

Comhairle Contae Chorcaí  

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Cork County Council

## **GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2024**



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## 1. Introduction

The Gender Pay Gap Information Act, 2021 requires organisations with over 150 employees to report on their Gender Pay Gap and this is the third year that this report has been prepared by Cork County Council.

Cork County Council's Development plan provides an ambitious but balanced vision for the future of Cork County including a population growth of 59,000 to 2028. Our vision, is for the development of County Cork as an attractive, competitive, and sustainable place to live, visit and do business, where the quality of its economy, natural and built environment, culture and the strength and viability of its rural and urban communities are to the highest standard. People are at the core of our organisation, and we strive to promote an inclusive culture that delivers excellent public services to the people that call Cork County home. Cork County Council is a place where all employees have the same opportunities for recognition and career development and are treated fairly and equitably. We continue to be committed to addressing workplace barriers to equality, supporting diversity, and creating an open and inclusive workplace.

Cork County Council values the role of all staff in the workplace and affords all employees the same opportunities for recognition and career progression. We also ensure that all citizens have equality of opportunity in our recruitment process. We strive to treat everyone fairly and equitably. We will continue to provide training and development opportunities to staff, to enable them to reach their full potential. We will build on the initiatives targeted at supporting diversity and inclusion and overcoming barriers to equality that we already deliver. A number of policies and schemes such as the shorter working year, parental leave, carers leave, career break, force majeure etc. are available to support all Council staff who wish to avail of them.

Finally, we will continue to monitor the trends in our gender pay gap figures and work with our colleagues across the sector to share and develop best practice initiatives to further deliver equality in the workplace.

## 2. About us

### Local government in Ireland

There are 31 local authorities and 3 regional assemblies in Ireland. Local authorities are the closest and most accessible form of government to citizens. They have responsibility for the delivery of a wide range of services in their local area, with a focus on making cities, towns, villages, and the countryside attractive places in which to live, work and invest.

Local authority services make a significant contribution to the physical, cultural, social, and environmental development of communities and include housing, planning, infrastructure, environmental protection and the provision of amenities and recreation and community infrastructure.

Local authorities play a key role in promoting social inclusion and quality of life and supporting economic development and enterprise at a local level. Local authorities take the lead role in shaping the strategic vision of the county or city. They also work in partnership with other state, public and private bodies in the delivery of critical infrastructure and shared services.

Local authorities deliver hundreds of services and implement policy across a range of areas including:

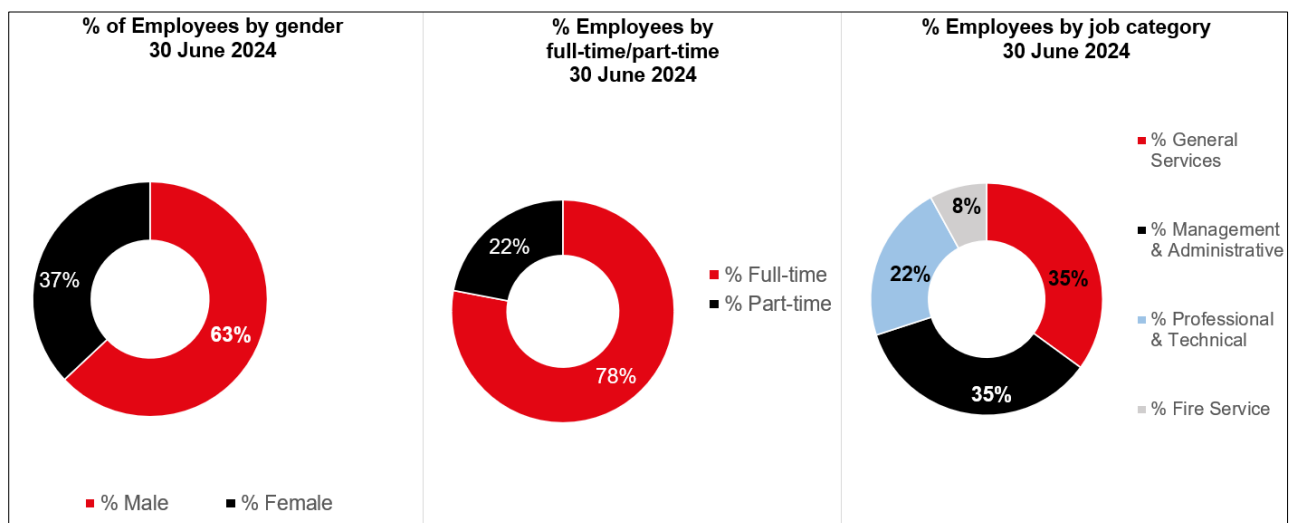
Arts, Culture and Libraries	Community Services	Economic Development
Environment and Climate Action	Housing	Parks and Open Spaces
Planning	Roads and Transport	Tourism

Local authority employees come from a wide range of backgrounds with diverse skill sets, qualifications, and experience. Roles in the sector include:

Accountants	Administrators	Apprenticeships
Archaeologists	Architects	Conservation Officers
Ecologists	Engineers	Fire Services
General Service and Tradespeople	Graduates	Health and Safety
Information Technology	Library Services	Legal
Senior Management Roles	Planners	Technicians

### Cork County Council

Located in the south of the country, Cork County Council is a progressive, dynamic local authority, committed to enhancing the county’s attraction as a place in which to invest, work, and live, and takes the lead role in shaping the strategic vision of the county. Through strong democratic leadership we promote the development of vibrant, prosperous communities, engaging with businesses and providing high quality services and infrastructure. Our core values include engagement, citizen focus, respect, excellence through people, quality, economic growth, and accountability. Our workforce of over 2,500 employees work in a dynamic and progressive local authority, and are our most valuable resource.



### **3. Gender Pay Gap Reporting**

#### **Gender pay gap reporting 2024**

The Gender Pay Gap Information Act, 2021 requires organisations with over 150 employees to report on their Gender Pay Gap. This year (2024) is the third year that organisations are required to report on their Gender Pay Gap. Organisations are asked to select a 'snapshot' date in the month of June. The reporting period is the 12-month period immediately preceding and including the snapshot date, which for local authorities is 30 June 2024. Organisations had six months to prepare their calculations, before reporting six months later during December 2024. The information must be published on the employer's website or in some other way that is accessible to all its employees and to the public.

#### **Who is included?**

All persons employed by the employer on the snapshot date, including employees not rostered to work on that date and employees on leave. The mean and median figures must also be given separately for part-time and temporary employees.

(Elected Councillors are not classified as employees for the purpose of this report.)

#### **What do we mean by the gender pay gap?**

The Gender Pay Gap calculates the percentage difference between the average earnings of males and females irrespective of their role.

The Gender Pay Gap is not the same as equal pay. Employment Equality legislation provides for equal pay for like work. All male and female employees in the local government sector are paid equally for work that is the same or similar or for work of equal value, therefore this report does not examine equal pay. Rates of pay within the sector are agreed through national wage agreements negotiated regularly between employers and staff representatives. Most employees are paid according to an incremental salary scale and the salary ranges for various roles are available on the local government jobs website at [www.localgovernmentjobs.ie](http://www.localgovernmentjobs.ie).

## Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap

The Gender Pay Gap calculates the percentage difference between the average earnings of males and females irrespective of their role, using the following measures:

MEAN GENDER PAY GAP
<p>This shows the % difference between the average hourly rate of pay for males and average hourly rate of pay for females</p> $\frac{(\text{average male hourly rate}) - (\text{average female hourly rate})}{\text{average male hourly rate}} \times 100$
MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP
<p>This shows the % difference between the median hourly rate of pay for males and median hourly rate of pay for females</p> $\frac{(\text{median of male hourly rates}) - (\text{median of female hourly rates})}{\text{median of male hourly rates}} \times 100$

The **mean** is the average. It is calculated by getting the difference between the average hourly rate of pay for males and the average hourly rate of pay for females (male hourly rate minus female hourly rate), expressed as a percentage of the male hourly rate. If this figure is negative, the average hourly rate of females is higher than the average hourly rate of males on the snapshot date. If this figure is positive, the average hourly rate of males is higher than the average hourly rate of females on the snapshot date.

The **median** is the figure that falls in the middle of a range where the salary of all relevant employees is listed, from the lowest to the highest. This can provide a more accurate representation of the 'typical' differences in pay.

It is useful to look at both the mean and median figures, as each one can tell us something different about the underlying factors affecting the pay gap.

For example, a small number of higher paid employees can impact the mean figure and if this is the case, the median figure may be more representative of difference between what a male and a female is paid.

If there is a significant difference between an organisation's mean and median pay gap, this may indicate that the data is impacted either by the presence of low earners (making the mean lower than the median) or by a group of higher earners (making the mean higher than the median).

It is also important to remember that this report uses data on a snapshot date in June. Gender pay gaps can fluctuate from month to month and across quartile pay bands, depending on changes to headcount. However, headline figures will give a good indication of the differences between average earning between males and females.

### **Quartile Pay Bands**

Dividing employees into four more-or-less equal groups (or quartiles) with pay graded from lowest to highest helps us to examine pay across different levels of the organisation.

Organisations must report on the percentage of employees who fall within the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile hourly pay bands.

In order to group employees into these Quartile Pay Bands, the organisation lists all employees from lowest to highest, based on their hourly rates. The employees are then divided into four equal groups or Quartiles based on this - lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper. The employer then shows the proportion of male and female employees in each quartile as a percentage e.g. percentage of male employees in the lower quartile and percentage of female employees in the lower quartile (and so on).



## **Bonus and benefit-in-kind**

Figures must also be provided for bonus payments or benefit-in-kind payments if these apply. Bonus payments do not apply within the local government sector.

Benefit in Kind may arise in certain circumstances, e.g. where some professional fees are paid by the employer.

## **Factors that can have an impact on the gender pay gap**

As mentioned, this report does not look at equal pay. Every employee, regardless of gender is paid equally for work that is the same or similar or for work of equal value. However, differences between what employees are paid can be impacted by a number of complex factors including:

- Occupational segregation – some job categories or occupations may have traditionally attracted more females than males or vice versa.
- Working patterns – full-time and part-time work. It may be that more females than males seek part-time work or career breaks and although this does not impact on their hourly rate of pay, it may impact on choices around career progression.
- Length of service – incremental pay increases may mean that new joiners are paid less than more experienced employees.
- Time of year – temporary or seasonal workers may be recruited for different roles which may attract a different rate of pay.
- Gender breakdown of senior roles at higher salaries – a small number of higher paid employees can affect the average figures.
- Gender breakdown of lower paid roles – a large number of lower paid employees can affect the average figures.

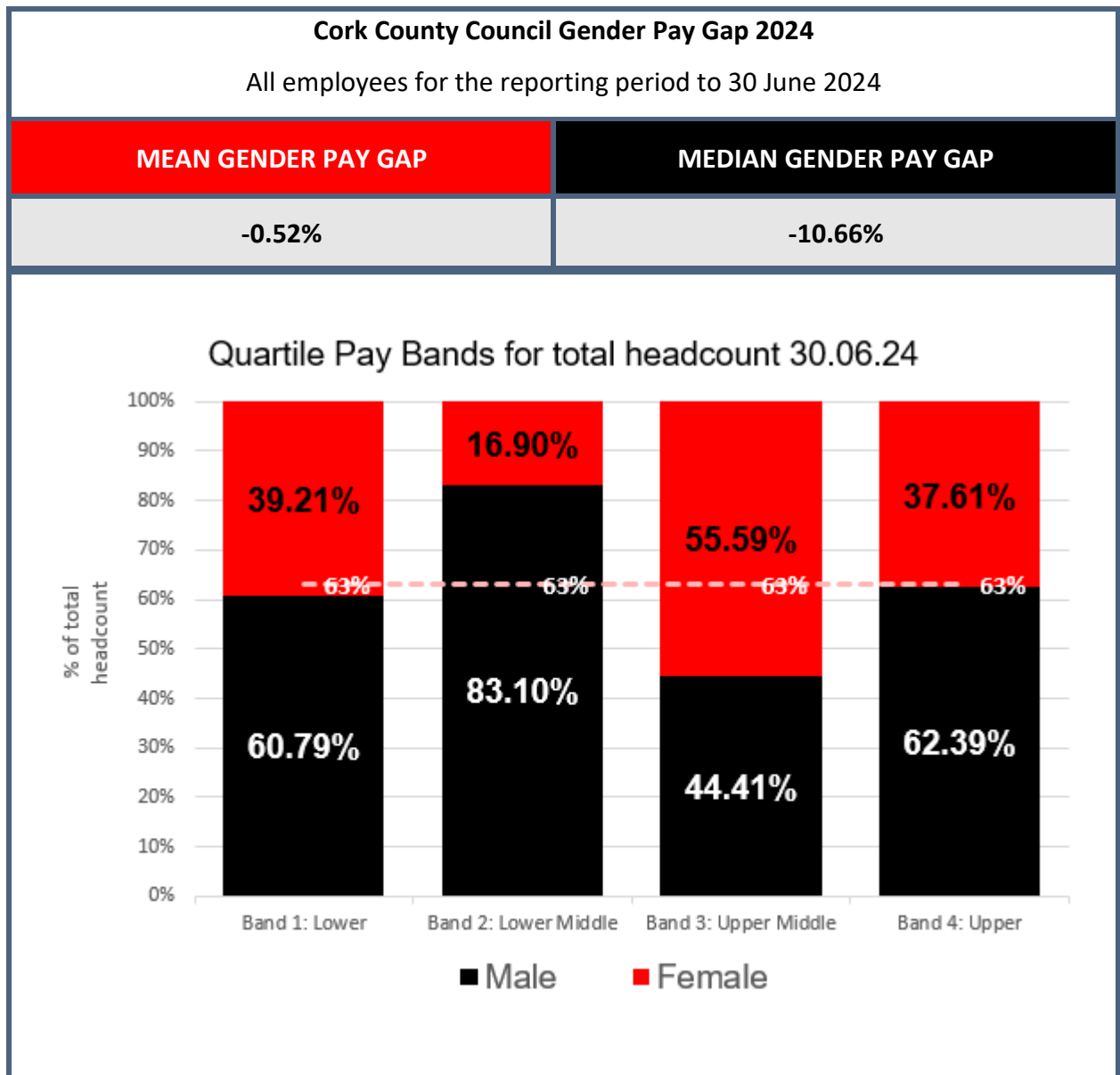
If an organisation reports a **positive gender pay gap**, it does not mean that females are paid less than males for doing the same job, but it does show that, on average, males occupy higher paid roles than females.

If an organisation reports a **negative gender pay gap**, it does not mean that males are paid less than females for doing the same job, but it does indicate that, on average, females occupy higher paid roles than males.

The larger the positive or negative pay gap is, the more marked the differences in hourly rates of pay will be and the more males or females proportionally working in either higher or lower paid roles within the organisation.

## 4. Our Figures

### Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap - all employees



**Note:** 63% : 37% (Male : Female) is the gender breakdown of all employees on 30 June 2024. This is shown in the dotted line above.

The **Mean Gender Pay Gap** shows that on average, females are paid 0.52% more than males. The **Median Gender Pay Gap** shows that the median rate of pay for females is 10.66% higher than the median rate of pay for males.

Looking at the distribution of employees across the four **Quartile Pay Bands** helps us examine pay at different levels of the organisation.

These Quartile Pay Bands show the distribution of male and female employees by Pay Band across the organisation (We list all employees from lowest to highest, based on their hourly rates, then divide this into four equal Pay Bands or Quartiles - lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper. We then show the proportion of male and female employees in each quartile).

For there to be no Gender Pay Gap you would expect to see the workforce demographics reflected more closely in *each* quartile.

There is a higher proportion of males in Band 2, reflecting that there are proportionately more males at lower - middle grades. There is a higher proportion of females in Band 3, reflecting that there are proportionately more females in Upper Middle Grades. However, a 62.39% / 37.61% gender breakdown in the higher band is to be welcomed and reflects the gender balance in senior roles and is in line with our workforce demographics of 63% male and 37% female.

### Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap – Part-time employees

<b>Cork County Council Gender Pay Gap 2024</b>	
Part-time employees for the reporting period to 30 June 2024	
<b>MEAN GENDER PAY GAP</b>	<b>MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP</b>
<b>-2.79%</b>	<b>-3.22%</b>

Approximately 22% of all our employees on 30 June were working part-time. Of these, 53% are male and 47% are female.

Factors influencing the pattern of part-time employees across the organisation include a range of flexible work options for part-time work, which, while available to all employees, have a greater take-up in administrative and clerical job categories.

Another factor is job categories where part-time work is an occupational feature of the role, including the fire service, veterinary service, library service and school wardens.

### Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap – Temporary employees

<b>Cork County Council Gender Pay Gap 2024</b>	
Temporary employees for the reporting period to 30 June 2024	
<b>MEAN GENDER PAY GAP</b>	<b>MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP</b>
<b>21.21%</b>	<b>9.22%</b>

On 30 June 2024, approximately 12% of our employees were employed on temporary contracts. Of these, the majority, 64%, are male and 36% are female. These contracts include temporary/seasonal employees such as beach lifeguards, seasonal drivers, and general operatives, as well as graduates, veterinary inspectors, major project staff and apprentices. The figures above reflect a higher proportion of male Professional/Technical and General Services staff employed on Temporary Contracts.

### Benefit in kind

On 30 June 2024 no employees received a Benefit in Kind payment.

### Bonus payment

Bonus payments do not feature as part of pay in the local government sector.

## 5. How we are supporting Gender Equality

In line with the Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021, 2024 is the third year that Cork County Council has reported on the gender pay gap, but equality, diversity and inclusion continues to be part of the way we work.

### **Fair and transparent recruitment practices**

- As an equal opportunities' employer, we work to promote a culture of equality and we strive to embrace genuine equality of opportunity through our recruitment and selection process which is open to all.
- Cork County Council provides appropriate assistance and accommodation throughout our recruitment and selection process, including providing easily accessible interview facilities, agreeing an appropriately timed interview, and supplying or arranging appropriate equipment.
- All our Interview Boards are gender balanced and all Interview Boards receive clear guidance on Cork County Council's expectation and requirement for equality and fairness during the recruitment process.
- Recruitment websites highlight family friendly and flexible working options, and our job descriptions are gender neutral.
- Cork County Council provides training and support, open to all employees to help them prepare for job applications and interviews.
- Where applicable, employees are paid according to an incremental salary scale, and we offer strong career progression opportunities which are open to all employees.

### **Work life balance**

- We offer a wide range of flexible working and leave options which are available to all employees, including carer's leave, career breaks, paid maternity and adoptive leave, paid paternity leave, parent's leave, parental leave, shorter working year schemes, work-sharing.

## **Blended working**

- Blended working is now a part of our flexible working policies with flexible options to combine office and home/hub working.
- Cork County Council provides access to the Cycle to Work Scheme and the Tax Saver Scheme, to reduce commuting costs.

## **Learning and development**

- Cork County Council is committed to providing ongoing learning and development opportunities so that all employees can develop to their full potential. All employees are encouraged to pursue education opportunities through the Education Assistance Scheme, with study and examination leave also available.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

- The health and wellbeing of all employees is paramount and a healthy work-life balance is important to us. We offer a comprehensive employee occupational health and wellbeing programmes including an Employee Assistance Programme, health screening, health and nutrition advice and wellbeing webinars etc.

## **Dignity at Work**

- Cork County Council promotes and supports a culture of dignity, respect, and equality. We have a Dignity at Work Policy and employees and line managers receive support in the implementation of the policy.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

- Cork County Council is continually developing as an employer of choice, to attract, develop and promote an inclusive and diverse employee population.
- Cork County Council continues to design and provide responsive services and customer care that meet the needs of an increasingly diverse customer base.

## **Public Sector Duty**

- Cork County Council progressively embed the Public Sector Duty in its current management, policy development and service delivery processes.
- The Public Sector Duty is set out in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014. Section 42 requires a public body, in the performance of its functions, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services and protect human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.
- Public bodies are required to set out in a manner that is accessible to the public in its strategic plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to its functions and purpose and the existing or proposed policies, plans and actions to address those issues. Furthermore, public bodies are required to report annually on developments and achievements in that regard in its annual report in a manner that is accessible to the public.
- Cork County Council acknowledges the commonality of purpose stated in both the “Duty” and Gender Pay Gap reporting requirements and the publication of this report serves to underline and support the three-step approach advocated by the IHREC i.e., Assess, Address and Report.

## **Women in leadership**

- Our Senior Management Team comprises of a gender balance of 50% Male and 50% Female and we continue to work on developing leadership programmes for female staff.
- Leadership training has been rolled out to line managers to enable them to improve their leadership skills and assist them in their current roles and to support their progression in the organisation.
- Cork County Council supported a number of female staff to participate in the Women in Leadership programme run by Co-operation Ireland.



## **Apprenticeships**

- As part of our inclusive approach to recruitment, Cork County Council offers a number of apprenticeship programmes and participates as part of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Innovation and Science's Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021 – 2025 which aims to increase the number of apprenticeships within the Public Service. This includes new apprenticeship programmes linked to areas of work within local authorities such as ICT as well as more traditional apprenticeship areas.

## **Data collection and evidence-based policy development**

- We welcome the opportunity to report on our gender pay gap and have worked collaboratively across the sector to provide a standard and consistent approach to reporting. We will work with the LGMA and our colleagues in other local authorities to share learnings and best practice.

