

# Gender Pay Gap Report 2021

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## **1. Introduction**

Since April 2017 employers in Britain with more than 250 employees are required by law to publish their gender pay gap information every year within twelve months of the relevant snapshot date, which is 31 March for local government. Data must be published on both Durham County Council's website (<https://www.durham.gov.uk/genderpaygap>) and through the government gender pay gap reporting website (<https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/>).

The gender pay gap shows the difference in average pay between men and women in the workforce. This data helps us to understand the size and potential causes of pay gaps and to identify any issues that need to be addressed. Gender pay gap is not the same as equal pay which is defined as pay differences between gender when carrying out jobs of equal value.

This document sets out Durham County Council's (DCC) gender pay gap (GPG) data, analysis and plans for long term improvements. Due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) took the decision to suspend enforcement of the gender pay gap deadlines for the reporting year (2019/20). The decision meant there was no expectation on employers to report their data if they have not already done so. All North East councils complied with the submission and published their Gender Pay Gap data to the 30 March deadline. However, the suspension of GPG reporting, impacts on the availability of national data, which is presented for wider comparison within this written statement.

Since the previous GPG report, a workforce strategy for the council has been developed to ensure the right transformational people practices are in place to support the transformation of our people and services. A number of initiatives from the strategy have commenced or are planned to help improve and have a positive impact on the gender pay gap difference. This includes, providing support through a range of staff networks, introduction of a hybrid working model, which will increase and improve flexibility, and development of a new careers webpage to help attract a diverse range of talent.

## **2. Results for Mandatory Gender Pay Gap Reporting Requirements**

Durham County Council is required to publish the following four types of data annually to meet the government's gender pay gap reporting requirements:

- Gender pay gap (mean and median averages)
- Proportion of men and women in each quartile of the organisational pay structure
- Gender bonus gap (mean and median averages)

- Proportion of men and women receiving bonuses

As a large public sector employer, our GPG calculations are based on a total of 8,291 full-pay relevant employees as at 31 March 2021. Data from 31 March 2020 is also included for comparative analysis.

### **Gender Pay Gap (mean and median averages)**

The mean hourly rate is the average hourly wage across the entire organisation, so the mean gender pay gap is a measure of the difference between women's mean hourly wage and men's mean hourly wage.

The median hourly rate is calculated by ranking all employees from the highest paid to the lowest paid, and taking the hourly wage of the person in the middle; so the median gender pay gap is the difference between women's median hourly wage (the middle-paid woman) and men's median hourly wage (the middle-paid man).

### **Mean**

As at 31 March 2021, women's **mean** hourly rate of pay is **1.85% lower** than men. In terms of money the difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees is;

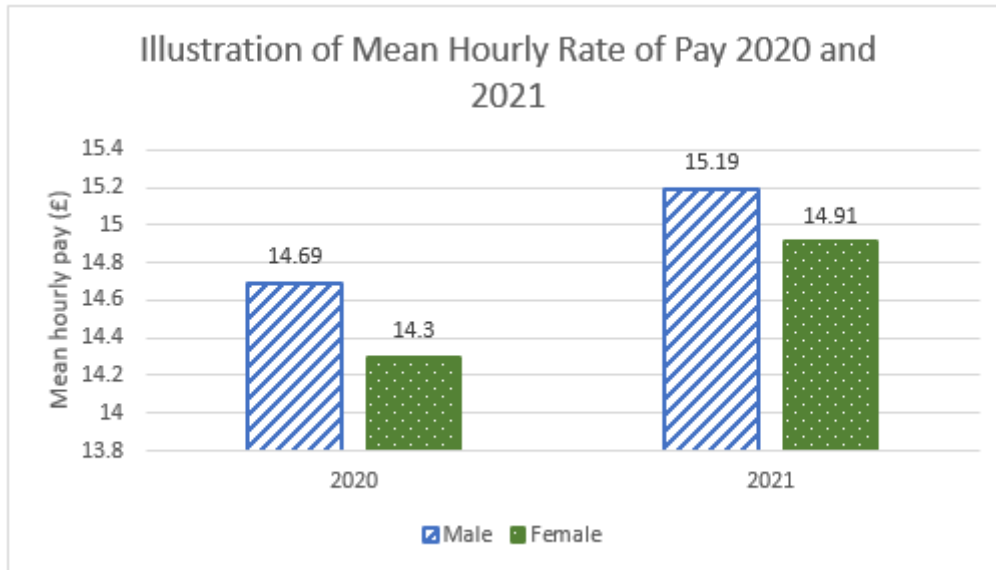
**-£0.28 (Female Mean £14.91 and Male Mean £15.19)**

This represents an improvement (narrowing of the gap) on the position as at 31 March 2020 when the outcomes were as follows:

-2.65% lower pay (using the mean)

-£0.39 (Female Mean £14.30 and Male Mean £14.69)

### **Chart 1 – Illustration of Mean Hourly Rate of Pay 2020 and 2021**



In 2021, female DCC employees pay was 1.85% less (£0.28) than their male colleagues based on the average (mean) hourly rate.

## Median

As at 31 March 2021, women's **median** hourly rate of pay is **3.87% lower** than men. In terms of money the difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees is;

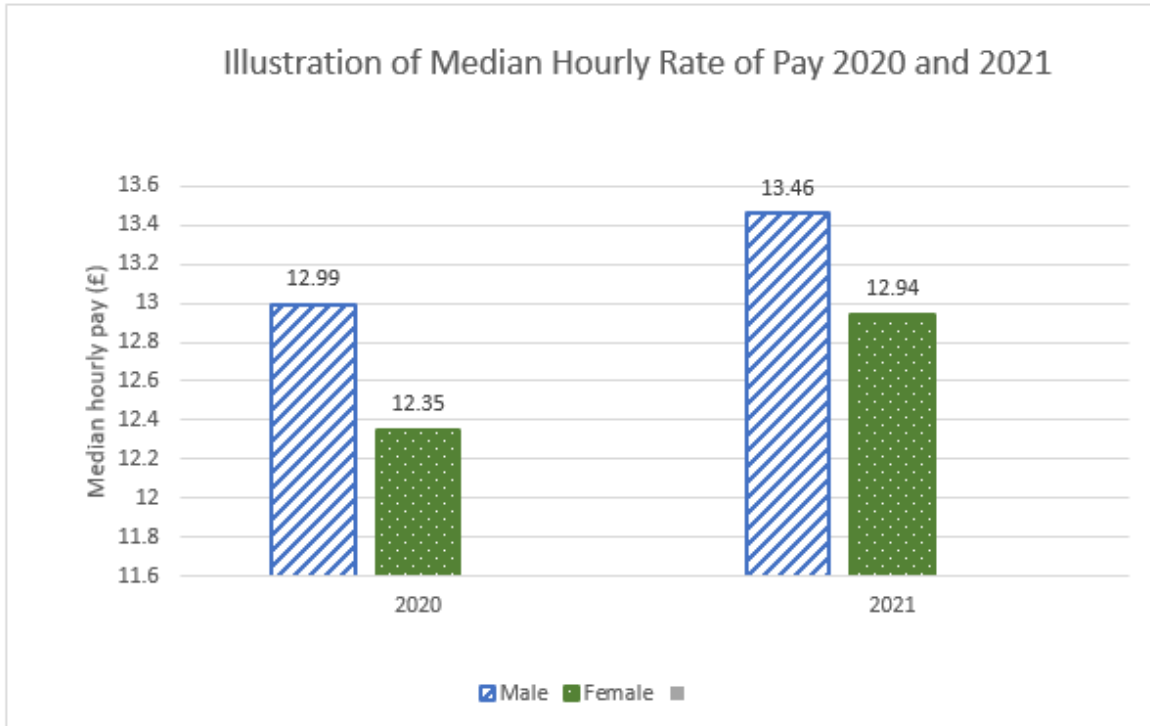
**-£0.52 (Female Median £12.94 and Male Median £13.46)**

This represents an improvement (closing of the gap) on the position as at 31 March 2020 when the outcomes were as follows:

- 4.93% lower pay (using the median)

-£0.64 (Female Median £12.35 and Male Median £12.99)

## Chart 2 – Illustration of Median Pay Gap 2020 and 2021



In 2021, female median pay was 3.87% less (£0.52) than their male colleagues based on the median hourly rate.

### Proportion of men and women in each pay quartile

Pay quartiles are calculated by splitting all employees into four even groups according to their level of pay. Looking at the proportion of women in each quartile gives an indication of women's representation at different levels of the organisation.

In terms of the calculations, the workforce was split into quartiles as follows:

Quartile 1 From Apprentice Rate to £10.61404

Quartile 2 From £10.61406 to £13.20725

Quartile 3 From £13.20735 to £17.21131

Quartile 4 From £17.22970 to Chief Executive

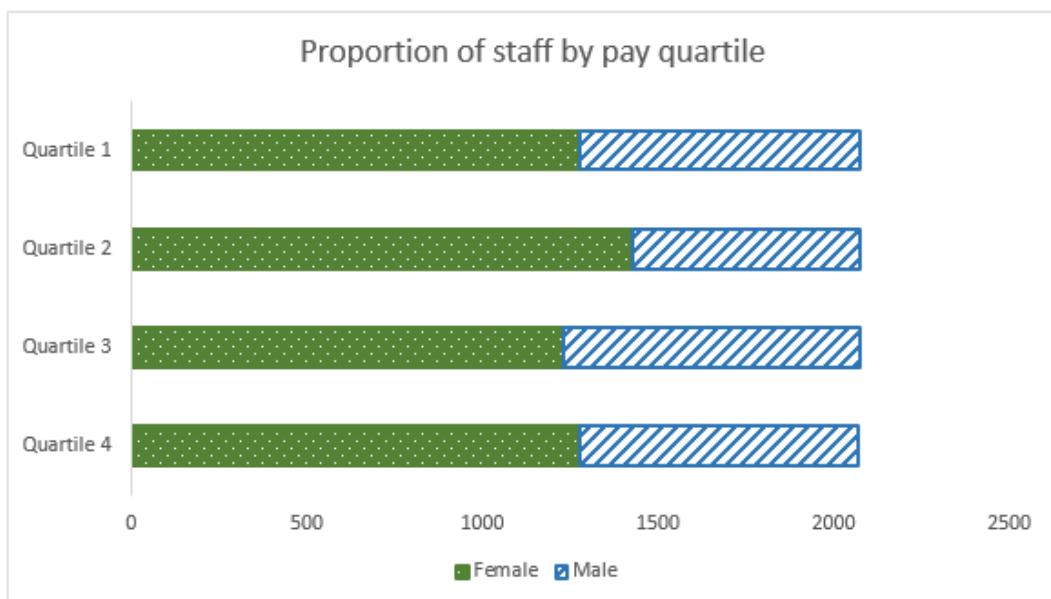
### Table 1 – Proportion of Male and Female Full-Pay Relevant Employees by Quartile (as at 31 March 2021)

	Hourly Pay Rate - Range	Number in Quartile	Female - Number	Female - %	Male - Number	Male - %
<b>Quartile 1</b>	Up to £10.61404	2,072	1,276	61.58%	797	38.47%
<b>Quartile 2</b>	£10.61406 - £13.20725	2,073	1,427	68.84%	646	31.16%
<b>Quartile 3</b>	£13.20735 - £17.21131	2,073	1,229	59.29%	845	40.76%
<b>Quartile 4</b>	£17.22970 - £104.48812	2,073	1,275	61.51%	796	38.40%
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>8,291</b>	<b>5,207</b>	<b>62.81%</b>	<b>3,084</b>	<b>37.20%</b>

**Table 2 – Proportion of Male and Female Full-Pay Relevant Employees by Quartile (as at 31 March 2020)**

	Hourly Pay Rate - Range	Number in Quartile	Female - Number	Female - %	Male - Number	Male - %
<b>Quartile 1</b>	Up to £10.4902	2,010	1,274	63.38%	736	36.62%
<b>Quartile 2</b>	£10.4983 - £12.3582	2,010	1,320	65.67%	690	34.33%
<b>Quartile 3</b>	£12.3589 - £16.2480	2,010	1,221	60.75%	789	39.25%
<b>Quartile 4</b>	£16.2480 - £101.6918	2,010	1,216	60.50%	794	39.50%
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>8,040</b>	<b>5,031</b>	<b>62.57%</b>	<b>3,009</b>	<b>37.43%</b>

**Chart 3 – Illustration of Quartile data as at 31 March 2021**



Durham County Council has a majority female workforce, of a total 8,291 employees, 62.80% (5,207) are female.

The gender balance across the pay range shows that, proportionally, men are more likely to feature in higher pay quartiles.

### **Gender Bonus Gap**

Durham's pay framework does not allow bonus payments to employees, therefore, there is no data to report in relation to bonuses.

### **3. Analysis of Durham County Council's data**

Mean gender pay gap data, as at 31 March 2021, shows an improvement (narrowing of the gap) on the previous year, where women's mean hourly rate of pay is 1.85% lower than men compared to 2.65% less in 2020.

A review of the proportion of male and female full-pay relevant employees by quartile demonstrates a higher percentage of females paid in the higher quartile compared to 31 March 2020, with a decrease in the percentage of males paid at the higher quartile in the same period. Since the 2020 report the proportion of females in the higher quartile has increased from 60.50% to 61.51% while the proportion of males has decreased from 39.50% to 38.40%.

There has also been an overall increase in the number of males paid in the lower quartile in 2021 compared to the previous year. The percentage of males in the lower quartile has increased from 36.62% in 2020 to 38.47% in 2021, while the percentage of females has decreased from 63.38% to 61.58% for the same period;

**Table 3 Annual comparison of mean and median data – Durham County Council**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
2021	1.85	3.87
2020	2.65	4.93
2019	3.58	4.32
2018	1.9	4.8

There was an improvement of the median pay gap (1.06% points), however the median pay gap remains higher than the mean. Nearly 52% of female employee are paid in the two lower quartiles, whereas 46% of male employees are paid in the two lower quartiles.

Whilst the Council currently employs more female employees (5,207) than male employees (3,084), proportionately there are currently more male employees paid at higher salary points compared to female; in contrast there are more female employees paid at bottom rate salary than male employees which could explain the median results.

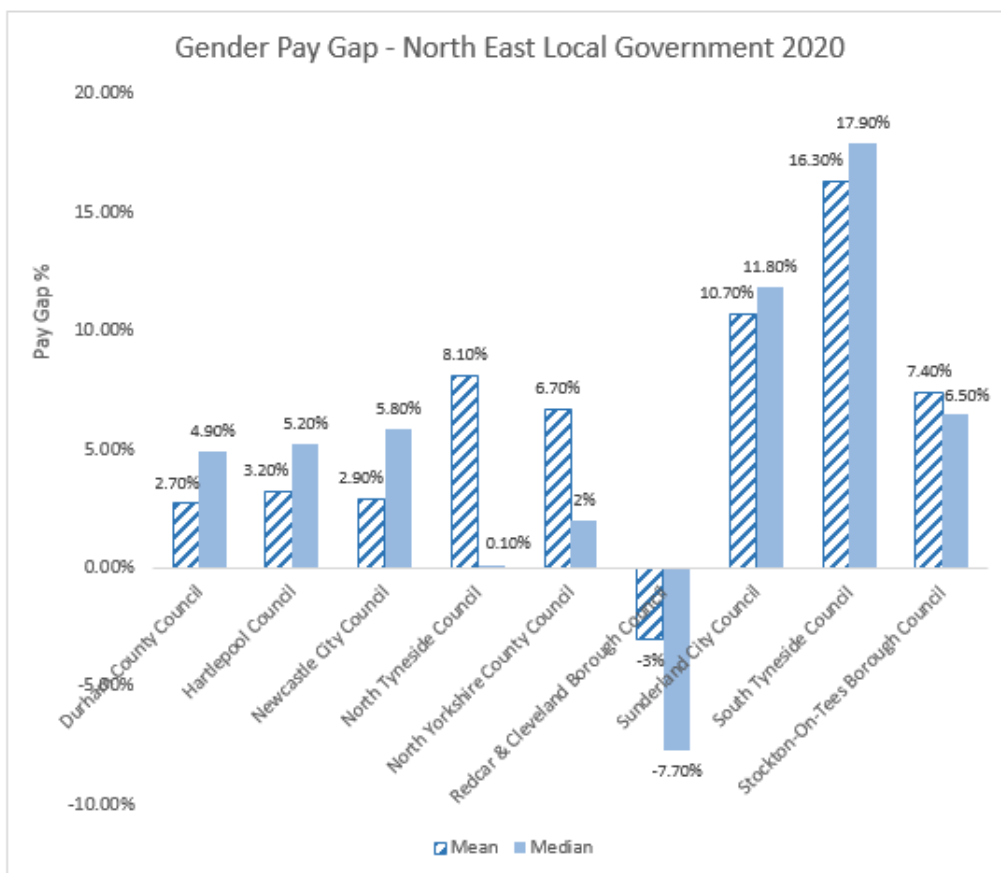
#### 4. Wider comparative analysis of 2020 published data

The following section provides comparative analysis of Durham County Council’s data regionally.

Although it is recognised that Durham has a negative gender pay gap for women, Durham’s data compares favourably within the region.

Chart 4 illustrates the variation of data across North East Councils as at 31 March 2020 and demonstrates that Durham had a lower than average gap regionally. Redcar and Cleveland Council continues to have a ‘positive’ pay gap, where women are paid more than men. Not all North East Councils have returned their data for 31 March 2020, however the deadline for submission has been extended to 5 October 2021.

**Chart 4 – Variation of gender pay gap data regionally (North East Councils)**





## **5. Durham's approach towards pay**

A pay offer has been agreed to start from 1 April 2018 until 31 March 2020. The pay offer again includes higher increases to the lower pay points in order to continue to close the gap with the National Living Wage forecasts. This resulted in a new minimum rate for Council employees of £9.36 per hour from 1 April 2019. As there are proportionately more female employees employed by the council within the bottom rate grade points, this will positively impact more women than men and thus contribute to closing the current pay gap across the next two years

## **6. Recruitment and People Management Policies**

Pay gaps experienced by women can arise from barriers faced getting into and progressing at work<sup>1</sup>. We currently employ 5,207 women; therefore, we are an attractive employer for women. Our recruitment and selection procedures are designed to ensure that applicants are not discriminated against and that we recruit from as wide a pool as possible. We advertise jobs that are flexible, operate name-blind recruitment and often open vacancies to part-time working or job share. This inclusive approach helps to ensure we receive as many applications as possible from women. Our recruitment and selection policy has recently been updated and the accompanying training for recruiting officers refreshed. The policy has undergone a full equality impact assessment which includes action for ongoing monitoring and analysis (see snapshot below) to ensure and reinforce fair practice.

The council has a range of policies and working practices to promote and sustain work life balance including various flexible working patterns e.g. part-time, flexitime, home working, maternity, paternity, adoption, dependent and shared parental leave.

Policies are available to all employees however, analysis shows, that higher proportions of female employees take advantage of such policies. For example, between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, we received 56 requests to change working hours for the reason of 'Family Leave Policy', and 91.07% of which were submitted by female employees. Family friendly policies therefore assist the council in retaining a highly skilled female workforce.

## **7. Continuing Challenges**

The Covid 19 pandemic, has certainly brought many workplace challenges, not just within Durham County Council but across the country, industries and occupations.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/pay-gaps-strategy-fair-opportunities-for-all.pdf>

The enforced government mandate of 'work from home', along with national and local lockdowns and school closures, added further pressure onto women to provide additional childcare, home schooling, or care responsibilities. However, this culminated in the speedy development of a flexible work from home approach, focusing on outcomes. This has allowed greater flexibility to all staff, both male and female. Moving forward this will be implemented into a new hybrid way of working 'future ways of working' initiative, which will allow employees greater flexibility in how, and where they work. This will create a greater work-life balance, for those with additional caring responsibilities. In addition, it will have a positive impact on recruitment and retention of posts.

During this period, we thought it important to examine the potential impact in terms of workforce leavers. To consider whether there was a higher number of female leavers during this period, caused by the additional pressures of home working and potential additional care responsibilities.

With regard to leavers from the Council, below is a summary of employees who have left from 1 March 2020 (the beginning of the covid pandemic) to 31 October 2021.

**Table 4 Leavers from March 2020 to October 2021**

	<b>No of employees</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Female</b>	792	63.67%
<b>Male</b>	452	36.33%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1244</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Although there are a higher number of female leavers (792) compared to male leavers (452), this is proportionate to overall workforce figures. The current workforce data shows there are currently 62.8% female, and 37.2% male employed within the council, which is a similar percentage breakdown of leavers (63.67% female and 36.33% male) This therefore shows that there has not been a higher proportion of females leaving during this period.

Additionally, the table below provides a summary of employees who were furloughed at the height of the pandemic.

**Table 5 Furloughed employees**

	<b>No of employees</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Female</b>	396	58.06%
<b>Male</b>	286	41.94%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>100%</b>

This shows no detrimental impact on the numbers of female employees who were furloughed, Comparison of overall workforce data shows a slight impact on men,

percentage of males in overall workforce (37.2%) compared to 41.94% males furloughed. This is perhaps due to the services eligible for furlough funding, e.g. leisure.

Some of the council's job roles can historically be quite gender specific. Roles such as those in front line health, social care and family and young people's services tend to be female dominated, for example as of 31 March 2021 93.22% of roles in 'Social Worker' teams (Children's Social Care) were occupied by female workers. In contrast, more manual and technical roles such as refuse collection, ICT and engineering are usually male dominated, for example as of 31 March 2021, 98.08% of roles in the 'Refuse & Recycling' team, and 77.16% of roles of the ICT teams within 'Digital and Customer Services', were occupied by male workers. Furthermore, historically part-time work equivalent to low hours per week (such as cleaners) has attracted more females, for example as of 31 March 2021 cleaner/cleaning/caretaker roles were 86.19% occupied by female workers.

We ensure our recruitment procedures are fair and welcome applicants from diverse sections of the community however there are often female skill shortages in particular career sectors such as ICT and this is a challenge for all employers.

As at 31 March 2020, due to ongoing restructures the Corporate Management Team consisted of the Chief Executive and four directors, with only one female representing senior management. However at 31 March 2021, the number of females occupying director positions increased to 2 (representing 40% of the senior management team). Additionally, for positions at Tier 4 and above, females represent 44.54% of this grouping.

Progress has steadily been made over recent years towards a more representative leadership team.

## **8. Plans for Long Term Improvement**

Durham County Council is a progressive council with ambitious plans to change and evolve and become a more inclusive organisation. The Council's Workforce Strategy aims to ensure that we are thinking about the most important aspects that affect the workforce and which of those need to change in order to modernise our people practices. It provides the organisation with a structured approach to strategic workforce planning. The strategy will identify a number of priorities which will link to improvements to our gender pay gap.

A priority of the council was to ensure that during the pandemic, staff remained in contact and we were able to offer support to colleagues. During this period a number of staff networks developed, especially a carer's network. This network provides informal support and advice for those with caring responsibilities. The group has a

membership of 40 staff members, who meeting virtually on a regular basis. The members have found this invaluable especially during this period of time.

Going forward, as well as the Disability and allies' staff network and LGBTQ+ and allies staff network, it is also proposed to develop a Menopause staff network. This network will raise awareness within the workplace, as well as providing support, ensuring women can access help and advice.

As an inclusive employer, the council has a range of flexible working policies and practices in place to promote work-life balance and flexible working patterns, e.g. part-time, shared parental leave, dependent leave and flexitime. The government mandate during the pandemic to 'work from home', helped to greatly improve this agenda, and improved ICT systems, has allowed greater flexibility for more staff to work at home. This approach and phenomenal feat, has undoubtedly had a positive impact for women, now allowing a greater work life balance to fit in with caring responsibilities.

Research shows that some elements of pay gaps result from the restrictions women face in balancing work with other aspects of their lives such as caring responsibilities.<sup>2</sup> We recognise the importance of flexible working practices to support all employees (including men) in the workplace in terms of flexible time and flexible place options. We also provide additional support for employees with caring responsibilities including a employees carers network and access to individual support via Durham County Carer Support as we recognise that this level of practical and wellbeing support helps to employees to remain in paid employment and balance their work and care responsibilities.

The council's apprenticeship programme is an integral part of the council's approach to address current and future skills needs. Apprenticeships help us to attract and retain the very best talent and to benefit from a skilled, motivated, and flexible workforce. We are committed to investing in the continued expansion and development of our apprenticeship programme. Through increasing the range and extent of apprenticeship opportunities, we can help to improve the skills base of our own workforce and across the County. Our apprenticeship strategy identifies how we will use apprenticeships to attract new talent to the organisation as well as identifying opportunities for the development of our existing employees aligned to our strategic approach to workforce planning. Additionally, initiatives such as work experience and internships opportunities to do project work and gain work experience are in place to help attract women into the workplace.

The development of our gender pay gap action plan will link into the council's Workforce Strategy that identifies a number of priorities which will link to

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/pay-gaps-strategy-fair-opportunities-for-all.pdf>

improvements to our gender pay gap. This will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Head of People and Talent Management, and Head of Transformation, Planning and Performance.

We will also build upon the following specifically targeted initiatives in order to eliminate our gender pay gap:

### ***Attracting future talent***

Our apprenticeship programme is an integral part of the council's approach to address current and future skills needs for new and existing employees. Apprenticeships help us to attract and retain the very best talent and to benefit from a skilled, motivated, and flexible workforce. Our apprenticeship programme is inclusive and promoted widely through social media campaigns, career events, north east jobs portal and through schools and colleges to ensure we reach the widest candidate pool.

We have in place an Apprenticeship Strategy which outlines what we want to achieve as an employer and the positive action we will take to increase the number and range of apprenticeships within the council as part of our wider Workforce Strategy.

Women are being attracted into more male dominated roles through our apprenticeship programme including Civil Engineering and Countryside Wardens and we are strengthening links with schools, colleges and universities to promote the range of opportunities available.

Initiatives such as work experience and internship opportunities to do project work and gain work experience are in place to help support people into employment. The council has previously participated in the National Local Government Graduate Programme to help attract future leaders into Local Government. Our 2017-19 programme included two male and two female graduates, one male and one female have from the programme have progressed their careers with the council. The council also supports the Change 100 Programme talent programme which supports paid summer work placements and mentoring for disabled undergraduate students and recent graduates. Three female graduates have undertaken this programme with two progressing into employment with the council following the placement.

### ***Inclusion***

All HR policies are subject to full equality impact assessment to ensure they do not discriminate, meet our public sector equality duty and progress inclusion. The Workforce Strategy was subject to a high-level equality impact assessment in order to understand the evidence base driving the strategy to ensure our direction of travel

is inclusive and responsive and able to adapt to changing employees needs and emerging issues longer term.

Our flexible working policies are evidenced to be attractive to women and we will continue to encourage all employees, male and female, to utilise these policies as improved sharing of home life responsibilities such as caring will facilitate women advancing in their careers and help to close the gender pay gap. This will also encourage a more modern and inclusive workplace in line with our values and behaviours. In addition, the council's Valuing Our Employees' Framework aims to attract, retain, motivate and engage employees together with supporting their wellbeing.

In 2020/21 our employee turnover was 5.98%, of which 64% were women leaving the council's employment. Our exit policy is currently being strengthened to ensure we proactively engage with employees who are leaving the council and seek feedback to improve our employment practices.

### ***Occupation and gender***

We have an inclusive approach to talent management and have in place a comprehensive Employee Learning and Development programme, including access to over 600 digital and e-learning resources, together with a Leadership and Management Development Programme to support all employees to grow and develop in their roles. Our Leadership and Management Programme covers 1,245 Leaders and Managers, of which 41.12% are male employees and 58.88% are female employees. Our Employee Learning and Development Offer supports employees to develop, grow and progress their careers through bespoke support, development programmes, apprenticeships, coaching, mentoring and career pathways.

We have in place a coaching framework where employees can access coaching delivered by professionally trained colleagues on a one-to-one basis or through an external coach. The coaching framework helps to support employees to reach their full potential and career goals. 39% of male and 61% of female employees have accessed our internal coaching offer.