

Durham County Council Gender Pay Gap Report 2022

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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.

Analysis of the gender pay gap and acting upon its findings demonstrates the council's commitment to the fair treatment and reward of all staff, addressing inequality and ensuring equality of opportunity for all staff. The council's approach is based on consistency, fairness and transparency, supporting the fair treatment and reward of all staff irrespective of gender.

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 8,642 full-pay relevant employees as at 31 March 2022. Data from 31 March 2021 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).

As at 31 March 2022, women's **mean** hourly rate of pay is 0.07% **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:

- (a) As of 31 March 2022, the difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees:

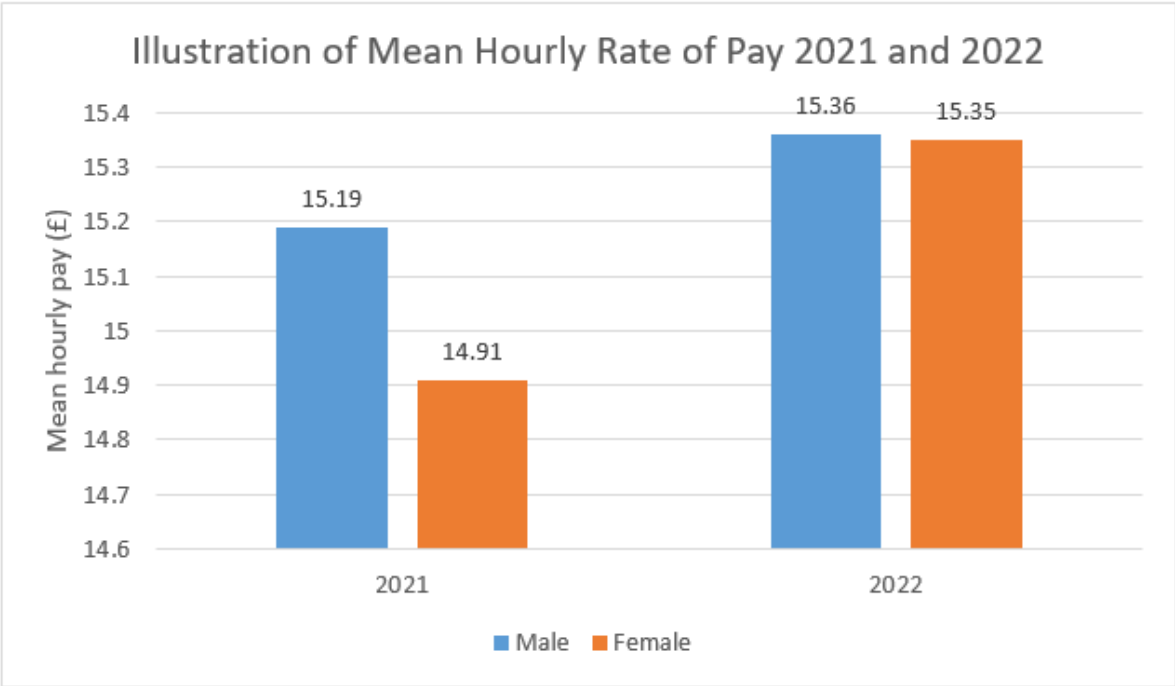
-£0.01 (Female Mean £15.35 and Male Mean £15.36)

For Gender Pay Gap reporting purposes the government are likely to express this as female employees having **0.07% lower** pay (using the mean) than male employees.

This represents an improvement (narrowing of the gap) on the position as of 31 March 2021 when the outcomes were as follows:

-£0.28 (Female Mean £14.91 and Male Mean £15.19) : 1.85% lower pay (using the mean)

Chart 1 – Illustration of Mean Hourly rate of Pay 2021 and 2022



(b) As of 31 March 2022, the difference between the **median** hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees:

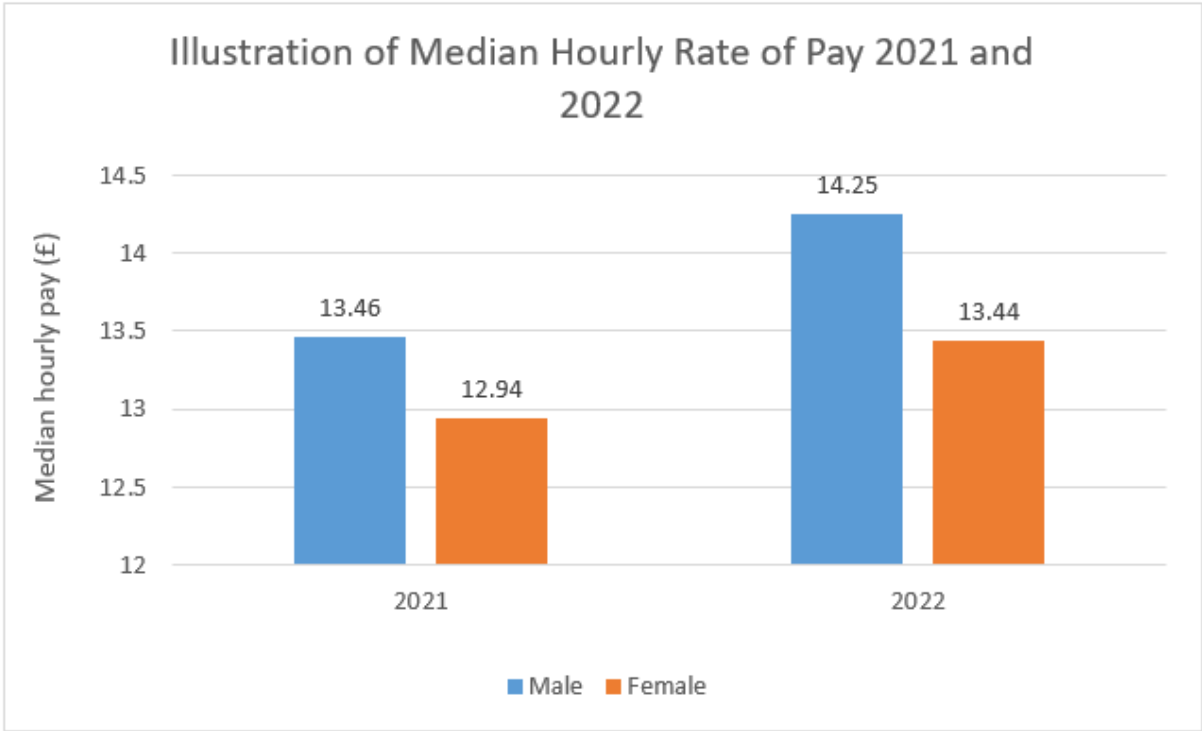
-£0.81 (Female Median £13.44 and Male Median £14.25)

For Gender Pay Gap reporting purposes the government are likely to express this as female employees having **5.68% lower** pay (using the median) than male employees;

This represents a deterioration (widening of the gap) on the position as of 31 March 2021 when the outcomes were as follows:

-£0.52 (Female Median £12.94 and Male Median £13.46) : 3.87% lower pay (using the median)

Chart 2 – Illustration of Median Hourly rate of Pay 2021 and 2022



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 £11.25
- Quartile 2 From £11.25 to £13.70
- Quartile 3 From £13.70 to £17.34
- Quartile 4 From £17.34 to Chief Executive

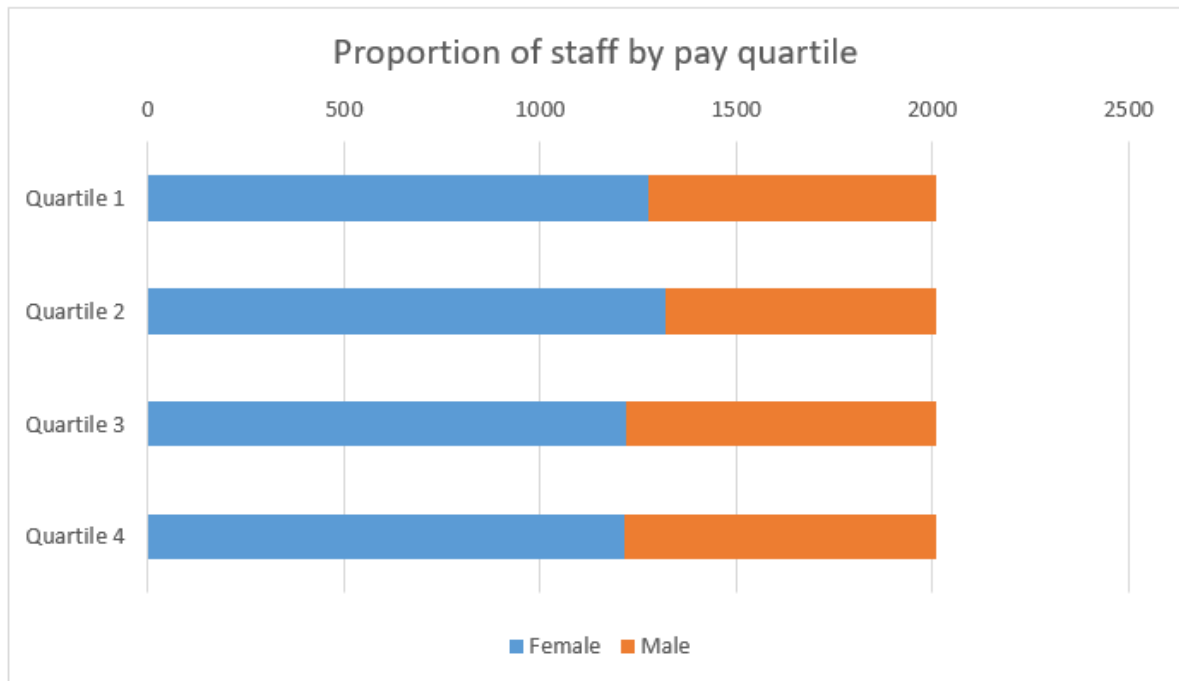
Table 1 – Proportion of Male and Female Full-Pay Relevant Employees by Quartile (as at 31 March 2022)

	Hourly Pay Rate - Range	Number in Quartile	Number of females	% females	Number of males	% males
Quartile 1	Up to £11.25	2,160	1,305	60.42%	855	39.58%
Quartile 2	£11.25 - £13.70	2,160	1,149	68.01%	691	31.99%
Quartile 3	£13.70 - £17.34	2,161	1,297	60.02%	864	39.98%
Quartile 4	£17.34 - £106.06	2,161	1,355	62.70%	806	37.30%
	Totals	8,642	5,426	62.79%	3,216	37.21%

Table 2 – Comparator Data – Proportion of Male and Female Full-Pay Relevant Employees by Quartile (as at 31 March 2021) i.e. last years' reporting

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

Chart 3 – Illustration of Quartile data as at 31 March 2022



Durham County Council has a majority female workforce, of a total 8,642 employees, 62.79% (5,426) 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

The Gender Pay Gap results at 31 March 2022 show an improvement (1.78% points) on the previous year in the difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees. The narrowing of the gap between the mean hourly rate suggests improvement in the overall employees split in terms of gender. The potential reasons for this improvement are as follows:

- (a) As of 31 March 2022, there were more male apprentices (90) compared to female apprentices (25). There are more than twice as many

male apprentices (78.26% of all apprentices are male) as there are female (21.74%). This has contributed to higher number of males paid in the lower quartile, and less females paid at the lower quartile;

(b) There has been an overall increase in the number of males paid in the lower quartile in 2022 compared to the previous year. The percentage of males in the lower quartile has increased from 38.47% in 2021 to 39.58%, whereas the percentage of females has decreased from 61.58% to 60.42% for the same period;

There was however a deterioration in the difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees (widening of the gap by 1.81 percentage points from March 2021 to March 2022), with the gap between the median GPG and the mean GPG widening. The potential reasons for this deterioration are as follows:

(a) Whilst the Council currently employs more female employees than male employees (5,426 to 3,216), proportionately there are currently more male employees paid at higher salary points compared to female, but there are more female employees paid at bottom rate salary than male employees which explains the median results. 51.12% of female employee are paid in the two lower quartiles, compared to 48.07% of males. Additionally, over 51.93% of male employees are paid in the two upper quartiles, compared to 48.88% of females.

(b) When breaking this down further, females disproportionately account for employees on the lowest paid grades (National Minimum Wage, Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3). Whilst females account for 63% of the council's workforce, they account for 77% of these lowest paid roles.

(c) In terms of more senior council positions, males disproportionately account for positions at Tier 4 and above. Whilst males account for 37% of the council's workforce, they account for 54% of the most senior council positions at Tier 4 and above.

(d) This uneven distribution of the genders across the lowest and highest paid roles in the organisation means that the 'middle' (or median) male is in a higher paid position to the 'middle' female.

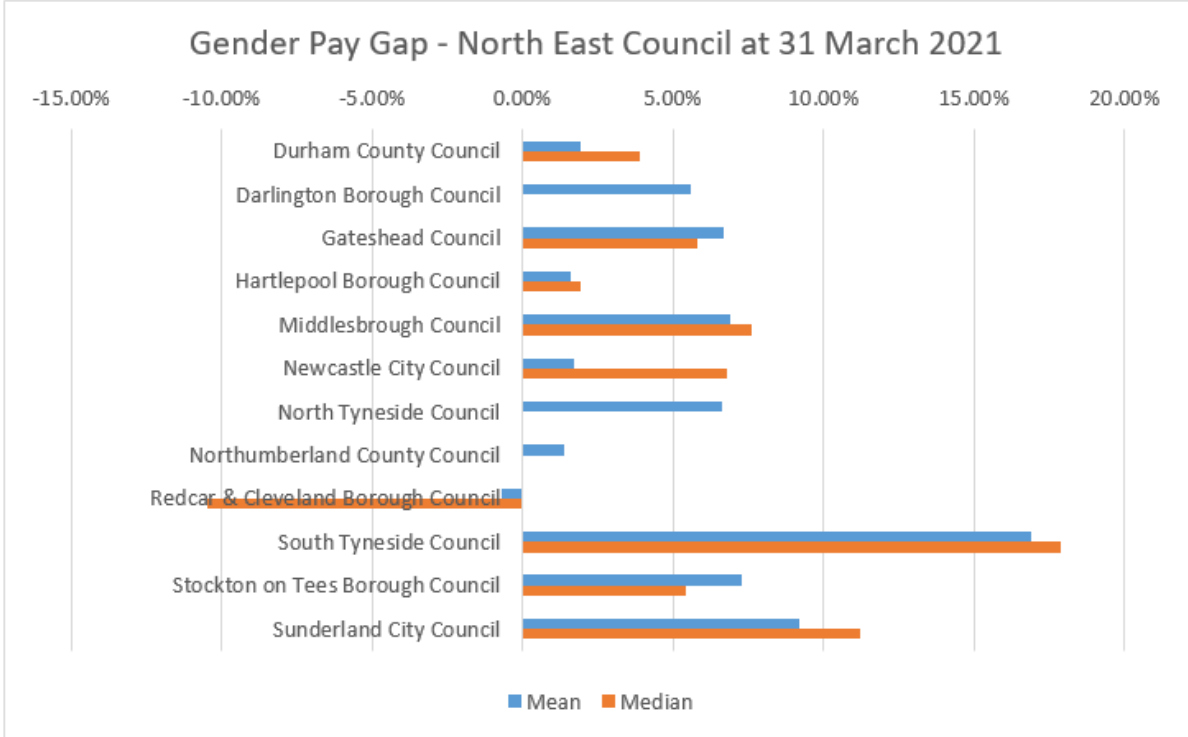
4. Wider comparative analysis of 2021 published data

The following section provides comparative analysis of Durham County Council’s data regionally. This data relates to the 2021 published data, as no regional councils have yet published their data for 2022 and so no comparative analysis is possible for 2022.

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 2021 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.

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



Whilst gender pay gap reporting in the UK has been praised for its transparency and compliance, research by the Global Institute for Women’s Leadership at King’s College London and the Fawcett Society highlights how the system has the potential to focus on monitoring the pay gap without compelling employers to change anything, with it being used as a monitoring rather than an action tool¹. Durham County Council is committed to using the findings of the gender pay gap to inform and shape its processes and workforce development plan.

¹ GIWL at KCL & the Fawcett Society (October 2021) Bridging the gap? (<https://bit.ly/3q9mJx8>)

5. How Durham County Council is addressing the gender pay gap

Durham's approach towards pay

In March 2022, a 2.75% pay award was implemented back dated to be effective from 1 April 2021. As at 8 December 2022, a pay offer of an increase of £1,925 on all pay points above point 1 has been agreed and implemented by the National Employers for Local Government Services. This has been effective from 1 April 2022, with an additional increase of 4.04% on all allowances, an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlements (from 1 April 2023) and the deletion of pay point 1 from the NJC pay spine.

The previously agreed pay award which was applied from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2020 included higher increases to the lower pay points in order to continue to close the gap with the National Living Wage forecasts. Whilst the 2022 pay offer applies the same monetary amount to each of the pay points, this proportionately increases the lower pay points by a higher percentage than those higher points e.g., a £1,925 pay increase on SCP 3 (previously £18,887 per annum – Grade 1) equates to a 10.20% pay increase, with the same monetary pay increase on SCP 24 (Grade 9 – previously £29,174) equating to a 6.60% increase).

Recruitment and People Management Policies

Pay gaps experienced by women can arise from barriers faced getting into and progressing at work². We currently employ 5,426 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 undergone a full equality impact assessment which includes action for ongoing monitoring and analysis to ensure and reinforce fair practice.

The council has more recently extended the reach of vacancy adverts through the use of LinkedIn, Indeed and Facebook advertising, with plans to extend this further into other social media forums such as Tik Tok. This will increase the audience to which the council's adverts reach. In addition, the Organisational

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

Design and Development Team regularly attend recruitment fayres, promoting apprenticeship opportunities and providing information to prospective applicants which promote the range and diversity of opportunities available at the council.

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 and flexitime.

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 2021 and 31 March 2022, we received 105 requests to change working hours for the reason of 'Family Leave Policy', and 95.24% of these were submitted by female employees. Family friendly policies therefore assist the council in retaining a highly skilled female workforce.

The recovery from the Covid 19 pandemic has brought many workplace challenges across the country, industries and occupations. 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 has been developed into a new hybrid way of working 'future ways of working' initiative, which will allow employees greater flexibility in how, and where they work. Employees, where roles allow will adopt a hybrid and flexible model of working, have moved from a requirement for 3 days attendance in the workplace, to 2 days. This has created greater work-life balances, for those with additional caring responsibilities. In addition, it will have a positive impact on recruitment and retention of posts. It is anticipated that the adaptations to the hybrid working model will help attract, recruit and retain employees who otherwise may have found 100% workplace based roles a deterrent to employment with DCC

The council has developed and extended its staff networks, including an unpaid 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 meet virtually on a regular basis. The members have found this invaluable, especially during the recent pandemic response.

The networks provide an opportunity for people across the council to meet with others, share and discuss experiences, help shape the working environment, arrange events and offer support to other staff. The introduction of the Menopause Staff Network and the Unpaid Carer's Network further enhances our wellbeing offer. These staff networks are advertised and promoted on the DCC internet and those considering working at DCC can see the supportive networks we have already established, enhancing our status as an employer of choice.

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.

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. Through the corporate apprenticeship recruitment programme, we will highlight the opportunities available to women in roles traditionally perceived as 'male' roles, such as those in highways, finance, ICT and fraud.

The development of the **staff networks** will continue, with the implementation and growth of the Unpaid Carer's Network and Menopause Network being recent examples of this excellent support mechanism. The Unpaid Carer's 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 and this is anticipated to be of great benefit going forward.

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. The council has moved to a new hybrid and flexible model of working, moving from a requirement for 3 days attendance in the workplace, to 2 days. These revised hybrid working opportunities can provide better opportunities for work-life-balance which can contribute positively to people who have caring responsibilities. It is anticipated that the adaptations to the hybrid working model will help attract, recruit and retain employees who otherwise may have found 100% workplace based roles a deterrent to employment with DCC.

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.³ We recognise the importance of flexible working practices to support all employees 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 HR and Employee Services team are continuing to review HR policies, health and wellbeing, and more recently work on the menopause which will result in the Council "signing the **Menopause Pledge**".

National research into the topic of Menopause, suggests almost 900,000 women have left their employment due to menopause symptoms. By committing to sign the Menopause Workplace Pledge as an employer, we will be demonstrating our intentions to support women to remain in employment as long as possible through our supportive approach to wellbeing.

In addition, the development of the Menopause staff network will continue into the coming months and years. This network will raise awareness within the workplace and amongst managers, as well as providing support, ensuring women can access help and advice.

³ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/pay-gaps-strategy-fair-opportunities-for-all.pdf>

Our Wellbeing portal now highlights and promotes the understanding of domestic abuse and while domestic abuse can affect anyone regardless of age, sexuality and gender, it is statistically more likely to affect women.

Through the Domestic Abuse Policy, employees experiencing domestic abuse can be supported by the council through the offer of practical support, through provision of domestic abuse workplace champions and providing training opportunities for managers to enhance their understanding.

Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions are employees within the council who have been trained and provided with ongoing support and act as a conduit for information and will assist the council to enhance their response to staff members who are affected by domestic abuse within DCC.

In addition, DCC Public Health team has published its '16 Days of Action' training programme, for both internal and external colleagues. These 16 days of action against gender based violence provides learning opportunities for employees to raise awareness and call for changes to end violence against women and girls.

The continued 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 improvements to our gender pay gap. This will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Head of HR and Employee Services.

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. 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.

Women occupy senior level positions in the council and we will build on this by championing our female managers, especially those in occupations which traditionally attract male applicants. 61% of our 'leader' and 'manager' roles are occupied by females, and 46% of our tier 4 and above positions are occupied by females, an increase of 1.43% points from 31 March 2021. We will build on attracting females into senior roles by continuing to showcase our female managers where appropriate.

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 2021/22 our employee turnover was 9.01%, of which 62.28% 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. The information provided by employees on the Exit Interview is being regularly analysed to identify issues and trends affecting turnover, with this information informing the development of recruitment and retention initiatives going forward.

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 1,310 Leaders and Managers, of which 39.39% are male employees and 60.61% 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.

7. Continuing Challenges

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 2022 83.75% 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 2022, 97.85% of roles in the 'Refuse & Recycling' team, and 80.26% 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 2022 cleaner / cleaning / caretaker roles were 86.64% 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.

The council's jobs and careers internet page has been updated to promote jobs and careers at the council and includes information on working for the council e.g. employee rewards and benefits, values and behaviours, equality diversity and inclusion. Additional advertising platforms are also being used to extend candidate reach and attraction including recruitment advertising sites and social media which will help attract a diverse range of talent to the council.

Links are being strengthened with schools, colleges and universities to promote careers at the council and job/apprenticeship opportunities together with attendance at career/job fairs and job centres

As at 31 March 2022, the Corporate Management Team consisted of the Chief Executive and four directors. Progress has steadily been made over recent years towards a more representative leadership team with nearly 40% of Corporate Management Team roles being undertaken by females (in comparison with 32% in 2012).

For positions at Tier 4 and above, females represent 45.97% of this grouping, an increase of 1.43% points from 31 March 2021. We will continue to work on attracting females to senior level positions in the council by ensuring our successes are promoted and making it clear that none of our roles are gender specific and that all roles are available for all applicants.