



Royal Society of Chemistry's Gender Pay Gap Report 2025

Foreword from our Chief Executive



At the Royal Society of Chemistry, inclusion and equity are not optional extras – they are part of our purpose and our culture. We want the RSC to be a place where everyone is treated with fairness and respect, where people can do their best work, and where opportunities to grow are real and visible.

This report sets out our gender pay gap using the measures required by law. The sections that follow explain what those measures mean, what is driving our results, and where we are focusing our efforts.

Behind the technical measures is a simple question: across the organisation, are women and men represented and progressing in a way that leads to fair outcomes over time?

This year, our mean gender pay gap is 10.9%, down from 12.3% last year. At the same time, our median gender pay gap is 13.9%, slightly higher than 13.1% in 2024. These movements do not point to a single cause; instead, they reflect changes in the composition of the workforce over the year, including colleagues joining, leaving, and moving between roles, rather than deliberate changes to pay.

The biggest underlying factor remains familiar. Women continue to be more highly represented in our lower-paid roles, while men remain more highly represented in higher-paid roles. That pattern shapes the overall figures, and it is why closing the gap is not something we can fix with a single policy or one-off initiative. It needs sustained work on progression, development planning, and access to opportunity.

It is also important to note that, alongside these structural factors, the figures in this report reflect statutory reporting definitions. For gender pay gap reporting purposes, the definition of bonus pay set out in the regulations includes some payments beyond basic pay, including non-consolidated elements of pay awards.

On this statutory basis, 93.8% of women and 94.4% of men are recorded to have received a payment, classified within the reporting regulations, as bonus pay in the year to 5 April 2025. Using this same definition, the mean bonus gap is -7.3% and the median bonus gap is 16.8%. Further detail on how these figures are calculated and interpreted is set out later in this report.

Progress depends on what we do next, and how consistently actions are implemented over time. For example, in 2025 we continued to invest in development and saw strong participation in our management and leadership programmes. We are also improving how we gather and use feedback, to understand colleagues' experiences and identify issues earlier.

Our commitment is clear: we will act in line with our organisational values, including integrity and care, and continue to enable the RSC to be a workplace where everyone has the opportunity to belong and thrive.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Helen Pain".

Dr Helen Pain MBE CSci CChem FRSC

What is the gender pay gap?

All organisations in the UK with more than 250 employees are required to publish their gender pay gap results each year, based on a snapshot date of 5 April 2025.

The gender pay gap shows the difference in average hourly earnings between men and women across an organisation. It is calculated using several measures, including mean and median hourly pay, bonus pay, and the distribution of men and women across pay quartiles.

- **Mean gender pay gap:** the difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees.
- **Median gender pay gap:** the difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees.

- **Gender bonus gap:** the difference in bonuses (as defined by the reporting regulations) received by male and female employees.

It is important to distinguish between the gender pay gap and equal pay. The gender pay gap reflects the overall distribution of roles and pay levels across the organisation, rather than differences in pay for individuals doing the same or comparable work. At the RSC, we are confident that pay for comparable roles is applied fairly and consistently, based on our pay frameworks and review processes.

* **Relevant employees:** all UK employees employed on the snapshot date, including part-time, job-sharing, and those on leave.

Gender pay gap results and trends

The mean hourly pay for each gender is calculated by adding all hourly pay for that gender and dividing by the number of employees. The gap is then expressed as a percentage of mean male pay. This measure reflects overall pay distribution and is more sensitive to changes at the highest and lowest ends of the pay range, including the impact of a relatively small number of higher-paid roles.

The median gender pay gap is calculated by ordering all employees by hourly pay and identifying the midpoint for men and women separately. The median is less affected by extreme values and provides an important complementary measure of pay distribution across the organisation.

In 2025:

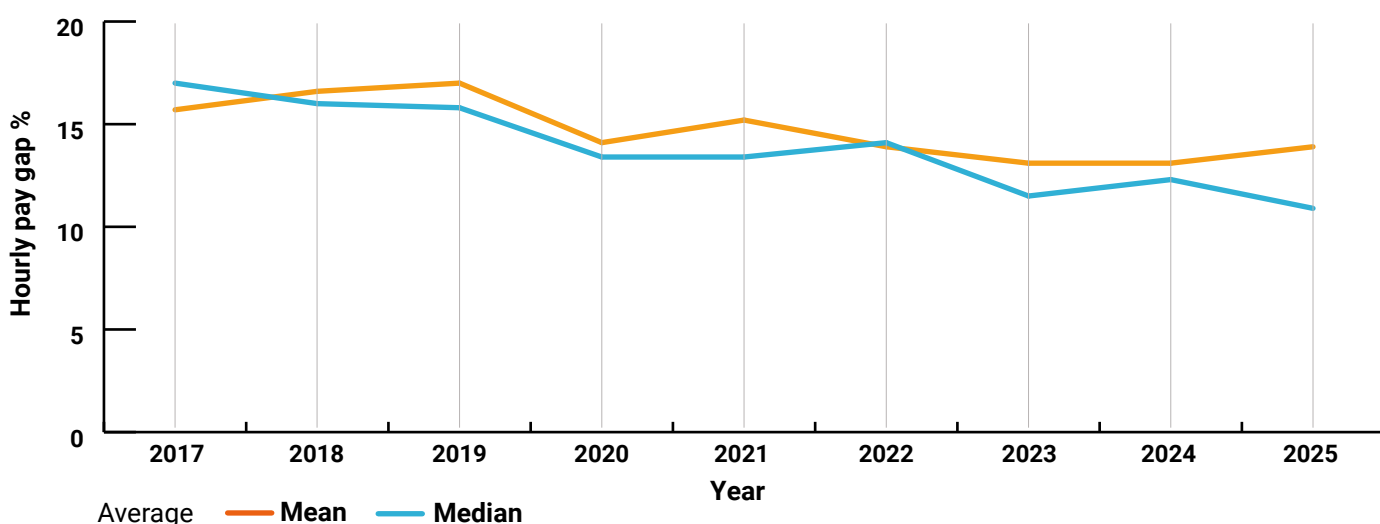
- The **mean gender pay gap was 10.9%**, a reduction from 12.3% in 2024.
- The **median gender pay gap was 13.9%**, a slight increase from 13.1% in 2024.

For every £1 earned by a man at the mean, women earned **90p**, compared with 89p in 2024 and 85p in 2017. At the median, women earned **88p** in both 2024 and 2025 (rounded), compared with 86p in 2017.

To understand what sits behind these movements, it is important to look at how our workforce is structured and how it has changed over the year. Compared with 2024, the reduction in the mean pay gap alongside a slight increase in the median pay gap reflects changes in workforce composition, rather than changes to individual pay rates. Over time, our gender pay gap shows a general downward trend, although progress is not linear and year-on-year changes can be influenced by recruitment, turnover and progression patterns.

The data tables and graphs in this report provide supporting detail for transparency and assurance.

Figure 1a. Gender pay gap percentages over time



Data Science and Insights 2026-03-12

Table 1a. Gender pay gap percentages

Year	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)
2017	17.0	15.7
2018	16.0	16.6
2019	15.8	17.0
2020	13.4	14.1
2021	13.4	15.2
2022	14.1	13.9
2023	11.5	13.1
2024	12.3	13.1
2025	10.9	13.9

What is influencing the 2025 gender pay gap?

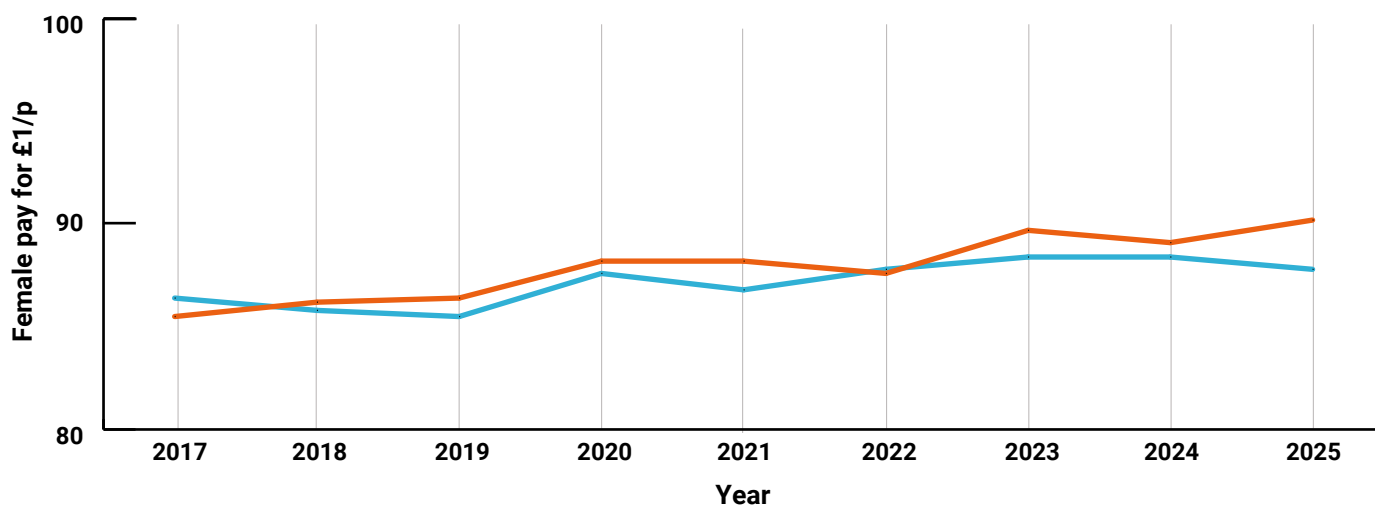
As in previous years, the gender pay gap at the RSC is driven primarily by structural patterns in how women and men are represented across roles and pay levels within the organisation.

In 2025, women continued to be more highly represented in lower-paid roles, while men remained more highly represented in higher-paid roles. Recruitment patterns among new starters, alongside progression and role changes among existing colleagues, were associated with shifts in the overall pay distribution.

The slight increase in the median pay gap is consistent with the combined effect of recruitment patterns and some role changes over the year. Net recruitment among women was higher in the lower-paid half of the organisation, while among men there was a net increase in the higher-paid half. Because the median is sensitive to workforce composition, modest changes in the number of joiners, leavers as well as role movement can affect year-on-year results.

These patterns are illustrated in Figure 1b and Table 1b, which show how female pay relative to male pay has changed over time.

Figure 1b. Female pay for £1 of male pay over time



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Table 1b. Female pay relative to male pay

Year	Mean female pay per male £/p	Median female pay per male £/p
2017	85.5	86.4
2018	86.2	85.8
2019	86.4	85.5
2020	88.2	87.6
2021	88.2	86.8
2022	87.6	87.8
2023	89.7	88.4
2024	89.1	88.4
2025	90.2	87.8

Bonuses

Bonuses form part of the statutory gender pay gap measures and are reported separately from hourly pay.

For gender pay gap reporting, 'bonus pay' is defined by the regulations and includes a range of payments in addition to basic pay. In 2025 the RSC changed the way we approach pay reviews, based on our desire to recognise performance, balanced with affordability. As part of this, the annual pay award for most colleagues consisted of both a consolidated element (applied to basic pay) and a non-consolidated element (paid as a one-off amount).

For statutory reporting purposes, 'bonus pay' is the non-consolidated element of our 2025 annual pay award. This is a reporting category and does not reflect how we consider or describe pay awards internally – however, it does affect our bonus pay gap reporting.

In the year to 5 April 2025, 93.8% of women and 94.4% of men received a payment that falls within the statutory definition of bonus pay. This compares with 97.6% and 99.1% the year before (Figure 2).

Using this statutory definition:

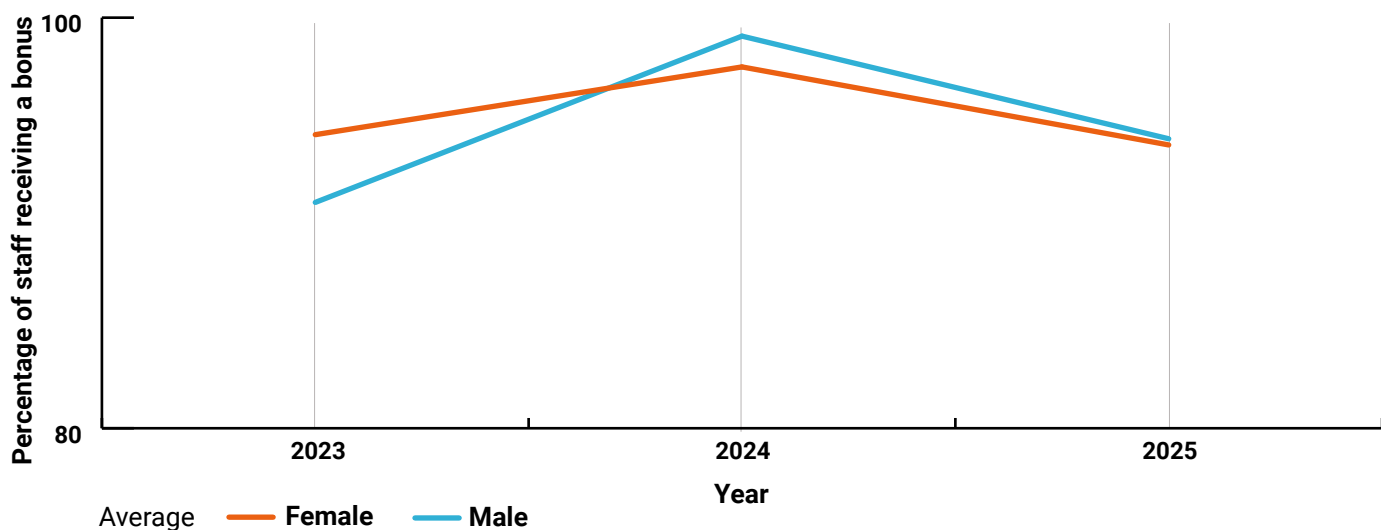
- the mean female bonus per pound was 107p (rounded), resulting in a mean bonus gap of -7.3% (compared with 91p in the previous year).
- the median female bonus per pound was 83p, resulting in a median bonus gap of 16.8% (compared with a median of £1 in the previous year).

The difference between the mean and median bonus gaps reflects how bonus-classified payments are distributed across the organisation. The mean bonus gap is influenced by the total value of bonus-classified payments, and in 2025 this had been affected by a small number of higher-value payments received by women during the year.

The median bonus gap compares the midpoint value for women and men and is therefore less affected by higher-value payments. Most colleagues received a pay award in 2025 which included a non-consolidated element determined by the level of their basic pay. The median bonus gap therefore reflects the same pattern as our median pay gap as women continue to be more highly represented in lower-paid roles, while men remain more highly represented in higher-paid roles.

In previous reports, bonus data for earlier years was calculated using a different approach. As part of this year's reporting, we reviewed the methodology to ensure it aligns fully with statutory guidance and is applied consistently across years. As a result, the bonus figures shown for preceding years in this report differ from those previously published. This correction applies to bonus data only and does not affect hourly pay gap or quartile analyses.

Figure 2. Percentage of staff receiving a bonus



Data Science and Insights 2026-03-12

Table 2. Percentage of staff receiving a bonus

Year	Female	Male
2023	94.3	91.0
2024	97.6	99.1
2025	93.8	94.4

Figure 3 shows how these have evolved over time.

Figure 3. Gender bonus gap percentages over time

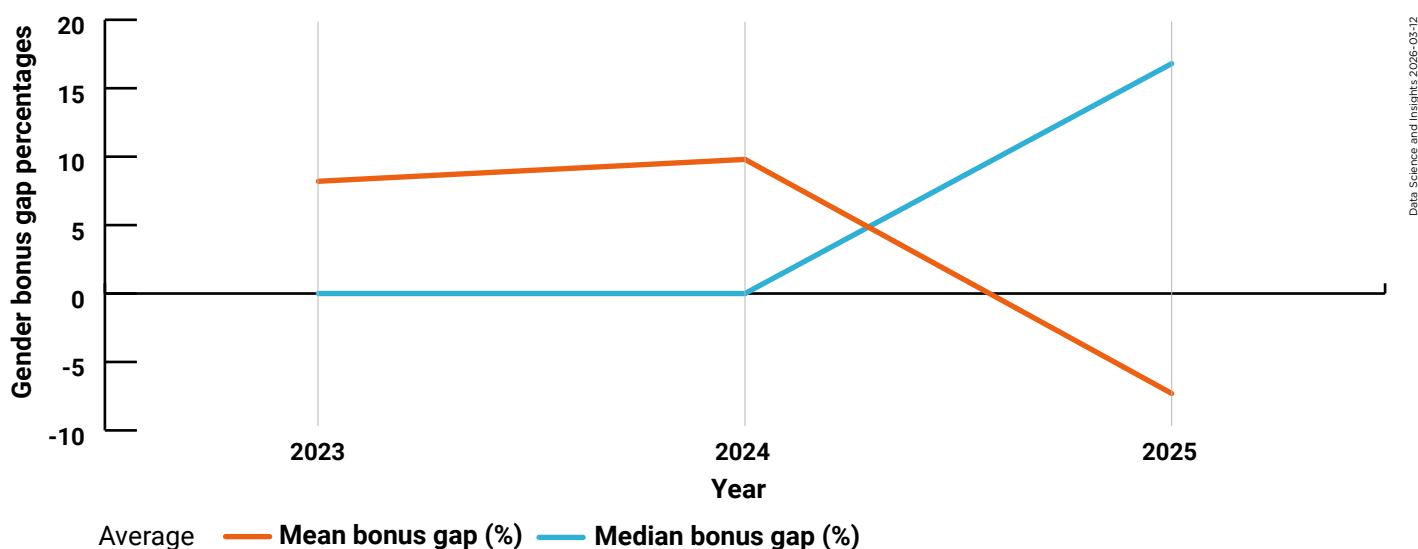


Table 3a. Gender bonus gap percentages

Year	Mean bonus gap (%)	Median bonus gap (%)
2023	8.2	0.0
2024	9.8	0.0
2025	-7.3	16.8

Figure 3b. Female total bonuses relative to male total bonuses over time

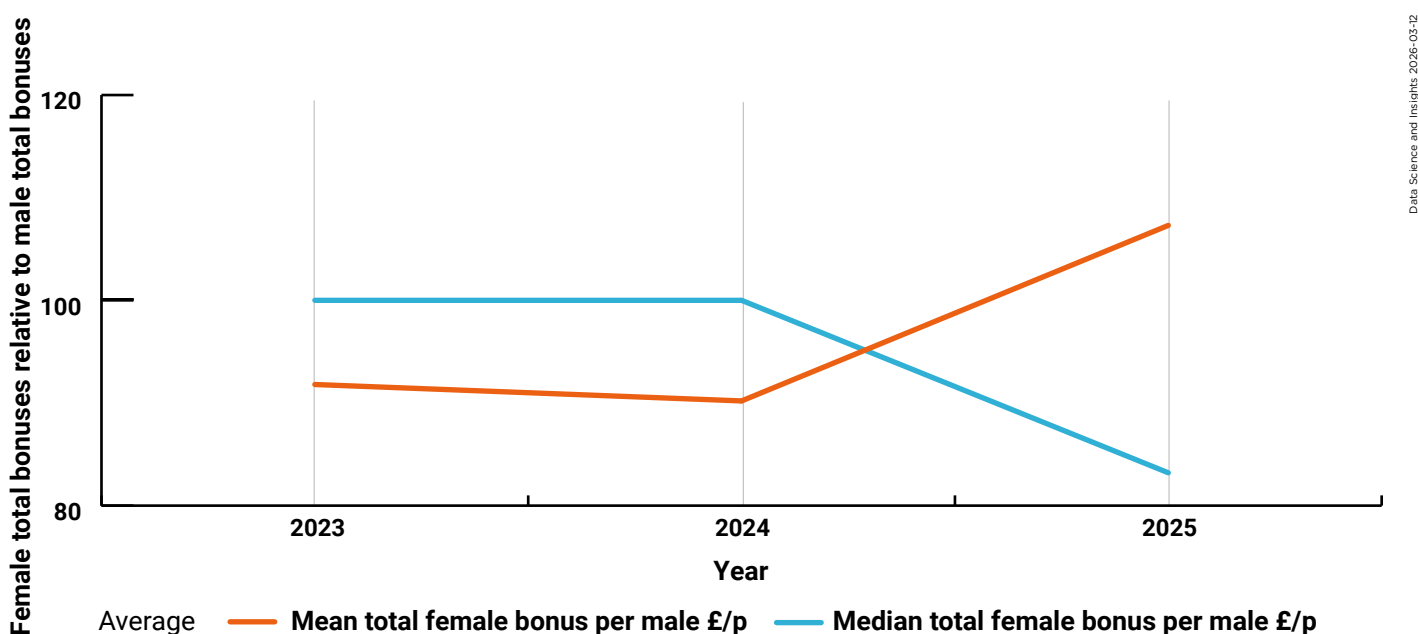


Table 3b. Female total bonuses relative to male total bonuses

Year	Mean total female bonus per male £/p	Median total female bonus per male £/p
2023	91.8	100.0
2024	90.2	100.0
2025	107.3	83.2

Figure 3 and Tables 3a and 3b show a different pattern for mean and median bonus gaps in 2025 compared to 2023 and 2024. This reflects a change in how bonus-classified payments were awarded in 2025, following the introduction of non-consolidated lump-sum awards as part of the pay award.

Pay quartiles

For reporting purposes, colleagues are divided into four quartiles based on their hourly pay, labelled 'upper'; 'upper middle'; 'lower middle' and 'lower.'

When segmented into pay quartiles, our gender pay gaps (-0.6% to 8.8%) are smaller than the overall gender pay gap because comparisons are made between colleagues in broadly similar roles. Year-on-year changes within quartiles can appear more pronounced because each quartile contains fewer people and is therefore more sensitive to minor changes in composition, including joiners, leavers, and role movement within the quartile.

- **Upper quartile:** women earned 98p (rounded) for every £1 earned by men (gap of 2.4%).
- **Upper middle quartile:** women earned 98p per £1 (gap of 2.1%).
- **Lower middle quartile:** women earned 101p per £1 (-0.6% gap).
- **Lower quartile:** women earned 92p per £1 (gap of 8.8%).

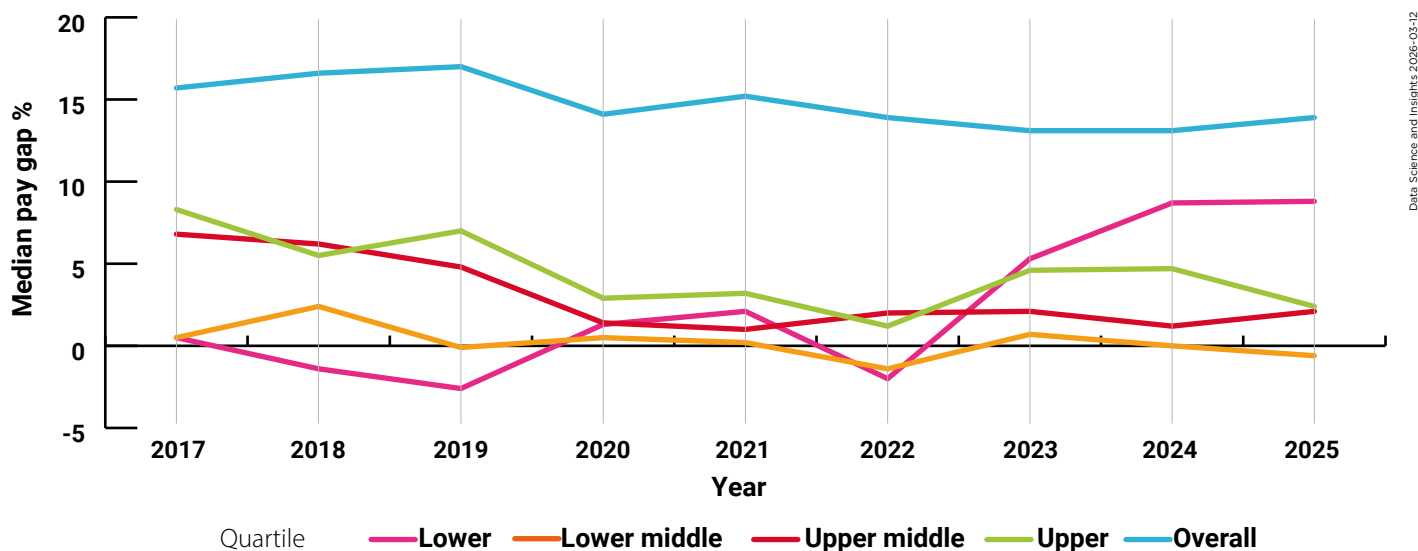
The biggest changes since last year are the narrowing of the upper quartile gap from 4.7% to 2.4%, the widening of the upper middle quartile gap from 1.2% to 2.1% and the reverse of the lower middle quartile gap from 0% to -0.6%. The lower quartile gap has increased only slightly, from 8.7% to 8.8%.

These trends are shown graphically in Figures 4a and 4b and in Tables 4a and 4b.

The narrowing of the upper quartile gap and the reversal of the lower middle quartile gap suggest movement in a positive direction, while recognising that year-on-year changes can reflect relatively small shifts in composition.

While senior leadership roles include strong female representation, the overall upper quartile remains influenced by the wider distribution of senior and specialist roles across the organisation. The lower quartile continues to show the largest gap, reinforcing the importance of progression and development opportunities for colleagues in lower-paid roles.

Figure 4a. Median pay gaps by quartile over time

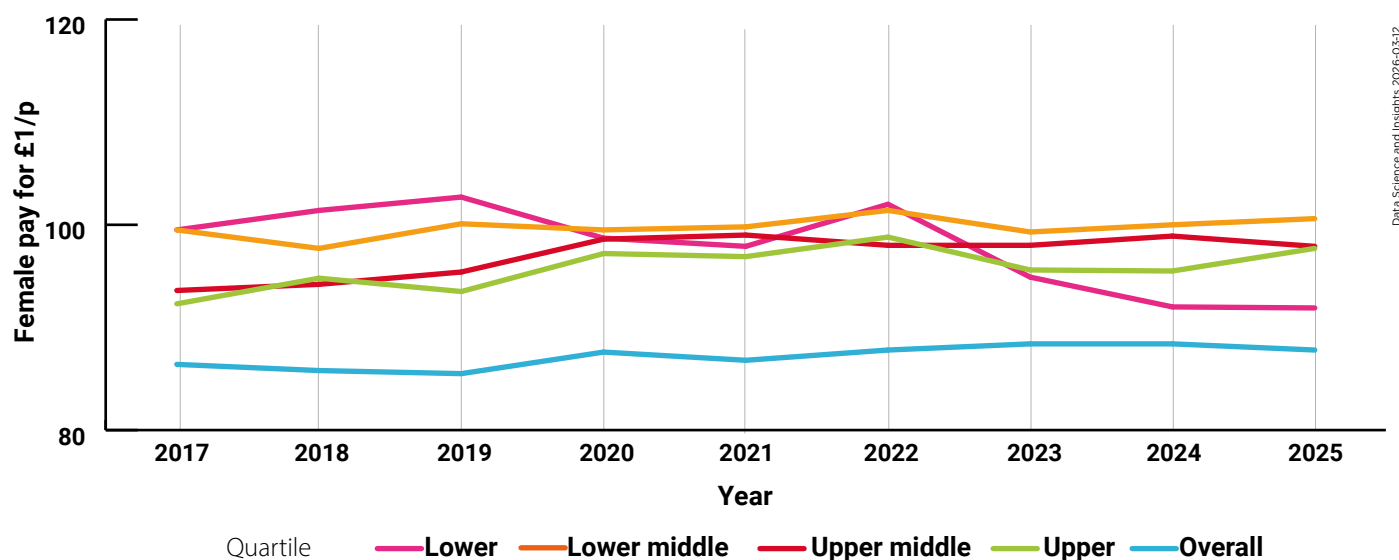


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Table 4a. Median pay gaps by quartile

Year	Upper quartile pay gap (%)	Upper middle quartile pay gap (%)	Lower middle quartile pay gap (%)	Lower quartile pay gap (%)	Overall pay gap (%)
2017	8.3	6.8	0.5	0.5	15.7
2018	5.5	6.2	2.4	-1.4	16.6
2019	7.0	4.8	-0.1	-2.6	17.0
2020	2.9	1.4	0.5	1.3	14.1
2021	3.2	1.0	0.2	2.1	15.2
2022	1.2	2.0	-1.4	-2.0	13.9
2023	4.6	2.1	0.7	5.3	13.1
2024	4.7	1.2	0.0	8.7	13.1
2025	2.4	2.1	-0.6	8.8	13.9

Figure 4b. Female pay relative to male pay per quartile



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Table 4b. Median female pay relative to male

Year	Upper quartile female pay per male £/p	Upper middle quartile female pay per male £/p	Lower middle quartile female pay per male £/p	Median female pay relative to male £/p	Overall female pay per male £/p
2017	92.3	93.6	99.5	99.5	86.4
2018	94.8	94.2	97.7	101.4	85.8
2019	93.5	95.4	100.1	102.7	85.5
2020	97.2	98.6	99.5	98.7	87.6
2021	96.9	99.0	99.8	97.9	86.8
2022	98.8	98.0	101.4	102.0	87.8
2023	95.6	98.0	99.3	94.9	88.4
2024	95.5	98.9	100.0	92.0	88.4
2025	97.7	97.9	100.6	91.9	87.8

Gender splits by quartile

The gender split across pay quartiles helps explain the overall gender pay gap.

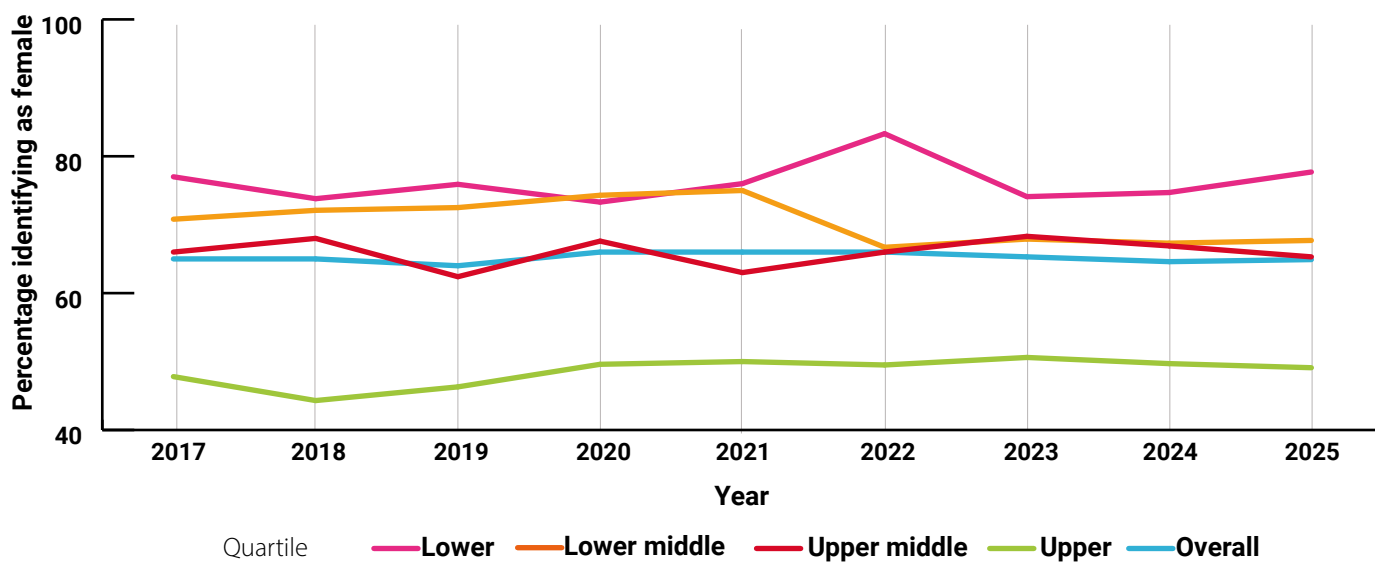
In 2025:

- **Upper quartile:** 49% were female, down on 50% the year before.
- **Upper middle quartile:** 65%, down on 66%.
- **Lower middle quartile:** 68%, up from 67%.
- **Lower quartile:** 78%, up from 75%.

Changes since 2024 were relatively small, but women remain most highly represented in the lower quartile. This distribution continues to influence the overall gender pay gap.

The change over time is shown in Figure 5 and Table 5.

Figure 5. Gender split in each pay quartile over time



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Table 5. Gender split by quartile over time

Year	Upper (%)	Upper middle (%)	Lower middle (%)	Lower (%)	Overall (%)
2017	47.8	66.0	70.8	77.0	65.0
2018	44.3	68.0	72.1	73.8	65.0
2019	46.3	62.4	72.5	75.9	64.0
2020	49.6	67.6	74.3	73.3	66.0
2021	50.0	63.0	75.0	76.0	66.0
2022	49.5	66.0	66.7	83.3	66.0
2023	50.6	68.3	67.9	74.1	65.3
2024	49.7	66.9	67.3	74.7	64.6
2025	49.1	65.3	67.7	77.7	64.9

What is influencing our gender pay gap, and what supports progress

Our gender pay gap continues to be influenced by how women and men are represented and progress across different roles and pay levels within the organisation, rather than differences in pay for equal work. We remain confident that men and women in comparable roles are paid fairly and consistently, and that reward decisions are made equitably and transparently.

In 2025, the mean gender pay gap reduced, while the median increased slightly. This reflects changes across the overall pay distribution rather than a single factor. As in previous years, women continue to be more highly represented in the

lower pay quartile, which has the widest quartile pay gap. Because the median is sensitive to workforce composition, modest changes across the distribution can influence year-on-year results.

Taken together, these patterns help explain why the overall gender pay gap remains influenced by workforce composition. Understanding these patterns helps us focus where sustained, long-term action is most likely to support progress, particularly through continued focus on progression and development, career pathways, leadership development and inclusive capability building.

Supporting progression and career development

Meaningful progress depends on long-term, structural change, particularly in how colleagues are supported to develop, access progression opportunities, and make informed career choices over time.

Supporting progression remains one of the most effective ways to reduce the gender pay gap in a sustainable way. Our 2025 data shows that women make up the largest proportion of colleagues in the lower quartile, reinforcing the importance of development pathways that enable movement across pay levels.

We continue to invest in career development and leadership capability, supporting colleagues to build the skills, confidence and experience

needed to progress. Development programmes form an important part of this approach, creating structured opportunities for colleagues to develop their leadership and management capability over time.

In 2025, participation across our management and leadership development programmes shows strong engagement. This reflects strong uptake of development opportunities, alongside our continued focus on progression, career pathways and inclusive capability building. Participation alone does not guarantee progression, but it is an important part of building capability and supporting access to opportunity over time.

These opportunities remain open to all colleagues.

Management and leadership development programmes (2025)

Our management and leadership development offer is designed to support colleagues at various stages of their management and leadership journey:

- Aspiring Managers supports colleagues wishing to move into management, focusing on the transition from team member to manager. In 2025, 62% of participants were women.
- New Managers supports colleagues promoted into their first management role or recently appointed to a management position, focusing on essential management responsibilities. In 2025, 62% of participants were women.
- Level 5 Departmental Managers Apprenticeship supports the development of experienced managers, focusing on building capability to lead people and manage operations effectively. In 2025, 80% of participants were women.
- Level 7 Senior Leader Apprenticeship supports progression into senior leadership roles, focusing on strategic leadership and organisational impact. In 2025, 45% of participants were women.

Overall, women represented 60% of participants across management and leadership development programmes in 2025, reflecting strong engagement across different career stages and supporting the development of a strong and diverse pipeline of colleagues with the skills and experience to access more senior roles over time.

Inclusion, culture, and opportunity

An inclusive workplace culture supports fair progression and decision making. Our Inclusion and Diversity Strategy provides a long-term framework for this work, supporting inclusive behaviours, consistent implementation and improved use of data to understand impact over time.

Understanding colleagues' lived experience is an important part of identifying barriers and opportunities for progress, particularly at different career stages.

In 2026, we will begin using our new employee voice tool, Peakon, to strengthen our ability to listen to colleagues and understand their experiences at work. Over time, we intend through this to strengthen our insight into engagement, inclusion, and progression-related sentiment.

Used alongside workforce and reward data, employee voice insight is intended to provide a more informed understanding of where colleagues feel supported and where barriers may exist, and the factors that influence progression, retention, and experience across different groups. It will help us to assess whether our actions are having the intended impact.

We continue to support initiatives that broaden access to experience and opportunity, particularly for individuals who may face barriers to

progression at different career stages. These initiatives contribute to longer-term change by supporting entry, development, and progression across various parts of the organisation.

Flexible and hybrid working practices are a well-established part of the RSC's employment offer. This includes a 35-hour working week, a high proportion of part-time roles, and a range of flexible working arrangements used across the organisation. These approaches support equality of access to work, and progression for colleagues at different life stages and with different responsibilities. While flexibility does not directly affect gender pay gap calculations, it plays an important role in attraction, retention and progression over time, and forms part of the wider context in which pay outcomes are understood.

Family-related leave, including maternity, paternity and shared parental leave, is also relevant to this wider picture. Periods of leave can influence career timing, progression patterns and representation at different levels, which in turn can shape gender pay gap outcomes over time.

Taken together, pay data, workforce composition, flexibility and leave arrangements help to build a fuller picture of progression and experience across the organisation.

Reward and recognition

We continue to review and strengthen our reward and recognition practices to ensure they remain fair, transparent, and aligned with our principles.

Our 2025 pay award changed the way we approach annual pay reviews, based on our desire to recognise performance, balanced with affordability. Performance through the year affects an individual's total pay award, and this approach is consistently applied to all RSC employees.

The pay award in 2025 for most colleagues included a combination of both consolidated and non-consolidated elements.

We will continue to monitor pay award outcomes alongside workforce data to ensure that reward decisions remain equitable and that any emerging patterns are understood and, where necessary, addressed.

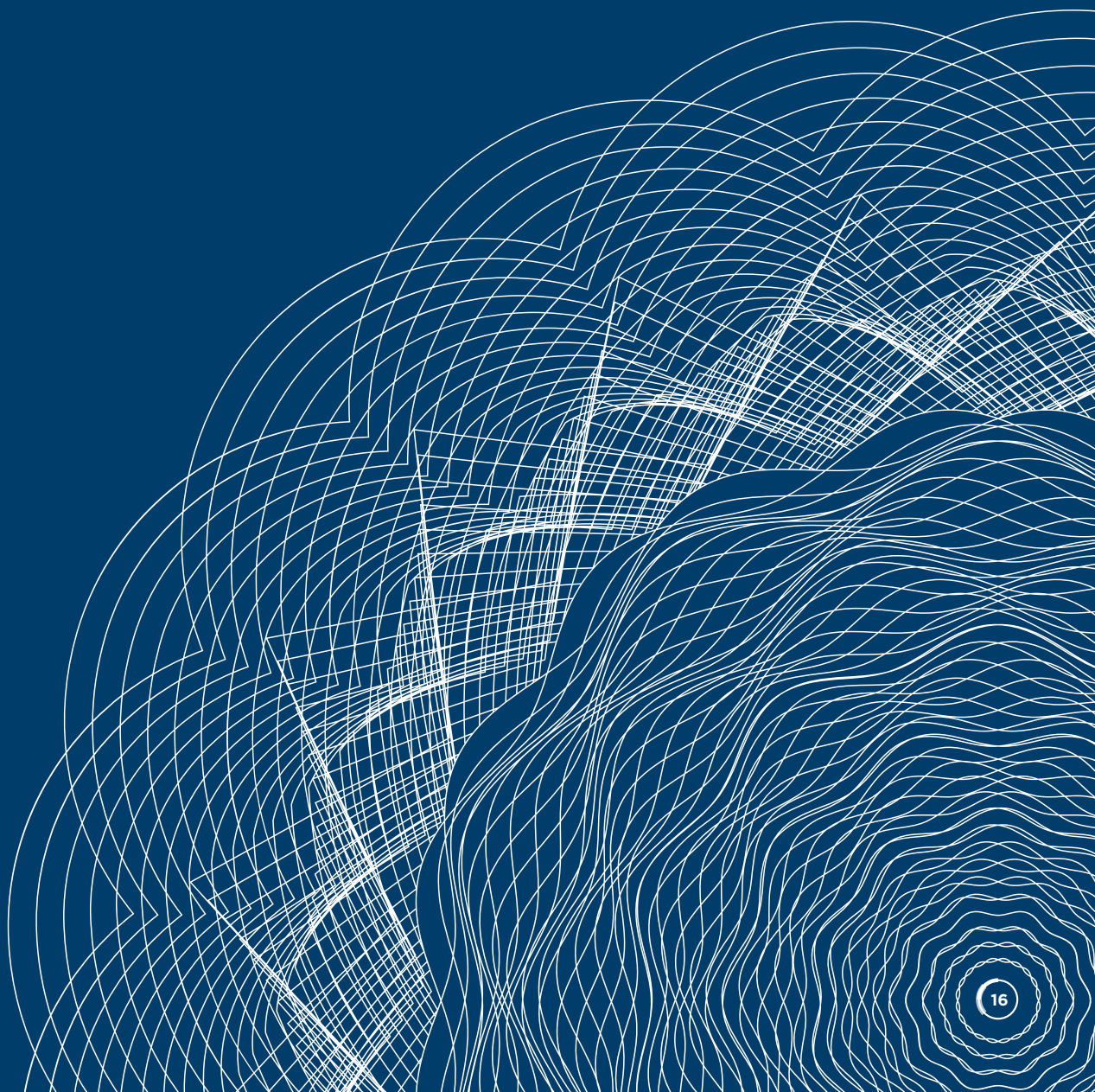
Conclusion

The Royal Society of Chemistry remains committed to promoting fair pay and fostering an inclusive workplace. In 2025, our mean gender pay gap reduced to 10.9%, while our median gender pay gap increased by less than one percentage point to 13.9%. These movements reflect changes in workforce composition during the year, including recruitment, turnover and progression patterns, rather than a single underlying factor.

As in previous years, the overall gender pay gap continues to be shaped by structural patterns in how women and men are represented across roles and pay levels. Women remain more highly represented in roles at the lower end of the pay distribution, while men remain more highly represented at the higher end, and this continues to influence the overall position.

While year-on-year movements are not linear, the longer-term picture shows progress alongside areas where further sustained focus is needed. During 2025, we continued to invest in leadership and management development, inclusive people practices and transparency around our approach to reward. Strong participation by women in our management and leadership development programmes indicates access to development that supports capability and potential progression over time.

Reducing the gender pay gap is an ongoing journey. We will maintain focus on progression, inclusive capability development, equitable reward practices, and access to opportunity, and we will continue to strengthen how we use data and employee insight. Through this we aim to support meaningful and lasting progress towards further improving the gender pay gap and ensuring fair pay for all colleagues at the Royal Society of Chemistry.



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