chart below shows that in the period 1991-2017, the birth of a first child caused a divergence in earnings, labour force participation and hours worked between men and women.

Earnings, labour force participation and hours worked all fall for women after the birth of their first child



Note: All charts control for age and year fixed effects. Hours worked in chart C are conditional on participation

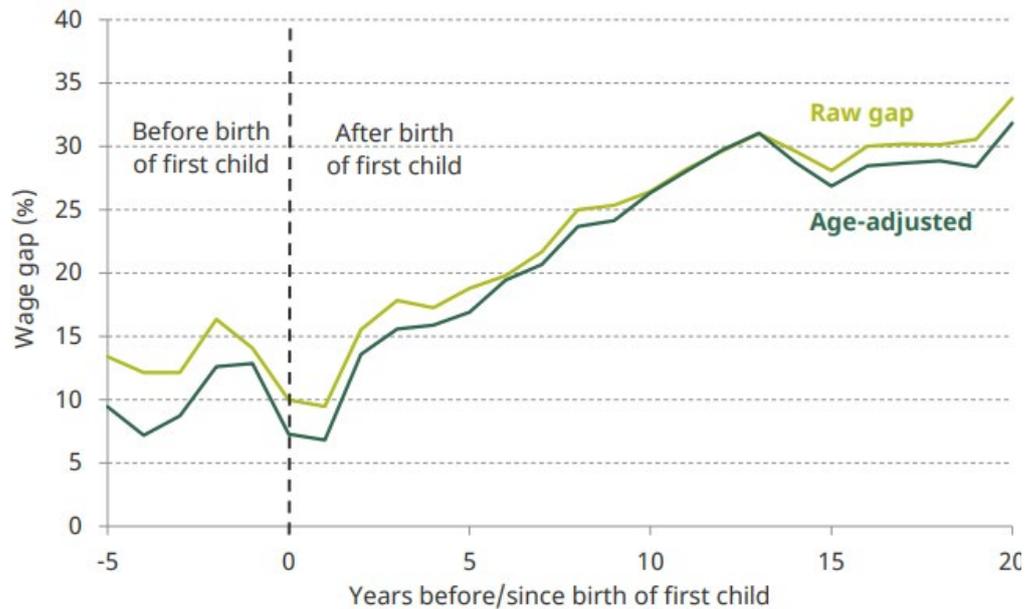
Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies, [Women and men at work](#), 6 December 2021, Figure 15

The IFS points out that this may underestimate the gap, since women with low wages before the birth of their first child are less likely (40%) than women on high pre-birth wages (70%) to participate in the labour market. This means

the women included in the wages data after the birth of their first child are more likely to be high earners.¹⁴

Between 1991 and 2015, the pay gap (based on mean hourly earnings¹⁵) between mothers and fathers was around 10% before the birth of their first child, but widens to a gap of around 30% by the time the child is aged 13:¹⁶

Gender pay gap by time to and since birth of first child



Note: Wage gap based on mean hourly pay. The age-adjusted series takes account of the fact that a small part of the gap is due to age differences: men tend to be slightly older than women when their first child is born. Figures exclude people in the bottom 2% of hourly wages.

Source: IFS [BN223](#), Figure 5

The pay gap between men and women widens in the years after having children.

Effect of full-time and part-time work

The gradual widening in the pay gap between mothers and fathers after the arrival of the first child is reflected in a widening gap in the amount of time spent in the workplace. Many mothers leave employment for a time after the birth of the first child (this is observed for mothers across all education levels but is particularly pronounced for the lowest-educated) while many others move from full-time to part-time work. Both effects result in a loss of labour market experience among mothers which accumulates over time.

¹⁴ Institute for Fiscal Studies, [Women and men at work](#), 6 December 2021

¹⁵ The rest of this paper looks at the gender pay gap based on median hourly pay.

¹⁶ Monica Costa Dias, Robert Joyce and Francesca Parodi, [Wage progression and the gender wage gap: the causal impact of hours of work](#), IFS Briefing Note BN223, 5 February 2018, Figure 5. Note the IFS analysis uses data from the British Household Panel Survey for 1991-2008 and the Understanding Society survey for 2009-2015, rather than the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. Therefore the IFS figures may differ from those presented elsewhere in this paper.

According to the IFS, by the time the first child is aged twenty, mothers have on average been in paid work for three years less than fathers: they have spent ten years less in full-time work, but seven years more in part-time work.

The pay gap between mothers and fathers increases by around 21 percentage points between the birth of the first child and the child's twentieth birthday, from 8% to around 30% (figures do not sum due to rounding). The IFS estimates that on average, half of the increase is explained by mothers spending less time in full-time work.

Part-time experience leads to less growth in earnings than full-time experience. Women are more likely than men to work part-time.

The amount that men and women work part time tells us more about the widening of the pay gap following the birth of a first child, than looking at the time mothers spend out of employment.

According to the IFS, extra years of experience make almost no difference to a woman's wages if she works part time.¹⁷

What is more, full-time experience makes a larger difference to wage progression for graduates than for those with GCSEs or A levels as their highest qualification. Thus, the loss of full-time experience explains a larger part of the pay gap for mothers and fathers who are graduates than it does for non-graduates.

What else might cause an increase in the pay gap after having children?

As noted above, time spent in full-time work only explains half of the increase in the pay gap between mothers and fathers during the twenty years following the birth of their first child. Other factors include women being less likely to successfully bargain for higher wages within a given firm, and more likely to enter 'family-friendly' occupations over high-paying ones.¹⁸

Caring responsibilities may also constrain the length of time that people can spend travelling to work. A wide "gender commuting gap" opens in the years following the birth of the first child, which evolves over time in a very similar way to the gender pay gap between mothers and fathers (shown in the chart on page 16). Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that the gender pay gap is caused by a gender commuting gap: it is possible that both could arise from another factor, such as women needing more flexibility in their work.¹⁹

¹⁷ Monica Costa Dias, Robert Joyce and Francesca Parodi, [Wage progression and the gender wage gap: the causal impact of hours of work](#), IFS Briefing Note BN223, 5 February 2018 – p16

¹⁸ Research summarised in Monica Costa Dias, Robert Joyce and Francesca Parodi, [Wage progression and the gender wage gap: the causal impact of hours of work](#), IFS Briefing Note BN223, 5 February 2018 – p3.

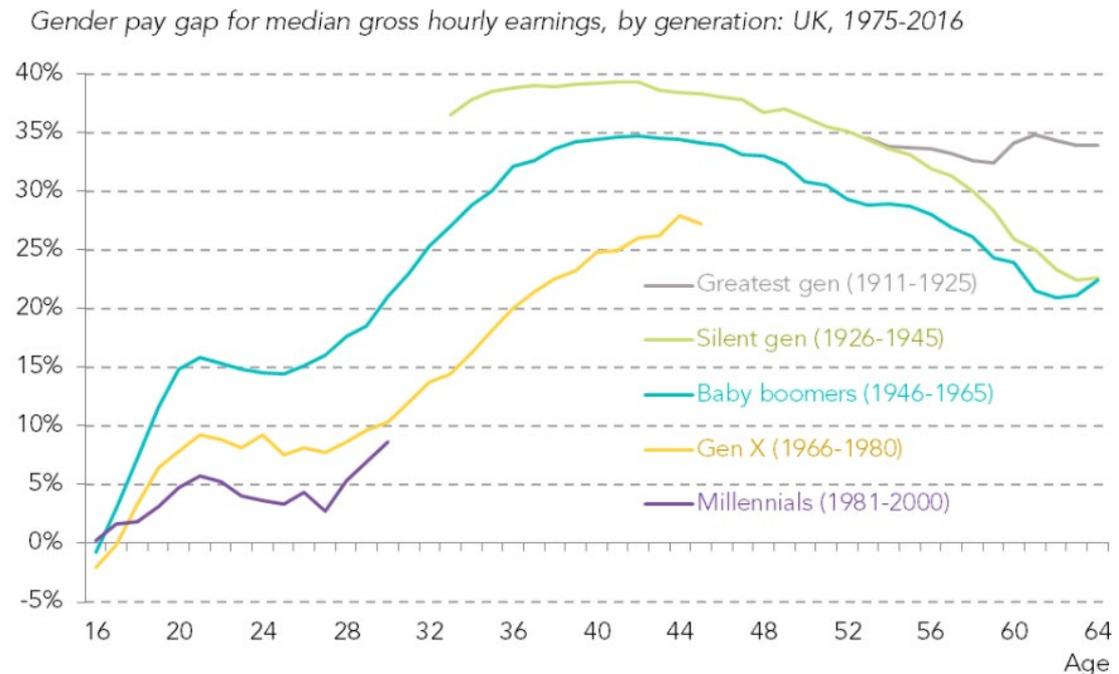
¹⁹ Robert Joyce and Agnes Norris Keiller, [The 'gender commuting gap' widens considerably in the first decade after childbirth](#), IFS Observation, 7 November 2018.

The IFS also discuss the potential effect of parental leave and childcare policies on the gender pay gap among parents.²⁰

3.2 Pay gap varies by generation and education

The larger gender pay gap for older age groups may also stem from generational differences, in which case we might expect the gap to shrink as younger generations grow older. For example, the gender pay gap for full-time employees in their forties was 11% in 2022, down from 24% for people in their forties in 1997.

Resolution Foundation analysis shows how the gender pay gap at a given age has reduced for successive generations. For example, the gender pay gap for people in their twenties was around 16% for the baby boomer generation (born 1946-65) but had shrunk to 5% for millennials (born 1981-2000), as shown in the chart below (from the Resolution Foundation).²¹



²⁰ Institute for Fiscal Studies, [Women and men at work](#), 6 December 2021

²¹ Laura Gardiner, [Is the gender pay gap on the brink of closure for young women today?](#), Resolution Foundation blog, 4 January 2017

There has been a larger increase in average education levels among women than among men over the past 20 years.

The reduction in the gender pay gap between generations is likely to be partly due to a more highly educated workforce. The IFS found that over three quarters of the fall in the gender pay gap in the 25 years to 2019 was due to increased educational attainment for women, who are now 5% more likely to have graduated from university than men.

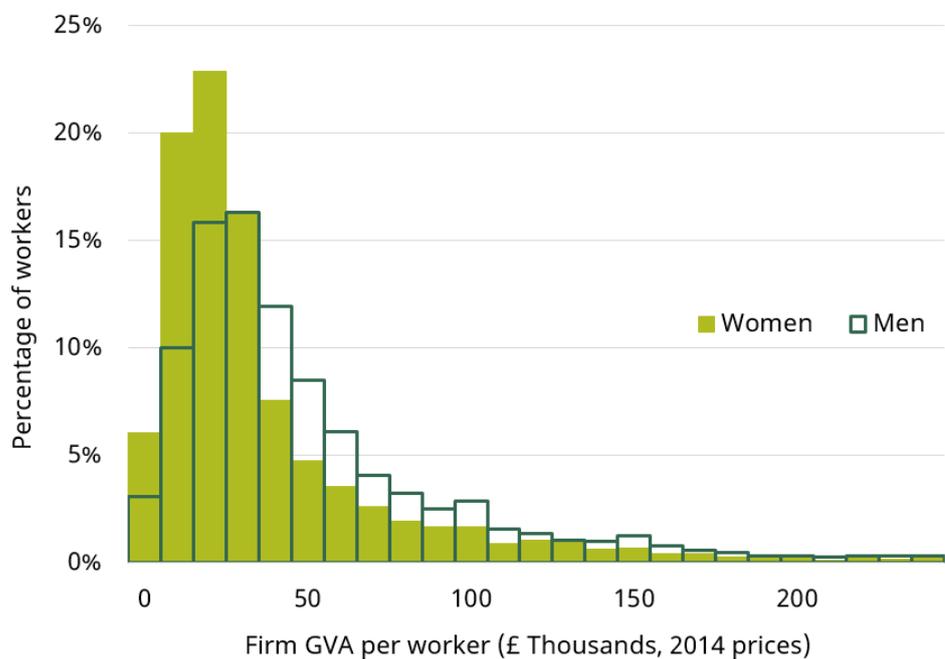
Despite more women being educated to a higher level, there has been little or no change in the gender pay gap among **workers qualified to degree standard** since the early 1990s.

At the same time, the gender pay gap has reduced for workers whose highest qualifications are GCSEs or A Levels. This means the reduction in the overall gender pay gap reflects rising education levels as well as some decrease in the gap for people who have had less formal education.²²

3.3 Where women work

An IFS report finds that women tend to work in less productive, lower paying firms, as shown in the chart below.²³

Distribution of men and women by firm productivity



This effect becomes larger when women reach their mid- 30s and 40s.

²² Institute for Fiscal Studies, Women and men at work, 6 December 2021

²³ The chart shows firm productivity measured by GVA (gross value added) per hour worked – a measure of the amount of output compared with the amount of work done

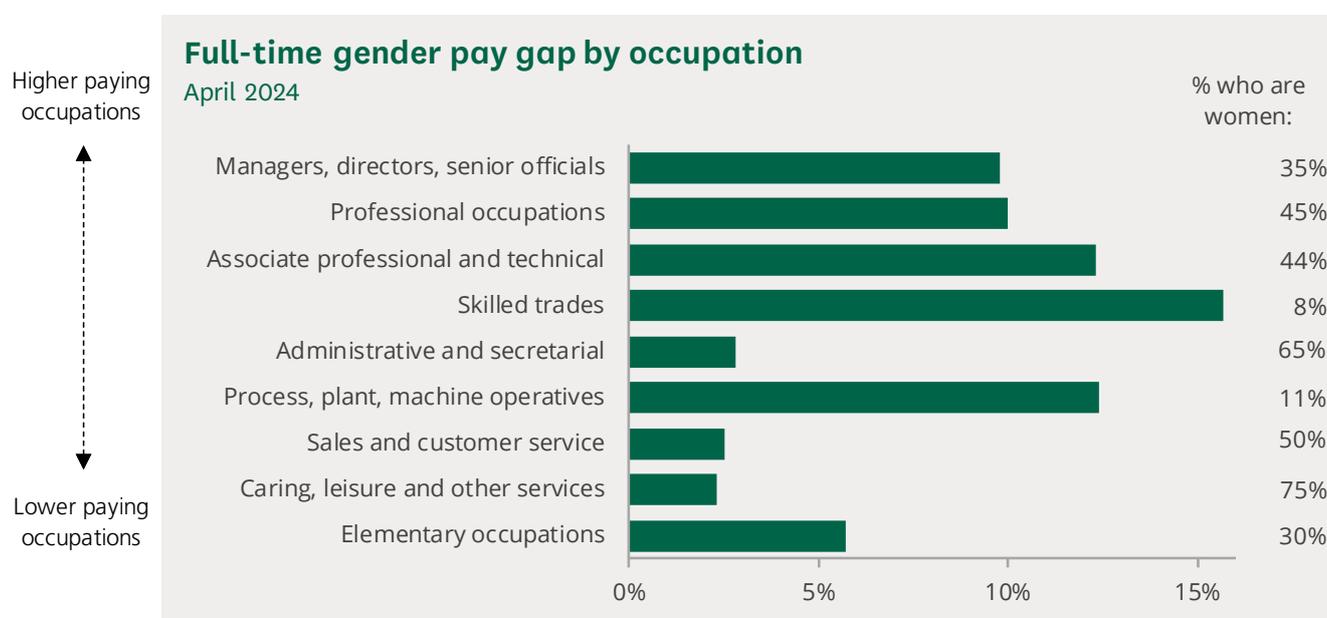
Women aged 18-34 are approximately 5 percentage points less likely to work for the top fifth most productive firms than men over the same age. This increases to approximately 15-20 percentage points for women from the age of 44. As the IFS report explains, this partly reflects differences in sector, but does not explain the entire effect.²⁴

²⁴ Robert Joyce and Xiaowei Xu, [The gender pay gap: women work for lower-paying firms than men](#), IFS Observation, 3 April 2019, Figure 1.

4 Occupation

The gender pay gap for full-time employees varies widely by occupation. The gap tends to be smaller for occupation groups where a larger proportion of employees are women.

There is a large gender pay gap in skilled trades occupations (15.7%), where men comprised 92% of full-time employees, and process, plant and machine operatives (12.4%), where men comprised 89% of full-time employees.²⁵ The gap is smaller among administrative and secretarial roles (2.8%), where women comprised 65% of full-time employees and smallest in caring, leisure and other service occupations (2.3%), where women comprised 75% of full-time employees.²⁶

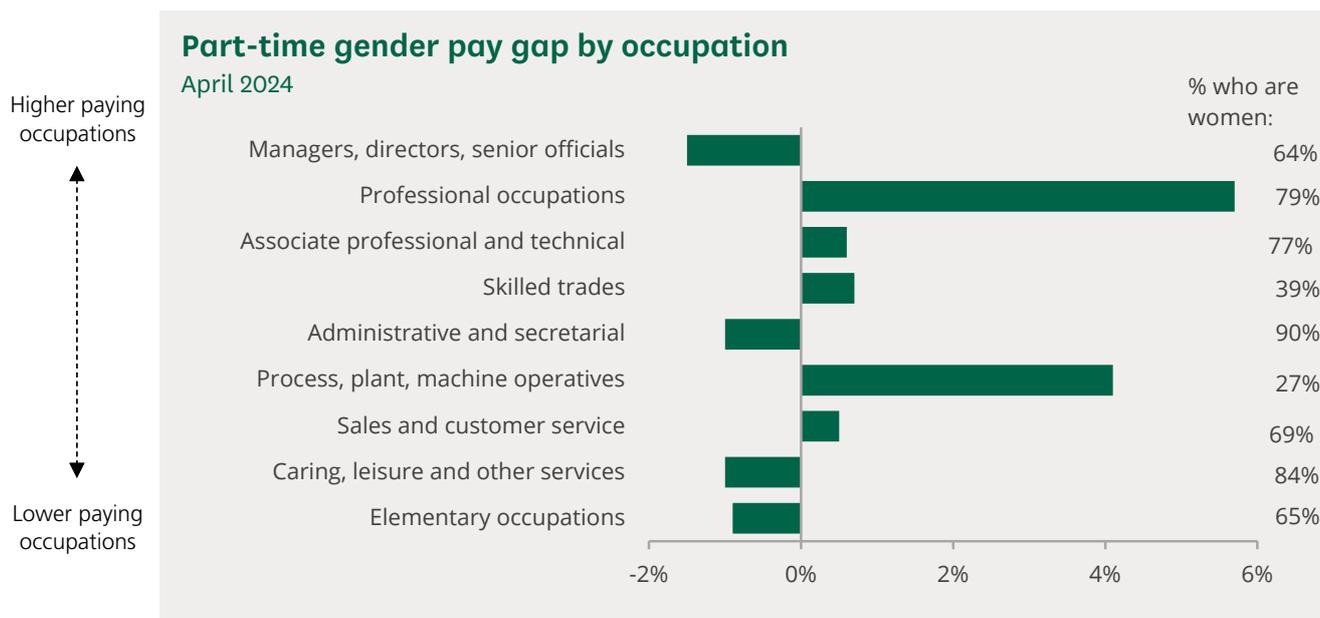


Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Gender pay gap data](#), Table 2.12

For part-time employees, the gender pay gap is relatively small or negative except for professional occupations and process, plant and machine operatives occupations.

²⁵ ONS, Annual Population Survey, year to June 2024

²⁶ ONS, UK Labour Market, [Table EMP04](#) (not seasonally adjusted)



Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Gender pay gap data](#), Table 2.12

The ONS provides gender pay gaps for more detailed occupations in its release [Gender pay gap in the UK: 2024](#).

Occupational segregation

Even if men and women working in the same role are paid the same on average, a gender pay gap could still arise if women are concentrated in those occupations which pay less. This is sometimes known as occupational segregation. But within each of the broad occupation groups listed above, there is a diverse range of roles: professional occupations encompass both solicitors and midwives; skilled trades include both plumbers and chefs. Average earnings may vary considerably across roles contained within the same occupation group.

Therefore, the charts below use a more finely-grained classification of occupations (around 350 occupations in all).²⁷ We group occupations into four categories:

- **Low-paying occupations** are defined as those where median hourly pay is less than the 25th percentile of the overall distribution, which was £13.00 in 2023 (the 25th percentile is the point at which 25% of people earn less, and 75% earn more).
- **Lower middle occupations** are those with median hourly pay between the 25th percentile and median of the overall distribution, so between £13.00 and £17.03.

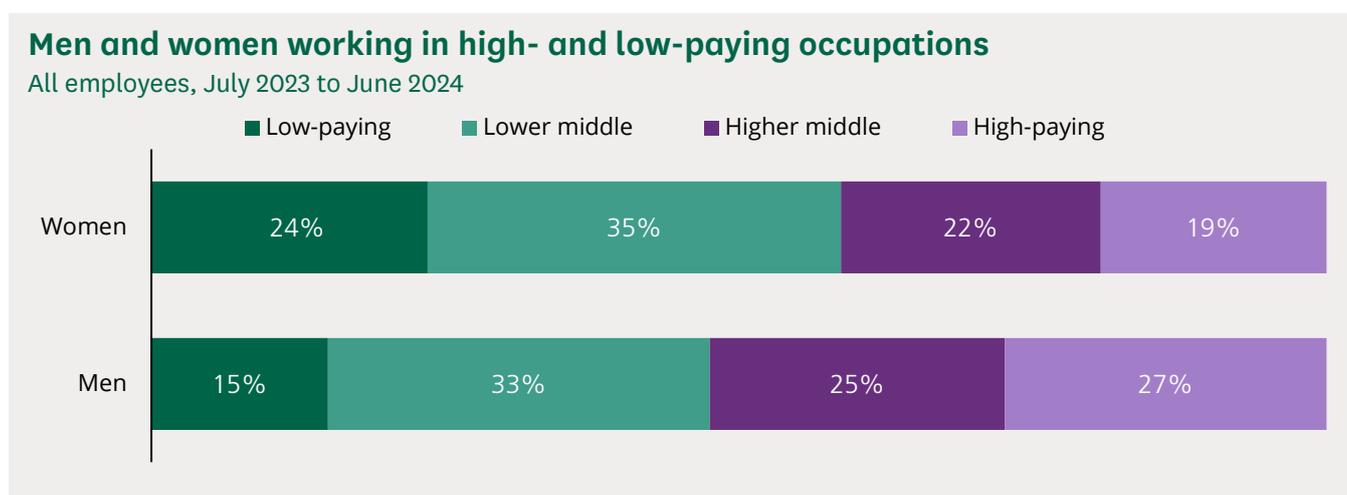
²⁷ Analysis is based on occupations as listed in the ONS Standard Occupational Classification, 4 digit codes.

A higher share of women than men are employed in low-paying occupations, while men are more concentrated in high-paying roles.

- **Higher middle occupations** are those with median hourly pay between the median and 75th percentile of the overall distribution, so between £17.03 and £24.56.
- **High-paying occupations** are those with median hourly pay above the 75th percentile of the overall distribution, so above £24.56.

Note the thresholds for high and low pay used here differ from other analyses.²⁸

Looking at the proportion of male and female employees in each group, our analysis suggests that a **higher share of women than men are employed in the lowest-paying occupations**: 24% of women compared to 15% of men. The reverse was true for high-paying occupations, which employed 19% of female employees but 27% of male employees:²⁹



Note: Pay data is missing for a small number of occupations.

Source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey, July 2023 to June 2024, via [Nomis](#) and [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings](#), Table 14.6a

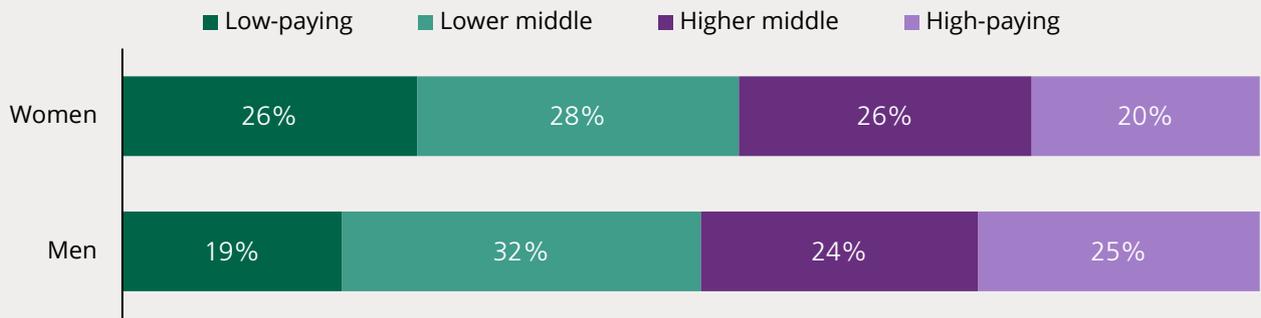
To repeat this analysis for full-time employees, the thresholds are modified to reflect the full-time pay distribution, where the 25th percentile is £14.13, the median is £18.64, and the 75th percentile is £28.66. Women working full-time are still more likely to be employed in low-paying occupations and less likely to be employed in high-paying occupations than men working full-time.

²⁸ For example, a common threshold for low pay is two-thirds of median earnings, as used in ONS, [Low and high pay in the UK: 2024](#), 29 October 2024. The above thresholds are used in this analysis because it means the employee population is evenly spread across the four pay groups.

²⁹ This does not mean that 24% of female employees earned below the 25th percentile of the distribution; rather, 24% worked in occupations where median pay was below this threshold.

Men and women working in high and low-paying full-time occupations

Full-time employees, July 2023 to June 2024



Note: Pay data is missing for a small number of occupations.

Source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey, July 2023 to June 2024, via [Nomis](#) and [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings](#), Table 14.6a

However, the proportions of men and women in low- and high-paying occupations are more similar among full-time employees than when we looked at full-time and part-time employees together. This is because most part-time roles are found in lower-paying occupations, and many more women than men are employed part-time.

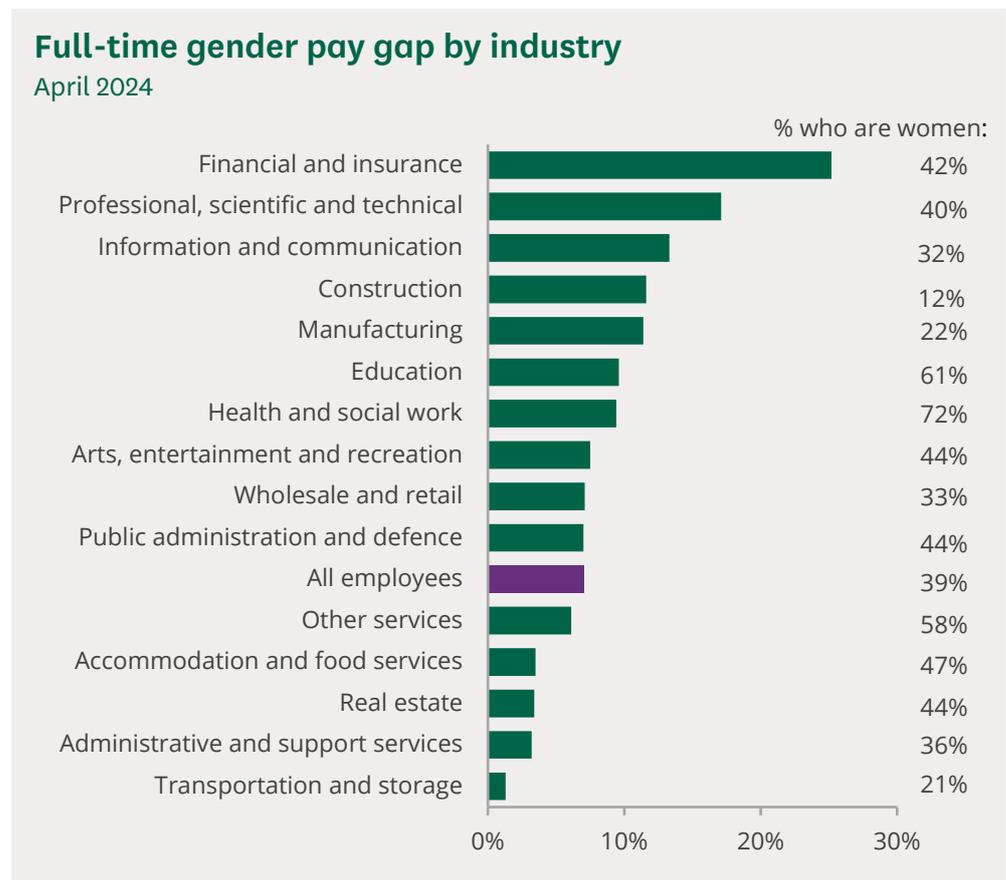
5

Industry

There is wide variation in the gender pay gap between industries, although people working in the same industry may do very different kinds of work. Some of the pay gap in an industry may be explained by differences in the kind of roles undertaken by men and women.

For full-time employees, the gender pay gap is largest in financial and insurance activities (25.2%).

The industries with the smallest pay gaps for full-time employees are transportation and storage (1.3%) and administrative and support services (3.2%).³⁰

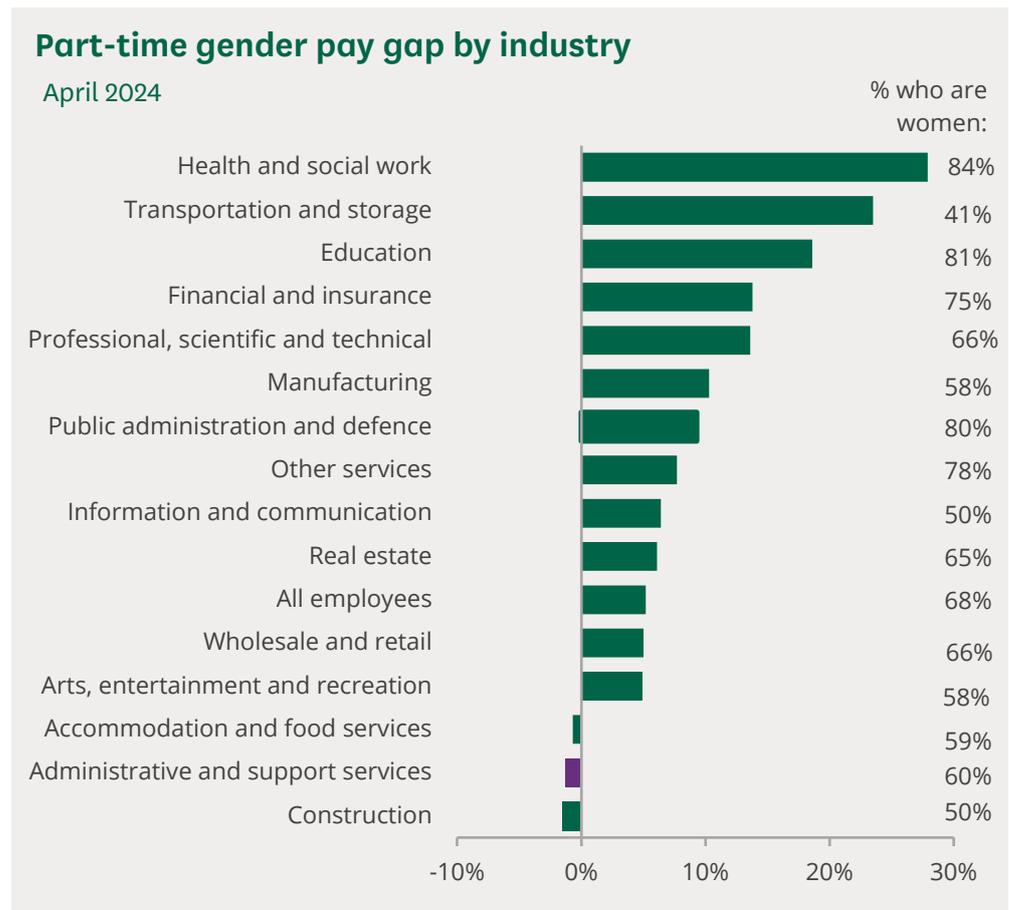


Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Gender pay gap data](#), Table 4.12

³⁰ Percentage figures in industry charts show the proportion of employee jobs in each sector that were held by women at Q2 2024, based on the ONS Workforce Jobs series (accessed via Nomis).

In many sectors, the pay gap for part-time employees is small or negative. The part-time pay gap is largest in the health and social work sector at 27.9%, as shown in the chart below.

Counterintuitively, the overall pay gap for part-time employees is smaller than the part-time pay gap in most of the industry sectors in the chart. This is because there is a higher concentration of female part-time employees than men in sectors with higher than average pay for part-time employees (even if men working part-time in those sectors tend to earn more): for example, education and health and social work.



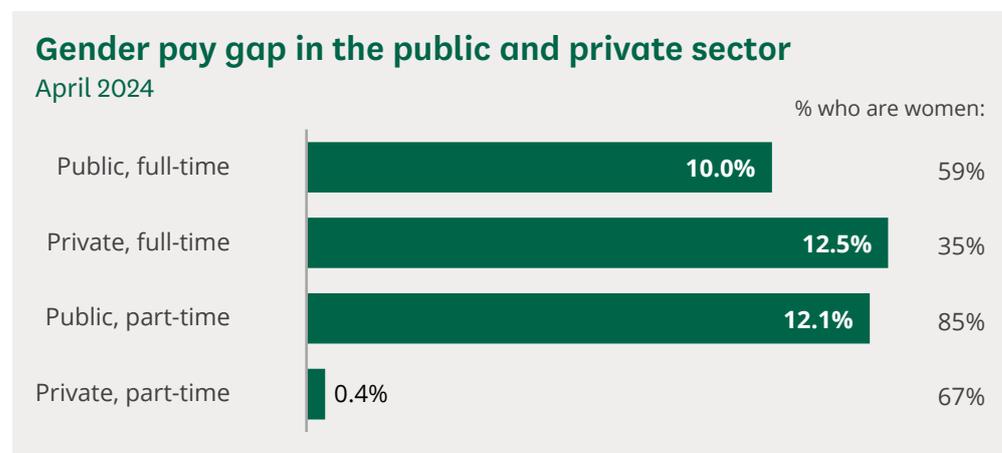
Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Gender pay gap data](#), Table 4.12

6

Public and private sector

In April 2024, the gender pay gap for full-time employees was 10.0% in the public sector and 12.5% in the private sector.

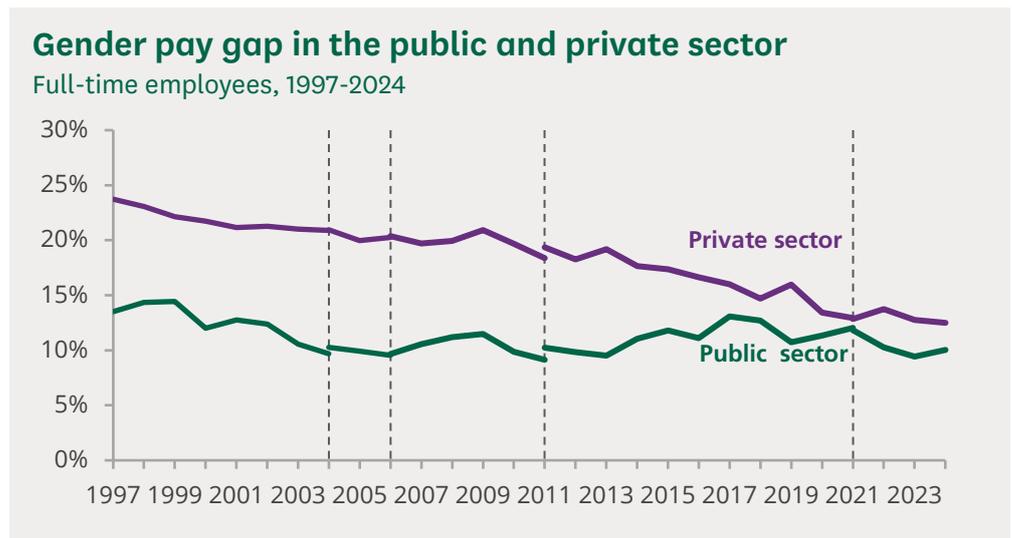
Both these figures are higher than the 7.0% gender pay gap for all full-time employees. This is because women make up a higher share of employees in the public sector than in the private sector, and average earnings tend to be higher in the public sector.



Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Gender pay gap data](#), Table 13.12

For part-time employees, there is a negligible gender pay gap in the private sector (0.4%), which contrasts with a large part-time gender pay gap in the public sector (12.1%).

The full-time gender pay gap fell in both the public and private sectors from 1997 to the mid-2000s. However, while the private sector pay gap has mostly continued to fall, the public sector pay gap has, if anything, widened slightly overall.



Note: Dashed lines indicate breaks in the series in 2004, 2006, 2011 and 2021

Source: Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings time series of selected estimates](#) – Table 9

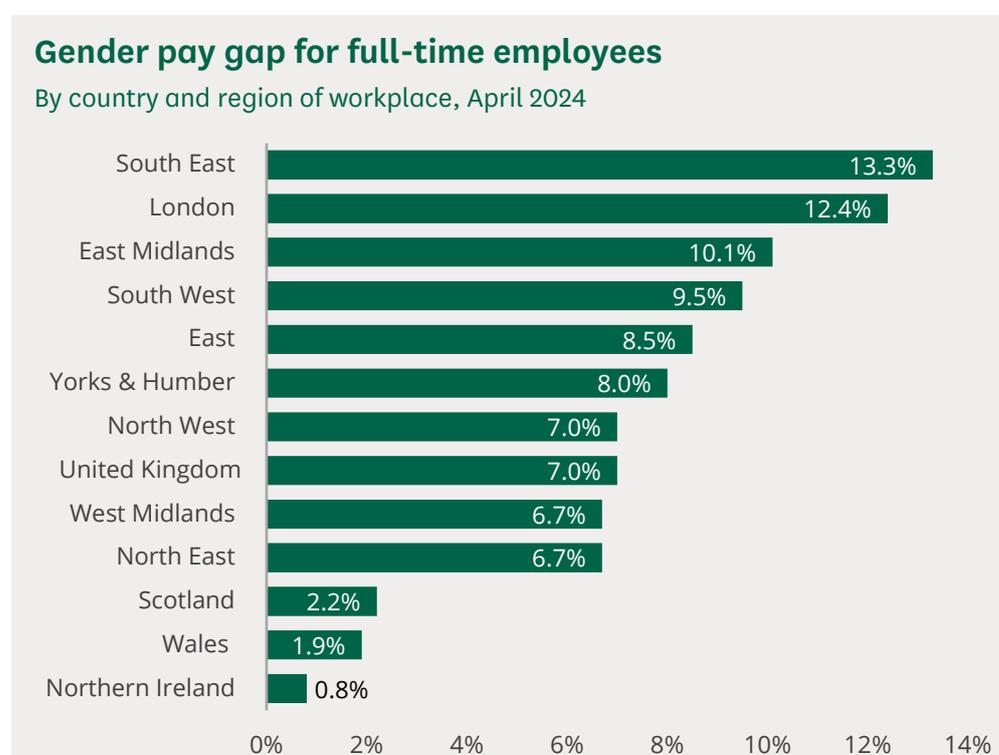
7

Region and country

Gender pay data for all countries and regions are provided in data tables published alongside this paper.

The gender pay gap for full-time employees ranged from 0.8% in Northern Ireland to 13.3% in the South East in April 2024. Note these estimates are based on where people work, rather than where they live.³¹

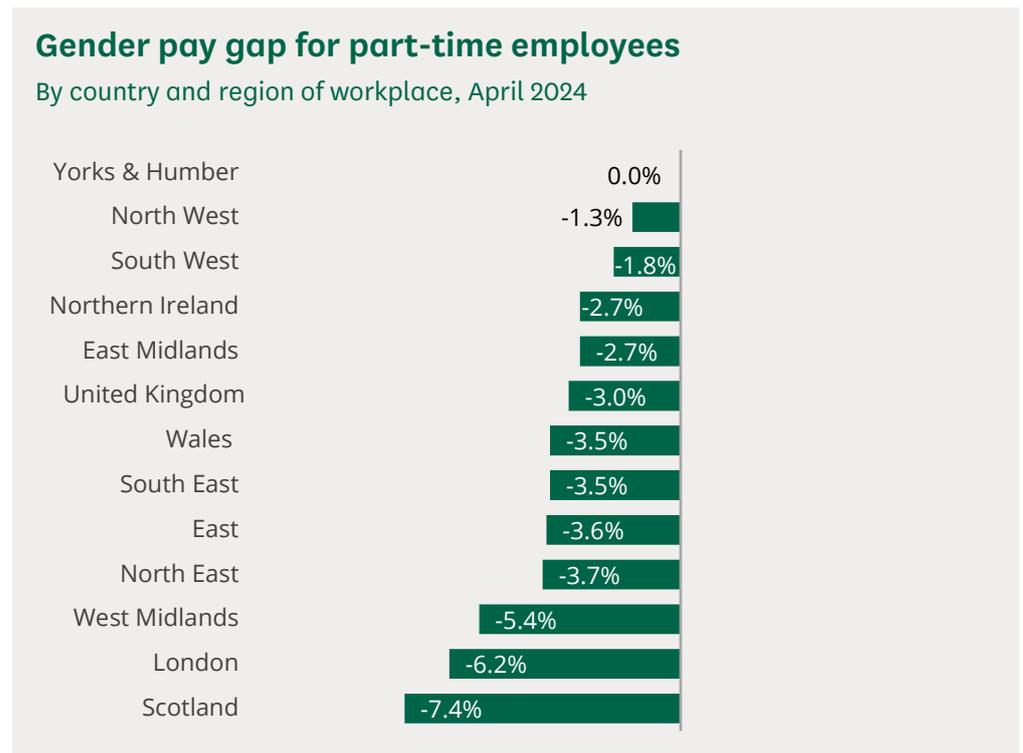
Part of the explanation for the negligible full-time pay gap in Northern Ireland is the higher proportion of public sector jobs than in the rest of the UK. There are more women employed in the public sector and these jobs tend to be higher paid, in general, than in the private sector.



Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Gender pay gap data](#), Table 7.12

For part-time employees there is a negative or zero gender pay gap in every country and region of the UK.

³¹ Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Gender pay gap data](#), 29 October 2024



Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Gender pay gap data](#), Table 7.12

8 Higher-paid and lower-paid employees

So far, this briefing has focused on the gender pay gap at the middle of the pay distributions. We can also look at the pay gap between men and women who are relatively high-paid and relatively low-paid. The gender pay gap is larger among high-paid workers than it is among low-paid workers.

Full-time employees

In April 2024, to be in the highest-paid 10% of female full-time employees required hourly earnings greater than £33.18 (excluding overtime). To be in the highest-paid 10% of male full-time employees required hourly earnings greater than £39.27. This gives a **gender pay gap of 15.5% at the 90th percentile** of the pay distribution (the point at which 10% of people earn more and 90% earn less).³² This disparity becomes more pronounced in the very highest earners; the IFS found that by the mid 2010s, only 11% of the earners in the top 0.1% in the UK were women.³³

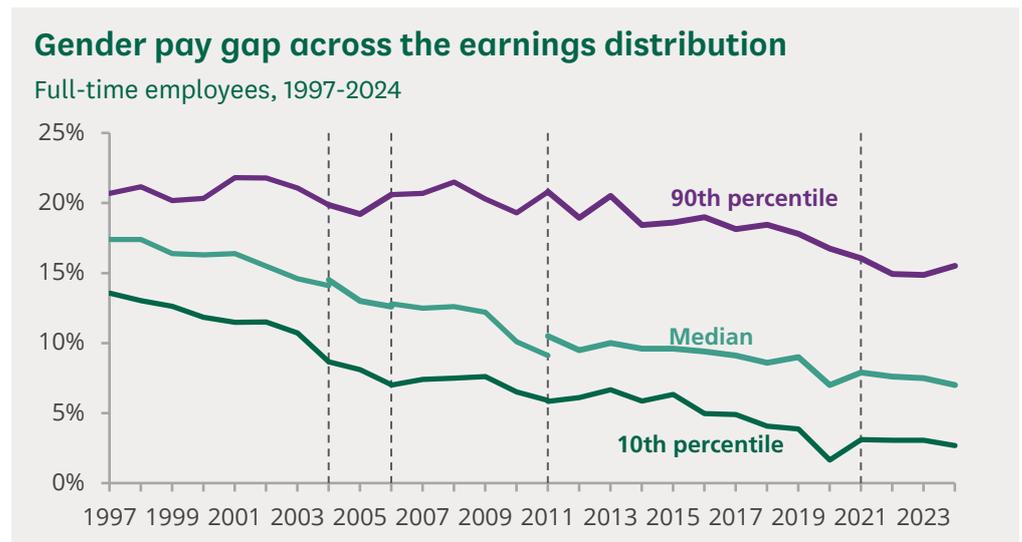
At the bottom end of the distribution, an employee would have had to earn less than £12.02 an hour to be in the lowest-paid 10% of female full-time employees and less than £12.35 to be in the lowest-paid 10% of men. This gives a **gender pay gap of 2.7% at the 10th percentile** of the pay distribution (the point where 90% of people earn more and 10% earn less).³⁴

The gender pay gap at the bottom and middle of the full-time earnings distribution has decreased since 1997. For higher earners, the gap has been slower to close:

³² Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, via [Nomis](#)

³³ Institute for Fiscal Studies, [The characteristics and incomes of the top 1%](#), 6 December 2021

³⁴ Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, via [Nomis](#)

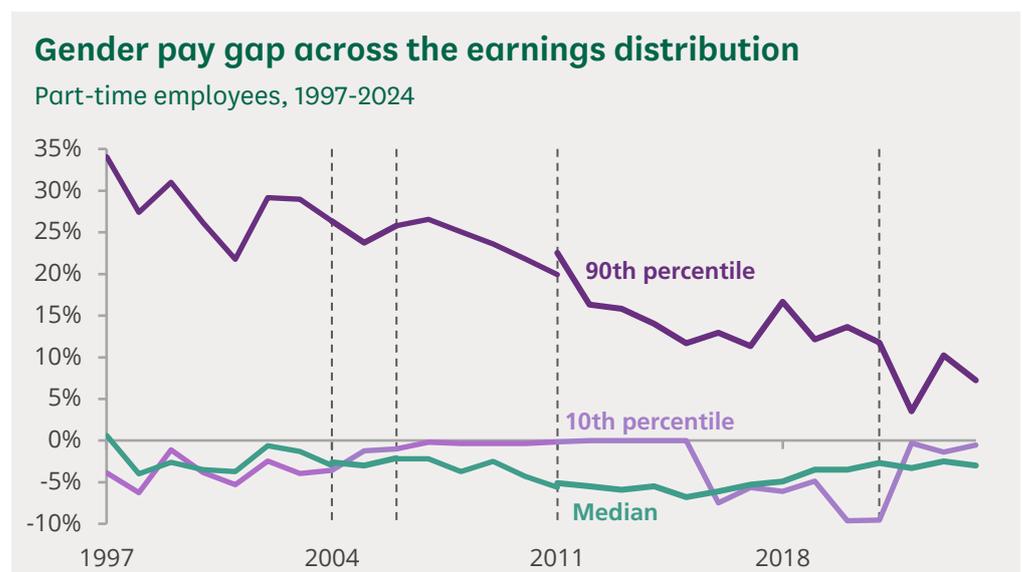


Note: Dashed lines indicate breaks in the series in 2004, 2006, 2011 and 2021
 Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings](#), via Nomis

Part-time employees

Turning to part-time employees, a different picture emerges. Median pay for part-time employees is higher for women than for men. However, the highest-paid male part-time employees tend to earn more than the highest-paid female part-time employees, so that there is a substantial gender pay gap at the 90th percentile of the pay distribution.

As the chart shows, the estimated gap at the 90th percentile fluctuates from year to year. Some of this volatility is likely to arise from survey error rather than genuine changes in the gap.



Note: Dashed lines indicate breaks in the series in 2004, 2006, 2011 and 2021
 Source: Office for National Statistics, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings](#), via NOMIS

From 2007 to 2015, the 10th percentile of the male and female part-time earnings distributions was equal or very similar to the adult rate of the

National Minimum Wage for people aged 21 and over (previously 22 and over). This meant there was no gender pay gap among the lowest-paid part-time employees.

However, the gap turned negative in 2016 following the introduction of the National Living Wage (NLW), a higher minimum wage for people aged 25 and over. From 2016 to 2019, the 10th percentile of women's part-time earnings was the NLW, while the 10th percentile of men's part-time earnings was closer to the National Minimum Wage rate for people aged 21-24. This reflects the different profile of men and women working part-time. Young people on the minimum wage make up a larger share of men employed part-time than women employed part-time. Among those aged 25 and over, men are much more likely to be working full-time.

The NLW started to cover people aged 23+ from 2021 and people aged 21+ from 2024. This meant the 10th percentile of men's part-time earnings moved closer to the NLW. In April 2024, the 10th percentile of women's part-time earnings was £11.44, the value of the NLW, and the 10th percentile of men's part-time earnings was just below, at £11.38.

In 2020 and 2021, the 10th percentiles were affected by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, under which some people were furloughed on reduced pay.

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