Office for National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Gender pay gap in the UK: 2024

Differences in pay between women and men by age, region, full-time and part-time, and occupation.

Contact:
Earnings team
earnings@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 456120

Release date:
29 October 2024

Next release:
To be announced

Correction

5 November 2024 07:33

We have corrected an error in Data Sources and Quality under the heading Methodological changes in 2023 to 2024. The previous version read Median hourly pay for full-time employees has risen from £17.40 to £17.52. It should have read Median hourly pay (excluding overtime) for full-time employees has risen from £17.40 to £17.52.

This happened because of a human error.

Table of contents

1 . Other pages in this release

Commentary on topics covered in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) is split between three separate bulletins. Our other two ASHE bulletins are:

- Employee earnings in the UK: 2024
- Low and high pay in the UK: 2024

2 . Main points

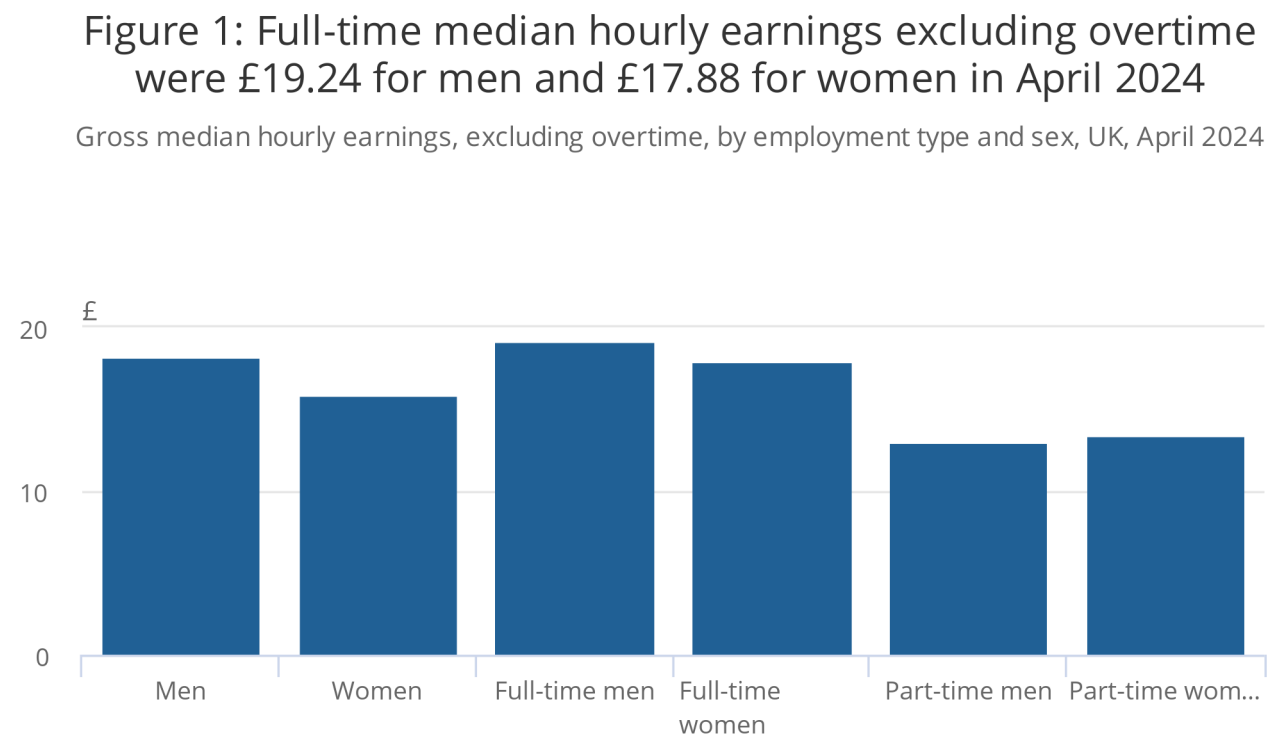
- The gender pay gap has been declining slowly over time; over the last decade it has fallen by approximately a quarter among full-time employees, and in April 2024, it stood at 7.0%, down from 7.5% in 2023.
- The gender pay gap is larger for employees aged 40 years and over than those aged under 40 years.
- The gender pay gap is larger among high earners than among lower-paid employees.
- In April 2024, the gender pay gap was highest in skilled trades occupations and lowest in the caring, leisure and other service occupations.
- In April 2024, the gender pay gap among full-time employees was higher in every English region than in Wales, Scotland, or Northern Ireland.
- The gender pay gap measures the difference between average hourly earnings excluding overtime of men and women, as a proportion of men's average hourly earnings excluding overtime; it is a measure across all jobs in the UK, not of the difference in pay between men and women for doing the same job.

The terms “jobs” and “employees” are used interchangeably throughout this bulletin.

3 . Pay differences between men and women

Figure 1: Full-time median hourly earnings excluding overtime were £19.24 for men and £17.88 for women in April 2024

Gross median hourly earnings, excluding overtime, by employment type and sex, UK, April 2024



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Estimates for 2024 are provisional.
2. Employees are on adult rates, where pay is unaffected by absence.
3. Full-time is defined as employees working more than 30 paid hours per week, or 25 or more for the teaching professions.

In April 2024, median hourly earnings excluding overtime for full-time employees were £19.24 for men and £17.88 for women; for part-time employees, they were £13.00 for men and £13.40 for women.

We have introduced improvements to our methods for processing returns for the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) to help address differences between ASHE and other earnings data sources. More information is available in Section 7: Data sources and quality.

In this bulletin, we present a measure of the gender pay gap between men and women that is based on median hourly earnings excluding overtime. This is comparable across groups, and shows how the gap differs by age, occupation, and other job characteristics.

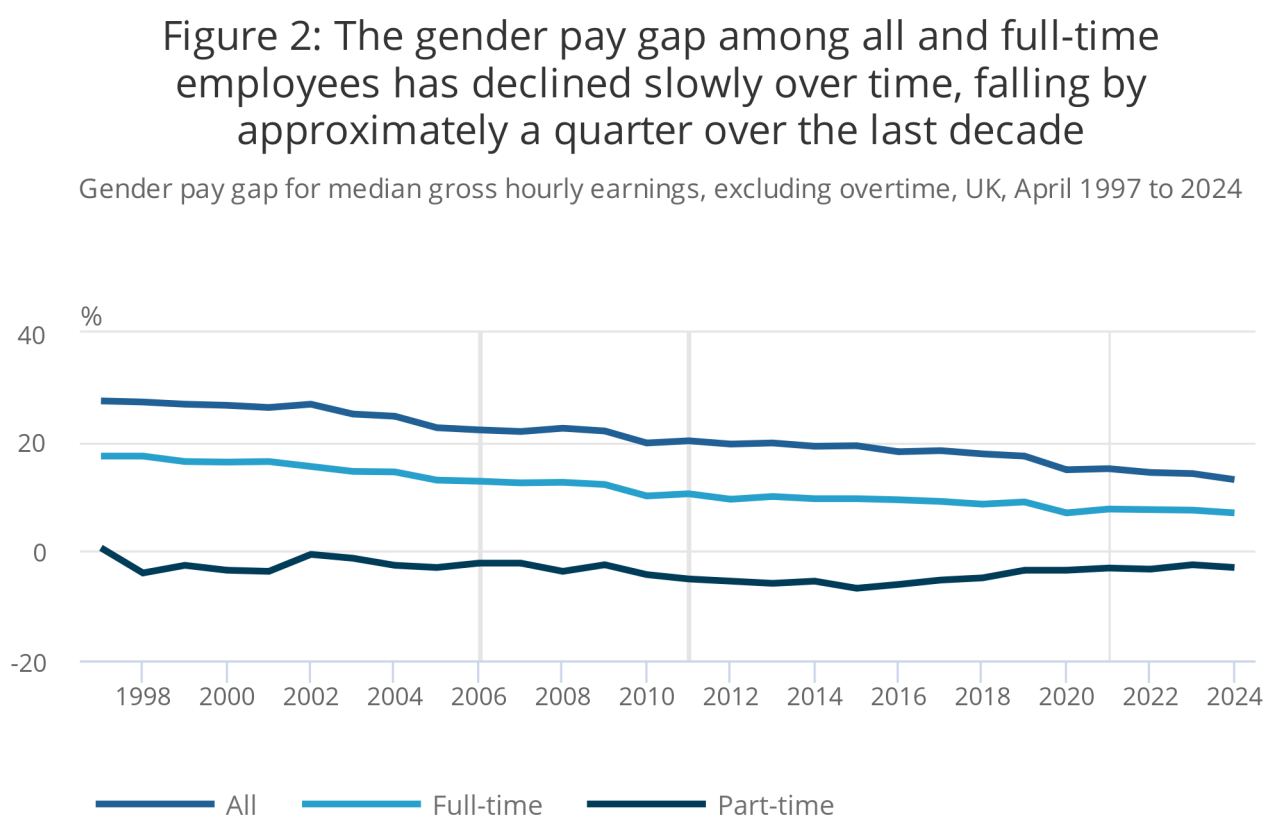
4 . The gender pay gap

Our measure of the gender pay gap is the difference between average hourly earnings excluding overtime of men and women, as a proportion of men's average hourly earnings excluding overtime. It is a measure across all jobs in the UK, or across all jobs within a group, such as a specific occupation. It is not a measure of the difference in pay between men and women doing the same job, and with similar skills and experience.

Our Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) gender pay gap analysis is different from the gender pay gap based on compulsory reporting. No findings from that initiative are reported in this publication. For more information, see Section 7: Data sources and quality.

Figure 2: The gender pay gap among all and full-time employees has declined slowly over time, falling by approximately a quarter over the last decade

Gender pay gap for median gross hourly earnings, excluding overtime, UK, April 1997 to 2024



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Vertical lines represent discontinuities in the 2006, 2011 and 2021 ASHE because of a change in occupation coding.

2. Estimates for 2024are provisional.

3. Employees are on adult rates, where pay is unaffected by absence unless furloughed.

4. Full-time is defined as employees working more than 30 paid hours per week, or 25 or more for the teaching professions.

5. Figures represent the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings as a percentage of men's hourly earnings, excluding overtime.

6. Because of methodological changes, data for 2023 and 2024 may not be directly comparable to data for 2022 and earlier years.

7. Data for 2020 and 2021 are subject to more uncertainty and should be treated with caution because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the data and collection. See Section 7: Data sources and quality for more information.

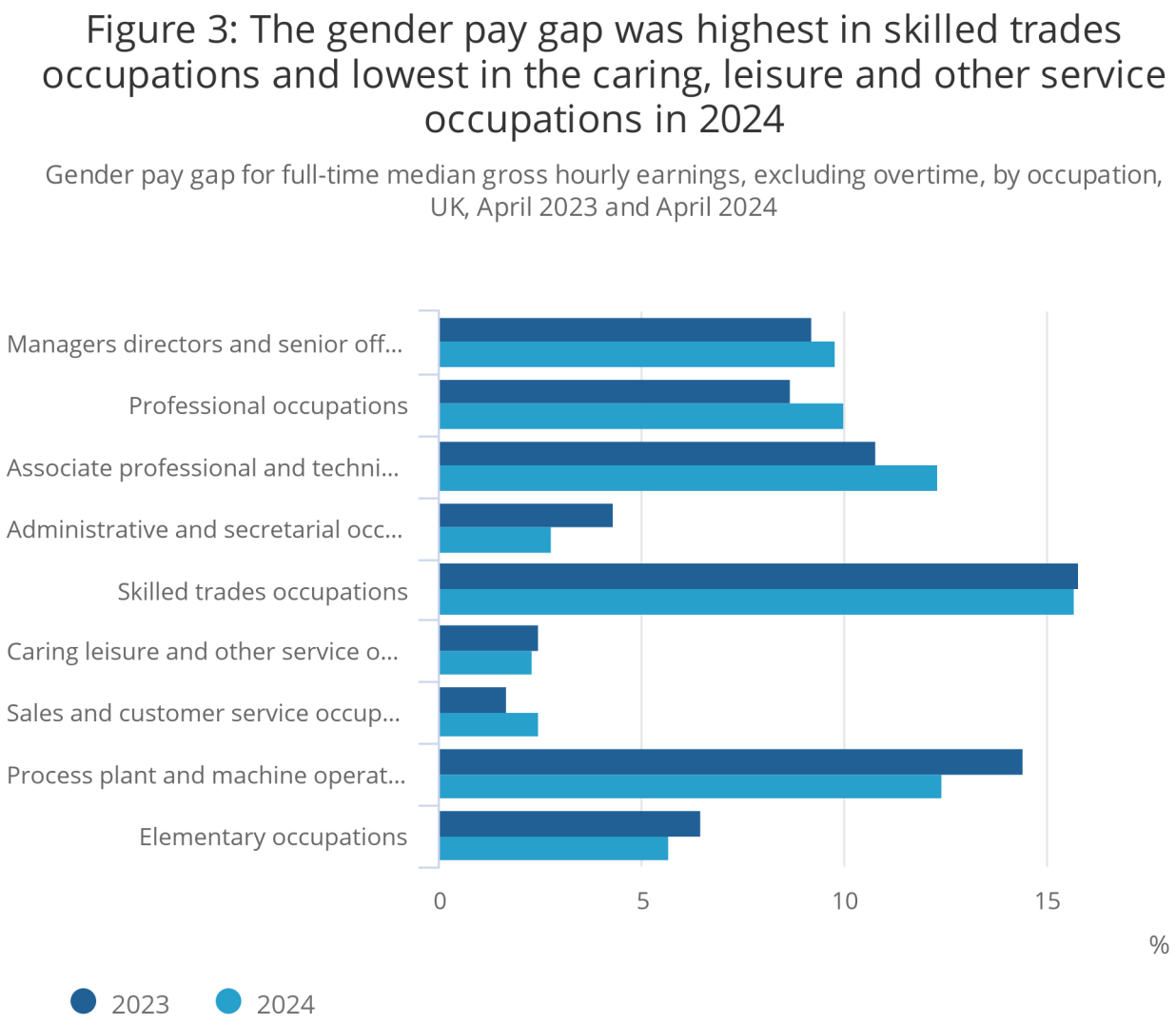
The gender pay gap among full-time employees was 7.0% in April 2024, down from 7.5% in April 2023. Among all employees, the gender pay gap decreased to 13.1% in April 2024, down from 14.2% in April 2023. For part-time employees, the gender pay gap was negative 3.0% in April 2024. This was an increase from April 2023, where it was negative 2.5%.

The gender pay gap is higher for all employees than it is for full-time employees or part-time employees. This is because women fill more part-time jobs, as described in our Decoding the gender pay gap blog. Compared with full-time jobs, part-time jobs have lower hourly median pay. ASHE data show that in 2024, approximately 85% of male employees were in full-time jobs, compared with approximately 61% of female employees.

The gender pay gap has been declining slowly over time. Over the last decade, it has fallen by approximately a quarter among both full-time employees and all employees.

Figure 3: The gender pay gap was highest in skilled trades occupations and lowest in the caring, leisure and other service occupations in 2024

Gender pay gap for full-time median gross hourly earnings, excluding overtime, by occupation, UK, April 2023 and April 2024



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

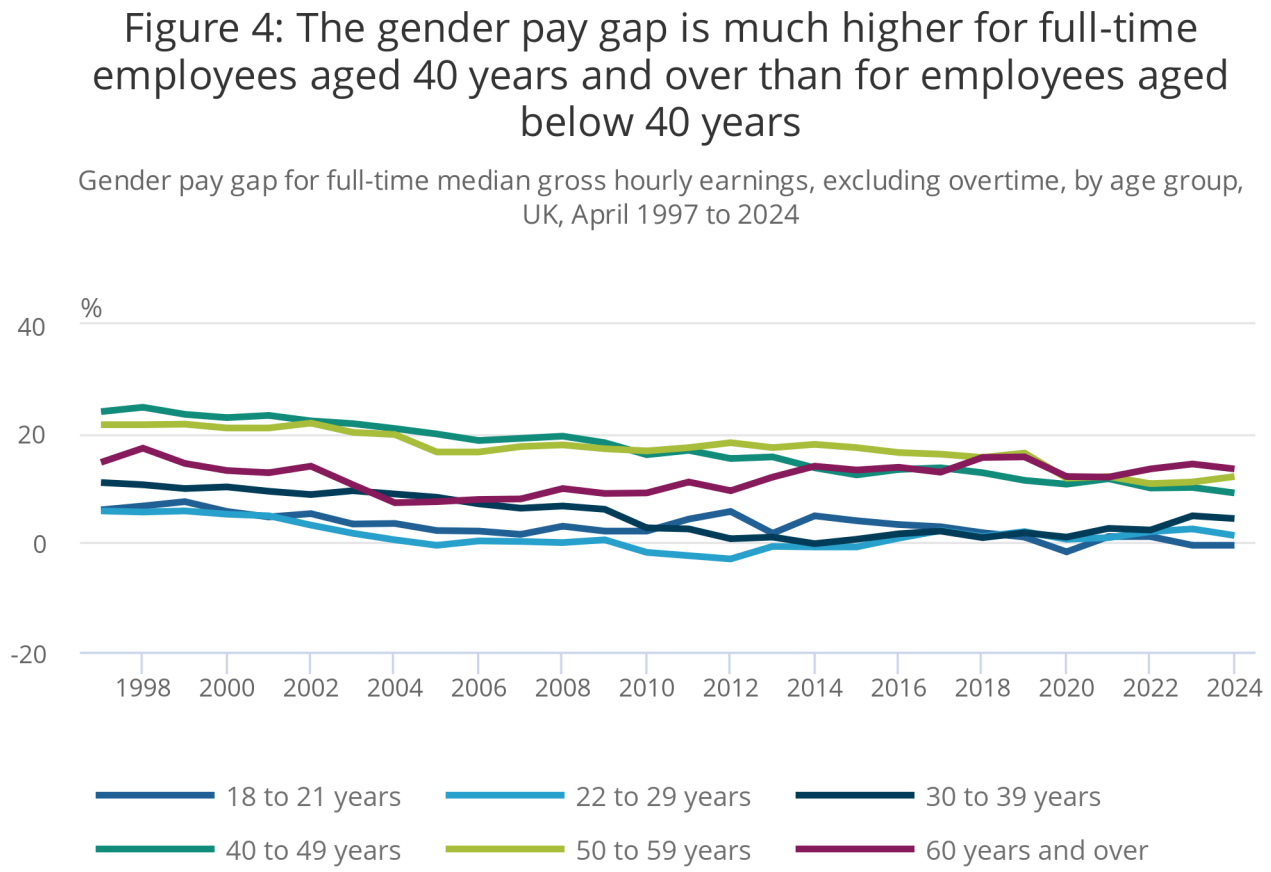
1. Estimates for 2024 are provisional.
2. Employees are on adult rates, where pay is unaffected by absence.
3. Full-time is defined as employees working more than 30 paid hours per week, or 25 or more for the teaching professions.
4. Figures represent the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings excluding overtime as a percentage of men's hourly earnings, excluding overtime.
5. Occupations are defined by the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) 2020.

Median hourly earnings excluding overtime are higher for men than for women among full-time employees in each of the nine main occupation groups. The gender pay gap is largest for higher-paying occupations and smallest for lower-paying occupations.

The associate professional and technical occupations had the largest increase in the gender pay gap between April 2023 and April 2024 (1.5 percentage points). The process plant and machine operative occupations had the largest decrease in the gender pay gap between April 2023 and April 2024 (2.0 percentage points).

Figure 4: The gender pay gap is much higher for full-time employees aged 40 years and over than for employees aged below 40 years

Gender pay gap for full-time median gross hourly earnings, excluding overtime, by age group, UK, April 1997 to 2024



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. The age group for those aged 16 to 17 years has been excluded from this chart because of sample size volatility.
2. Estimates for 2024are provisional.
3. Employees are on adult rates, where pay is unaffected by absence unless furloughed.
4. Full-time is defined as employees working more than 30 paid hours per week, or 25 or more for the teaching professions.
5. Figures represent the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings excluding overtime as a percentage of men's hourly earnings excluding overtime.

The gender pay gap is largest for employees aged 40 years and over.

In April 2024, the gender pay gap for full-time employees aged under 40 years was smaller than for full-time employees aged 40 years and over. For example, the gender pay gap for those aged 30 to 39 years stood at 4.4%, while for employees aged 40 to 49 years, it was more than double at 9.1%.

The gender pay gap decreased across most age groups between 2023 and 2024. However, for those aged 50 to 59 years, it increased from 11.1% to 12.1%. For those aged 18 to 21 years, it stayed at negative 0.5%. The largest decrease was seen among employees aged 22 to 29 years, where the gender pay gap decreased from 2.5% to 1.3%.

The gender pay gap for full-time employees aged 60 years and over is currently the largest of all age groups. Between 2023 and 2024, the gender pay gap for this group has decreased from 14.4% to 13.5%.

Figure 5: The proportion of women decreases with age in occupations where pay increases largely with age, like managers, directors, and senior officials

Median gross hourly earnings, excluding overtime, by the percentage of full-time employees in each group who are women, for age and occupation group, UK, 2024

Notes

1. Estimates for 2024 are provisional.
2. Employees are on adult rates, where pay is unaffected by absence.
3. Full-time is defined as employees working more than 30 paid hours per week, or 25 or more for the teaching professions.
4. Occupations are defined by the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) 2020.

Figure 5 c

Figure 5 shows that the proportion of women in occupations where pay increases considerably with age and experience, like managers, directors and senior officials, or professional occupations, decreases with age.

Looking at the top three high-paid occupational groups, Figure 5 shows how the proportion of women in professional occupations decreases with age. Older age groups are positioned further to the left of the x-axis than younger age groups. It is also in these occupational groups where median hourly earnings increase more substantially with age. Older age groups are positioned higher on the y-axis than younger age groups. For example, 51.0% of employees in professional occupations aged 22 to 29 years were women and only 42.6% of employees aged 50 to 59 years were women.

Median hourly earnings excluding overtime were £19.70 for employees aged 22 to 29 years, and £27.13 for employees aged 50 to 59 years. In comparison, for employees in occupational groups that have lower pay progression, like caring, leisure and other service occupations, or elementary occupations, the proportion of women does not decrease with age. All age groups are positioned at a similar height on the y-axis.

Figure 6: Explore the gender pay gap by occupation

Gender pay gap for median gross hourly earnings, excluding overtime, all employees, full-time employees, and part-time employees, by occupations, April 2024

Notes

1. Estimates for 2024are provisional.

2. Employees are on adult rates, where pay is unaffected by absence.

3. Full-time is defined as employees working more than 30 paid hours per week, or 25 or more for the teaching professions.

4. Figures represent the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings excluding overtime as a percentage of men's hourly earnings, excluding overtime.

5. Some occupations can be included in more than one grouping.

6. Some data are unavailable as they are considered unreliable because of small sample size.

7. The quality of earnings estimates vary by occupation; quality measures are available in our accompanying datasets.

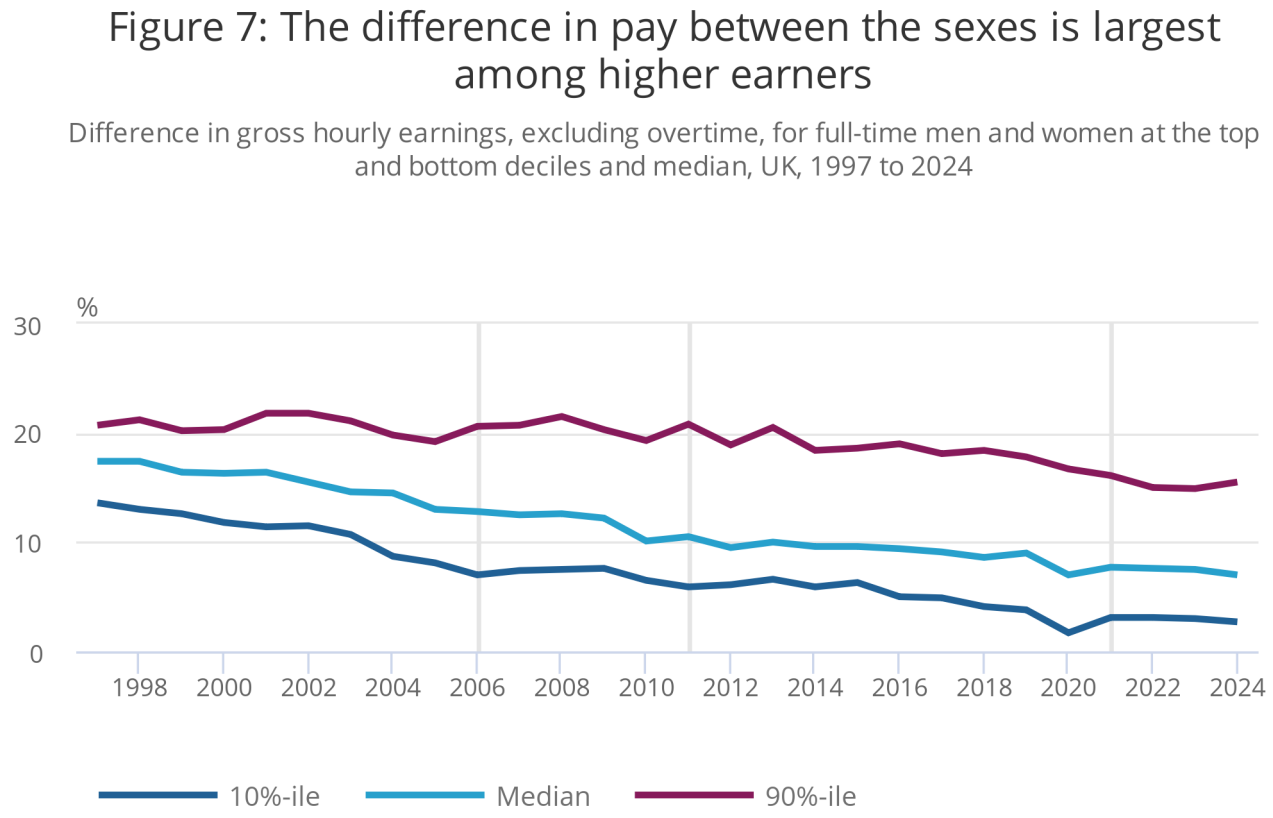
Figure 6 c

The interactive chart in Figure 6 allows you to compare the gender pay gap for all occupations at a detailed level, in terms of median gross hourly earnings excluding overtime, and for full-time and part-time employees.

You can see what the gender pay gap was in April 2024 for your occupation by searching for or selecting your occupation from the drop-down list in Figure 6. Select "full-time", "part-time" or "all" to see the specific gender pay gap for an occupation in each of these job types.

Figure 7: The difference in pay between the sexes is largest among higher earners

Difference in gross hourly earnings, excluding overtime, for full-time men and women at the top and bottom deciles and median, UK, 1997 to 2024



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Estimates for 2024 are provisional.
2. Employees are on adult rates, where pay is unaffected by absence.
3. Full-time is defined as employees working more than 30 paid hours per week, or 25 or more for the teaching professions.
4. Figures represent the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings excluding overtime as a percentage of men's hourly earnings, excluding overtime.
5. Vertical lines represent discontinuities in the 2006, 2011 and 2021 ASHE because of a change in occupation coding.

Figure 7 shows the gender pay gap for the highest-paid and lowest-paid employees. Employees in the 90th percentile are those who earn more than 90% of other employees, but less than the remaining 10%. Male employees in the 90th percentile earn substantially more than the equivalent female employees. The difference in pay, expressed in our gender pay gap measure, is 15.5% for full-time employees in the 90th percentile. This is much higher than the gap among median earners (7.1%). This, in turn, is also higher than the gender pay gap for employees earning the lowest wages in the 10th percentile (2.7%).

The changes to the gender pay gap across all deciles have been minimal between 2023 and 2024. However, the gender pay gaps for high earners, those in the 70th to 90th percentiles, have increased among full-time employees. For example, the 90th percentile gender pay gap in 2024 was 0.6% higher than it was in 2023.

Figure 8: The gender pay gap is higher in all English regions than in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland

Gender pay gap for median gross hourly earnings, excluding overtime, for full-time employees, by work region, UK, April 1997 and 2024

Notes

1. Estimates for 2024are provisional.
2. Employees are on adult rates, where pay is unaffected by absence.
3. Full-time is defined as employees working more than 30 paid hours per week, or 25 or more for the teaching professions.
4. Figures represent the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings excluding overtime as a percentage of men's hourly earnings, excluding overtime.

Downloac

The gender pay gap varied substantially between regions in April 2024. It was higher in every region of England than in Northern Ireland (0.8%), Scotland (2.2%) and Wales (1.9%). This was a very different pattern from April 1997, when the gender pay gap was relatively equal between the regions of the UK, as shown in Figure 8.

London and the South East were the regions with the largest gender pay gap in April 2024. This is likely to be partly because London and the South East have the highest average weekly earnings, as shown in our Gross weekly earnings of full-time employees by region dataset. London and the South East also have a higher proportion of employees earning the highest wages, which is where the largest gender pay gap is observed.

Women are more likely than men to accept lower pay in favour of a shorter commute, as we explored in our The commuting gap: women are more likely than men to leave their job over a long commute analysis. This would affect the number of women moving into managerial positions and therefore, lead to an increase in the gender pay gap in those regions.

5 . Data on the gender pay gap

Gender pay gap
Dataset | Released 29 October 2024
Annual gender pay gap estimates for UK employees by age, occupation, industry, full-time and part-time, region and other geographies, and public and private sector. Compiled from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE).

6 . Glossary

The gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is calculated as the difference between average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men and women, as a proportion of average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men's earnings. In practice, this means that a positive value for the gender pay gap indicates that on average, men earn more than women. A negative value indicates that on average, women earn more than men.

Our gender pay gap measure uses hourly earnings, instead of weekly or annual earnings, to better account for the fact that men work more hours per week on average than women. The gender pay gap estimates presented here do not include overtime. Overtime can skew the results, because men work more overtime hours on average than women.

Full-time and part-time

Full-time is defined as employees working more than 30 paid hours per week, or 25 or more hours for the teaching professions. Part-time is defined as employees working less than or equal to 30 paid hours per week, or less than or equal to 25 hours for the teaching professions.

Standard Occupational Classification

The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) is a common classification of occupational information for the UK.

7 . Data sources and quality

Data sources

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) collects information on actual payments made to the employee and the hours on which this pay was calculated. It is based on employer responses for a 1% sample of employee jobs, using HM Revenue and Customs Pay As You Earn (PAYE) records to identify individuals' current employer. All estimates for 2024 are provisional and relate to the pay period that includes 17 April 2024. Estimates for 2023 have been revised and relate to the pay period that includes 19 April 2023.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, the achieved sample size of ASHE was approximately 180,000 each year. However, given the challenges to data collection during the pandemic, the final achieved sample sizes were:

- 144,000 for 2020
- 142,000 for 2021
- 148,000 for 2022
- 164,000 for 2023

Response rates have improved to 173,000 in 2024.

Data methods

ASHE data are weighted to UK population totals from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), based on classes defined by region, occupation, age and sex.

From 2021, we have moved our occupation coding to Standard Occupation Classification 2020 (SOC 2020), from SOC 2010. This means estimates for earnings in April 2021 on an SOC 2020 basis represent a break in the ASHE time series. Estimates will not be directly comparable with estimates for earnings on an SOC 2010 basis and, as such, should not be used in direct comparison with each other.

ASHE estimates are affected by the composition of the employee workforce, which is the types of workers and jobs. This can vary year on year. Differences in levels and growth rates in ASHE estimates reflect both changes in earnings and changes in the composition of the employee workforce.

Methodological changes in 2023 to 2024

Since 2020, during and after the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, ASHE has shown some differences, compared with other earnings data sources, such as our Average Weekly Earnings dataset and our Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information datasets. There are inherent reasons for differences between ASHE and other earnings data sources, as set out in our Comparison of labour market data sources methodology.

We know that ASHE has not always accurately estimated the number of high earners in each profession in recent years. So, it may have been understating both the earnings of the highest earners and, to a lesser extent, underestimating both mean and median average wages. To address this concern, we have started to introduce improvements to the methods for processing returns to our survey for 2024 provisional data and 2023 revised data, focusing first on the treatment of high earners. This has resulted in more high earners in each profession being counted in the final data. This has increased the achieved sample size and improved the quality of ASHE estimates.

The impact of these method improvements is that we have larger than average revisions for 2023 data. Median hourly pay (excluding overtime) for full-time employees has risen from £17.40 to £17.52. Annual median earnings for full-time employees is now estimated to be £35,004, up from the previous estimate of £34,963.

We will shortly be engaging with users about whether we can bring this new method in for 2022 and earlier data. In the meantime, we caution against comparing 2023 and 2024 with 2022 and earlier years.

In addition to improving our methods, we have followed usual practice and applied the latest LFS weights. This will also have an impact on the revised 2023 data, compared with the provisional 2023 data. We will continue to update the LFS weights as they are made available to us. This will result in revised ASHE data, which we will communicate with users.

Additionally, the following factors are also likely to be contributing to the divergence between ASHE and other data sources since 2020:

- differential non-response
- the calibrating to the LFS
- increased variance because of sample size reduction
- the way the bonus element of ASHE is captured

We have a plan of future work to improve the quality of ASHE that can be found in our accompanying Exploring this year's earnings figures blog.

Uncertainty

Sampling variability for ASHE estimates are provided in our accompanying datasets.

More quality and methodology information

Our guide to interpreting ASHE estimates methodology addresses common questions about our data.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our ASHE methodology and guidance and in our ASHE, Low pay and ASHE pension results QMI.

Accredited official statistics

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in June 2013. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled "accredited official statistics".

8 . Related links

Understanding the gender pay gap in the UK
Article | Released 17 January 2018
This analysis builds on the raw gender pay gap, using regressions techniques to provide more insight into the factors that affect men's and women's pay.

Decoding the gender pay gap: how a Bletchley Park codebreaker helped explain a strange paradox
Blog | Released 16 April 2019
Our National Statistical blog post explores the paradox found in the gender pay gap, and how occupation and type of employment affect the statistics.

Comparison of labour market data sources
Methodology | Last revised 27 April 2022
The strengths and weaknesses of the main data sources we use to produce the labour market figures, including the advantages of new administrative data sources and limitations of some of our published figures.

Income and earnings statistics guide
Methodology | Last revised 22 May 2024
Explains the relationship between income and earnings data and outlines the statistics produced by the Office for National Statistics, Department for Work and Pensions, and HM Revenue and Customs.

Ethnicity pay gaps: 2012 to 2022
Article | Released 29 November 2023
Earnings and employment statistics for different ethnic groups, using regression analysis to provide more insight into factors that affect pay.

Disability pay gaps in the UK: 2014 to 2023
Article | Released 17 October 2024
Earnings statistics for disabled and non-disabled employees in the UK, using regression analysis to provide more insight into factors that affect pay.

9 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 29 October 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, Gender pay gap in the UK: 2024