

Hightown Housing Association Gender Pay Gap Report 2023

Hightown is a charitable Housing Association which provides affordable housing for people who cannot afford to buy or rent at market rates and care and supported housing for vulnerable and disabled people.

We operate mainly in Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire. Our head office is in Hemel Hempstead.

From 2017 all UK organisations employing over 250 workers are required to publicly report their gender pay gap according to the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information).

The snapshot date, according to the Gender Pay Gap guidelines, is the 5th of April¹. This report covers the 2022/2023 reporting period. The composition of the Hightown workforce as at the snapshot date of 5th April 2023 was 961 employees in total, 295 (30.7%) males and 666 (69.3%) females. All staff had a recorded gender.

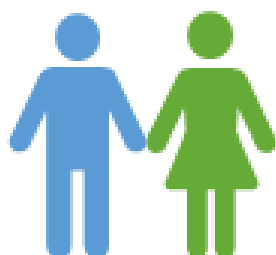
At Hightown, we are committed to the principles of equal opportunities and strive to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion across our workforce and our operations.

The following report outlines the results of our gender pay gap and our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap

Mean hourly pay is calculated by adding together the hourly rate for all workers and dividing by the total number of workers within the specified group (in this case, male or female). Median hourly pay is the middle rate when all hourly pay rates are listed in numerical order.

The mean gender pay gap is the difference between the average hourly rate for male and female staff while the median gender pay gap is the middle hourly rate value for male and female staff when all values are listed in numerical order. A positive percentage figure reveals that typically, female employees have lower pay than male employees.



↓ **Mean Gender Pay Gap** for Hightown **5%**

(down from 11% in 2021/22 and 16% in 2020/21)

= **Median Gender Pay Gap** for Hightown **0%**

(same in 2021/22)

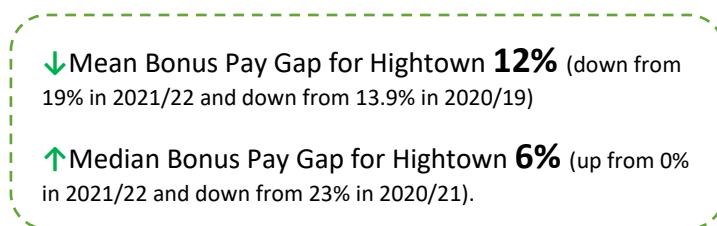
¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/gender-pay-gap-reporting>

The results above tell us that when comparing the average hourly rate (mean), a woman earns £9.50 for every £10 a man earns. When comparing average hourly rate (median), women and men earn the same.

Mean and Median Bonus Gender Pay Gap

The mean bonus pay gap is the difference between the mean bonus male and female staff receive, while the median bonus pay gap is the difference between the median bonuses received.

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The proportion of men and women across all staff as well as those who received a bonus are highlighted below.



At Hightown, where contracts allow, a bonus of 1% is awarded to staff in December subject to meeting their Appraisal objectives. It is paid to staff at a flat percentage rate based on meeting appraisal criteria, length of service, and contract type, regardless of gender or grade. Bank workers and some staff on specific contracts, such as TUPE contracts, are not eligible for these bonus payments. 569 employees were eligible for the appraisal bonus due to length of service and holding a fixed term or permanent Hightown contract. An additional £300 bonus was paid to all staff on permanent or fixed-term contracts who were in post on 1st October 2022 and still in post on 31st December 2022. The payment was paid pro rata for part-time staff based on their contractual hours.

60% of employees qualified for a bonus and 40% did not. The table below shows that contract type and meeting appraisal criteria account for a similar proportion of reason for exclusion from the appraisal bonus with 2% more male employees not receiving the bonus due to holding a Bank Worker contract. In line with an increase of male employees working for Hightown at this time, 6% more male employees (19%) started after 1st April 2022 than female employees (13%), contributing to the lower proportion of males receiving a bonus. Additionally, Table 2 shows that 7% fewer male employees (14%) received the “Thank you” bonus due to starting after 1st October 2022, compared to female employees (7%).

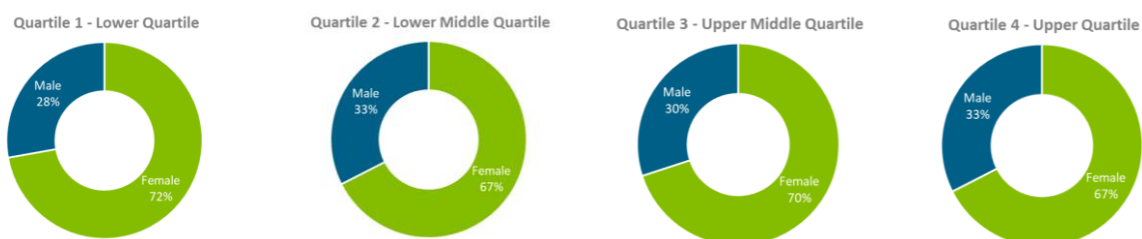
*Table 1. Appraisal bonus by gender	Female employees and Bank Workers		Male employees and Bank Workers		All employees and Bank Workers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Received appraisal bonus	400	54%	157	48%	557	52%
Did not receive bonus	347	46%	173	52%	520	42%
Reason for not receiving bonus						
Bank Worker	226	30%	104	32%	330	30%
Didn't pass appraisal criteria	11	1%	4	1%	15	1%
On Sabbatical Leave	1	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Started contract after 1 st April 2022	94	13%	63	19%	157	15%
TUPE contract	15	2%	2	1%	17	2%
*Grand Total	747	100%	330	100%	1077	100%
Included in pay gap calculation (excludes anyone who left before the 5 th April 2023)	721		324		1045	100%

Table 2. "Thank you" Bonus by gender	Female employees		Male employees		All employees	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Received thank you bonus	448	60%	177	54%	625	58%
Did not receive thank you bonus	294	40%	153	46%	452	42%
Reason for not receiving bonus						
Bank Worker	226	30%	104	32%	330	31%
Started contract after 1 st October 2022	53	7%	46	14%	99	9%
TUPE contract	15	2%	2	1%	17	2%
Did not receive bonus - no clear reason	5	1%	1	0%	6	1%
*Grand Total	747	100%	330	100%	1077	100%
Included in pay gap calculation (excludes anyone who left before the 5 th April 2023)	721		324		1045	

*To meet government pay gap reporting requirements, all employees who received a bonus within 12 months of the snapshot date, regardless of whether or not they are still employed at the snapshot date are included. However, technical guidance requires only employees employed at the snapshot date to be included in the total employee list for the calculation.

Quartiles

The pay quartiles measure how many male and female colleagues are represented in each quarter of the organisation when all hourly pay is stacked from lowest in Quartile 1 to highest in Quartile 4. Each quartile shown contains an equal number of colleagues.



↓ **Lower Quartile:** In 2022/23, the highest proportion of females across all quartiles was observed in the Lower quartile (72%). The proportion of females in this quartile has decreased by 5%.

↓ **Lower Middle Quartile:** In 2022/23, the lowest proportion of female staff was observed in the Lower middle (67%) and Upper Quartiles, with the Lower middle quartile also having the second lowest proportion of female staff (68%) in 2021/22. The proportion of females in this quartile has decreased by 1% in 2022/23.

↓ **Upper Middle Quartile:** The proportion of females in this quartile has decreased by 7% to 70% in 2022/23. In 2021/222 the highest proportion of females was found equally in the Upper middle quartile (77%) and the lower quartile (77%).

↓ **Upper Quartile:** In 2022/23, the lowest proportion of female staff was observed in the Upper Quartile (67%) and Lower Middle Quartile. The proportion of females in this quartile has decreased by 2% since 2021/22.

The slightly more even distribution of females across the quartiles may have contributed to the reduction in the pay gap.

Table 3. Gender distribution by pay Quartile

	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		+/-	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Quartile 1 Lower quartile	72%	28%	70%	30%	77%	23%	72%	28%	-5%	+5%
Quartile 2 Lower middle quartile	71%	29%	76%	24%	68%	32%	67%	33%	-1%	+1%
Quartile 3 Upper middle quartile	71%	29%	73%	27%	77%	23%	70%	30%	-7%	+7%
Quartile 4 Upper quartile	69%	31%	65%	35%	69%	31%	67%	33%	-2%	+2%

Factors contributing to the findings

Most of our staff (77%) are employed in our Care and Supported Housing Schemes, which provide care and support to vulnerable and disabled people, with many of those staff engaged in direct support to our service users as Care Workers. These roles are generally remunerated at a lower rate compared to staff in mainstream housing and housing development roles across the Association. The lower salary rates are due to external market factors and, in particular, the contract price set by commissioners of our services. However, the Hightown Board has a target to pay the Real Living Wage, and this has been achieved in 2022 and 2023.

How do we compare?

Data published by the Office for National Statistics in October 2023 shows that the median gender pay gap for all employees in the UK was 14.4% (Office for National Statistics - ONS)², a 1 percentage point decrease compared to the 2021 data. In comparison, Hightown's median has remained at 0%.

ONS data shows a mean pay gap of 13.4%, which has decreased from 14.7% in 2022. Hightown is performing well in comparison with a 6% decrease in the pay gap in the last year and a mean pay gap of 5%, 8.4% smaller than the national average.

What we are doing

The Association is committed to the principles of equal opportunities and equal treatment for all employees, regardless of sex, race, religion or belief, age, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or disability. The Association has a clear policy of paying employees equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of their sex (or any other characteristics).

EDI Statement: We want our staff to feel that they truly belong and can be themselves at Hightown, to create a diverse workforce reflective of the local communities we operate in. We are drafting an EDI statement to communicate this to our residents and stakeholders.

Recruitment: Hightown are committed to promoting diversity through our recruitment practices. We ensure our adverts are neutral; we advertise in a wide range of places and use values based assessments in our recruitment practices.

Between the 6th of April 2022 and the 5th of April 2023, we recruited 290 staff (Permanent and Bank Workers combined). This included 107 males who had an average hourly rate of £12.92 per hour and 183 females who had an average hourly rate of £11.48 per hour.

Leadership: A Board Member has been appointed as Equality & Diversity Champion.

EDI forum: The Equality and Diversity Forum drives further change in relation to equality and diversity within the organisation. EDI forum members completed EDI champion training, and as a result of this training, the recommendation was made for policy writers to attend Equality Impact Assessment training, which they then attended.

Staff surveys: Staff are asked to complete a Leavers survey if they decide to leave Hightown and an annual staff survey was sent to all staff in Spring 2022. Open comment questions in these surveys allow staff to give feedback about suggested areas of improvement, including areas around EDI.

²<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/annualsurveyofhoursandearningsashegenderpaygaptables>

Flexible working: During 2022/23, we reviewed our Working at Home Policy to allow 2 days at home; we also piloted compressed hours for full-time staff based at Hightown House, and the pilot has been a success.

Learning and Development: We continued to provide our Learning and Development offer to all staff, which by the snapshot date had involved creating around 2,000 spaces for staff in training in the previous 12 months. We have also supported:

13 females & 3 males undertaking an Apprenticeship
1 female & 1 male on our Graduate Scheme
3 female & 2 males undertaking a professional qualification course supported by Hightown

Next Steps

- Support the continued professional development of employees to maintain the number of female employees in management positions by launching a management training programme for existing, new and aspiring managers.
- Improve tracking of applications to monitor the recruitment journey and highlight areas that may create barriers for female applicants.
- Annual staff survey to include a focus on better understanding barriers and facilitators to career progression from our employee's perspective, including specific questions about gender and ethnicity.
- Share pay gap findings with the EDI forum to gain employees' perspectives on findings and involve them in future actions.
- Carry out Equality Impact assessments on key policies affecting staff, residents and service users.
- Continue to diversify the board by actively seeking more applicants from diverse backgrounds when recruiting and providing remuneration to board members for their activities.
- Carry out EDI self-assessment to inform future EDI work.