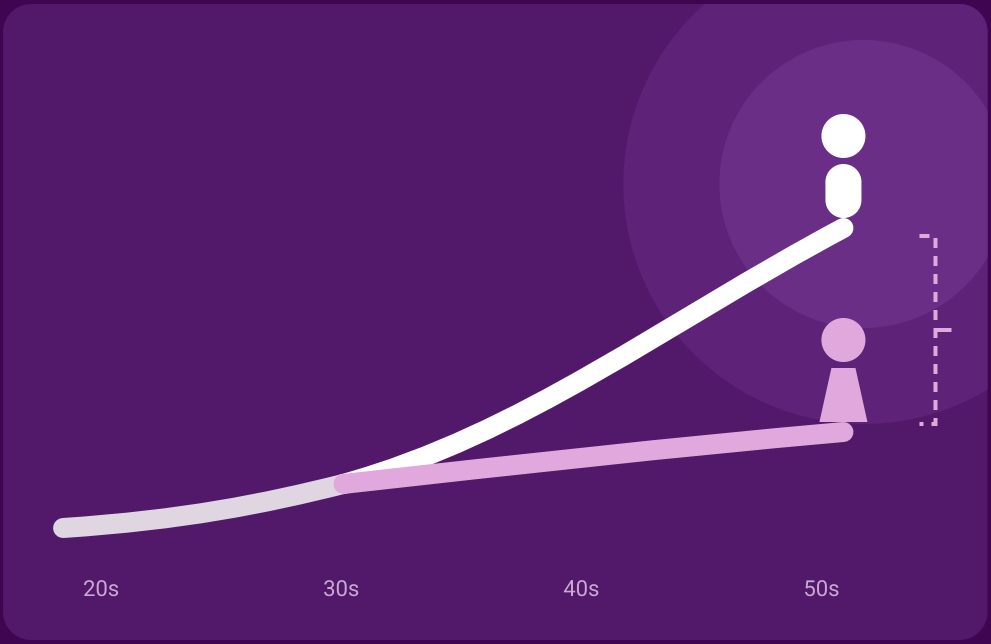
PayGap.ie

REPORT · 2026



GENDER PAY GAP REPORTING IN IRELAND

The State of Pay

Four years of employer reporting and national earnings data, what is driving the gap, and what it will take to close it.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

CloseTheGap.ie

FOREWORD

This gap is ours to close



Jennifer Keane

Founder, PayGap.ie and CloseTheGap

When Irish employers published their first gender pay gap reports in 2022, there was nowhere to find them all. So I started collecting them, one report at a time. More than 4,000 reports later, the numbers tell us something we can't ignore: transparency has shown us the gap, but it hasn't closed it.

That isn't a reason to lose heart. The gap wasn't created by one decision, and it won't be closed by one either. It was built by thousands of everyday choices, which means every one of us has a part to play in undoing it.

As individuals

We can ask the questions: about pay, about promotion, about who gets the stretch project and who gets overlooked. When we talk openly about money, it stops being a secret.

As organisations

We can treat the report as a starting point, not a box to tick. Understand the numbers, set real targets, and hold leaders to them.

As role models

We can show what's possible. Every woman in a senior role, and every man who takes his full parental leave, makes the path easier for the person behind them.

As government

We can make progress the default, with better reporting, real enforcement, and an EU Pay Transparency Directive implemented with ambition.

None of this is out of reach. I hope this report gives you the evidence to act, and the encouragement to start today.

Jen

Four years in, the gap has barely moved

17.3%
Gap in median annual earnings, 2025. Unchanged since 2023.

10.1%
Average employer gap in 2025, down from 12% in 2022.

21.6%
Average bonus gap, about double the hourly pay gap.

01 **The overall gap has progressed very little over the years of reporting.** Within employers who have reported in all four years, the average gap fell from 12% in 2022 to 10.1% in 2025. That's less than one percentage point a year.

02 **In terms of earnings, the gap seems to have stalled.** Per the CSO, in newly released 2025 data, the median woman earned €41,765 against €50,520 for the median man, a gap of 17.3%. This gap was the same in 2023 and 2024.

03 **The gap is primarily about who holds the top jobs.** Women hold 51% of the lowest-paid quarter of jobs, and 40% of the highest-paid quarter.

04 **This holds even where women are the majority.** In 1 in 3 employers where most staff are women, men still hold most of the top jobs.

05 **When it comes to bonuses, women have roughly the same chance of getting a bonus, but it will be a smaller one.** The average bonus gap is 21.6%, with a third of employers reporting a bonus gap of 40% or more.

06 **The gap begins to widen sharply in the 30s and keeps growing with age.**

07 **Our reporting system is not yet doing its job.** About 1 in 5 reports contain errors. Many don't commit to concrete action.

What the gender pay gap is, and what it isn't

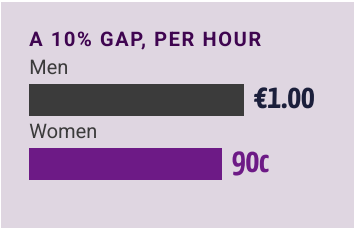
The gender pay gap is not the same as unequal pay

The gender pay gap compares the average pay of all men and all women in an organisation. A gender pay gap is not the same as unequal pay between two workers who do the same work or work of equal value, which was made illegal in 1974 by the passing of the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act. The gender pay gap represents a wider measure. An employer can pay men and women in the same role identically and still have a large gap, if men hold most of the senior (and therefore better-paid) roles within a company.

How the gap is calculated

The gap is the difference between men's and women's hourly pay, shown as a percentage of men's pay. For example, a gap of 10% means that for every euro a man earns per hour, a woman earns 90c.

A negative gap means that women are paid more on average.



Mean and median: why report both?

The mean

The ordinary average. It's easy to understand but can be easily skewed. A few very high earners can pull the number up significantly.

The median

The middle earner. When everyone is lined up in order of pay, the person in the middle of this line represents the median figure. This shows the experience of a typical employee.

When the mean gap is much larger than the median gap, the difference is mostly driven by **who holds the top jobs**. That's one of the reasons we report both.

How reporting works in Ireland

The **Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021** requires employers to publish their gap each year. The law was phased in over a period of years, gradually including more employers, on the basis of the number of employees.

WHO HAS TO REPORT

From 2022	From 2024	From 2025
250+	**150+**	**50+**
employees	employees	employees

What employers must report

Each June, qualifying employers must take a snapshot of their pay and report:

1. Mean and median hourly gaps (with figures for part-time and temporary employees)
2. Mean and median bonus gaps, and the share of men and women who received a bonus
3. The share of men and women who received benefit in kind
4. Quartiles (the share of men and women in each quarter of the pay range, from lowest paid to highest)
5. A written explanation of the reasons for the gap and what the employer is doing about it

5 months

Reports must be published within five months of the snapshot date.

3 years

Once published, a report must continue to be available for at least three years from the date of publication.

04 · ACROSS THE ECONOMY

No matter the source, the story is the same

Across the whole economy, women earn less than men. This is not just reflected in the gender pay gaps reported by specific companies or industries, but in other related datasets. PayGap.ie has aggregated data from the CSO, which incorporates information from the Structure of Earnings Survey (carried out every four years), as well as the "Distribution of Earnings by Gender and County" set of datasets, which gathers its data from Revenue, the Department of Social Protection, and the CSO's Business Register. No matter where the data is sourced from, the net result is the same.

MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS, 2025

17.3% lower

€8,755 a year ≈ €168 a week



In 2025, women's median annual earnings were 17.3% below men's. While the gap has narrowed through the 2010s, it has been stuck at around 17% since 2022. Source: CSO, table DEA06.

Annual and hourly gaps

The CSO figures above are for annual earnings, so they show the effect of women working fewer paid hours on average. Caring responsibilities help explain this difference in paid hours. In 2025, almost 30% of women working part-time cited caring for dependants as their reason for doing so, compared with just 7% of men working part-time (CSO, Women in the Labour Market 2024–2025). In 2023, the Irish gender gap in average working hours was the sixth highest in the OECD (OECD, 2025).

The CSO also shares an hourly pay gap, which is the 9.6% figure (CSO, Structure of Earnings Survey 2022) that most will be familiar with. Neither figure is wrong or incorrect, they are just different reflections of the same data. On an hourly basis, women earn less, and this is closer to what employers report as their pay gap (which is also calculated on an hourly basis). The annual earnings figure shows what ends up in women's pockets: what they really earn.

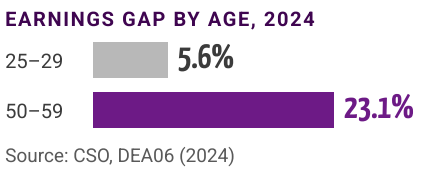
17.3%
Annual earnings gap: what women take home

9.6%
Hourly pay gap: closer to what employers report

04 · ACROSS THE ECONOMY

The gap that grows with your career

Among workers in their 20s, the gap is relatively small: women aged 25–29 earn 5.6% less than men of the same age. However, the gap is not static, and as women age and progress (or do not progress) in their careers, the gap grows wider. From age 40, it is roughly four times larger, at 19% (CSO, table DEA06).



Source: CSO, DEA06 (2024)

The gap that follows us into retirement

Lower pay means lower pension contributions, and time out of paid work for care means periods of time, sometimes spanning years, with no contribution at all. The pay gap becomes a pension gap that lasts for the rest of a woman's life, and by the time many people realise the shortfall, it is too late to resolve it.

Weekly pension income in retirement



About a third lower: a 35% gap

Retirees receiving a private pension



A historic gap in access and uptake

Retirees who worked 30+ years



The years in and out of work add up

Workers with a pension, 2025



Access may be equal, but the final pot still isn't

8 years

Irish Life found that women reach retirement with pots that are 36% smaller than men's, and would need to work about 8 years longer to catch up (Irish Life, 2025). Over a lifetime, Irish women earn nearly 40% less than men, against an OECD average of 33% (OECD, 2025).

Auto-enrolment via the My Future Fund scheme may close the remaining gap in access to pensions and bring many lower-paid workers into a pension for the first time, but contributions will always be linked to earnings. With a continuing gender pay gap, women will have less to contribute to a pension, and will carry the gap with them into retirement (TASC, 2024).

Sources: Nolan et al. (2019), ESRI, TILDA data for 2010; CSO (2026); Irish Life (2025); OECD (2025)

What employers are reporting

1,922

employers reported figures in 2025, up from 712 in the first year of reporting

8 in 10

employers pay men more per hour on average

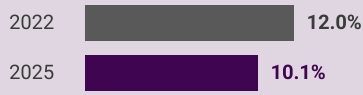
≈ 1 in 4

employers report a gap of 20% or more

Some progress, slowly

Considering the employers that reported every year (615 employers), there was some progress. Their average mean gap fell every year, from 12% to 10.1%: less than one percentage point a year. More than a third of this cohort saw their own gap widen over this time.

AVERAGE MEAN GAP, SAME 615 EMPLOYERS



At this pace, the average employer could take **about 16 years** to reach zero, and only if they maintain progress every year.

Who's in charge

The gap in hourly pay isn't about companies paying women less, but about who holds the top jobs. Across the PayGap.ie dataset, for 3 out of 4 employers, women account for a smaller share of employees in the highest-paid quartile than they do of the workforce as a whole. This under-representation can contribute to the gender gap in hourly pay. The reports show who is concentrated in higher- and lower-paid roles, while determining whether women and men receive equal pay for the same work or work of equal value requires more detailed information.

The pattern raises a question for employers. What might be limiting women's access to higher-paid roles? Gender stereotypes can shape perceptions of who is suited to senior or specialist jobs. Bias in recruitment, promotion and performance assessment can affect who gets those opportunities. The way employers organise work also matters, particularly where progression depends on long hours or constant availability, or where flexible working is harder to access in senior roles. Examining these practices can help employers identify where barriers arise and what they can change.

SHARE OF JOBS HELD, 2025 AVERAGE



Source: PayGap.ie

05 · EMPLOYER REPORTS

Bonuses for all, but...

Across the dataset, about two thirds of both women and men received a bonus. But while access to bonuses is close to equal, the actual bonus amount is not.

21.6%

average mean bonus gap, about double the hourly pay gap

70%

of employers that pay bonuses have a bonus gap larger than their hourly gap

1 in 3

employers report a bonus gap of 40% or more

Since bonuses are often set as a percentage of salary, and tend to be concentrated in more senior roles, the imbalance at the top is multiplied in bonus pay.

06 · THE CAUSES

Why do we have a gap?

Irish women are, on average, better qualified than Irish men, but research consistently finds that differences in education and experience do not explain the gap (Doorley, Privalko, Russell and Tuda, 2021). **The gap comes from what happens to women at and around work.**

1 Parenthood and care

The gap is small in the late 20s and much larger by the 40s. Research finds that women's earnings drop sharply after the birth of a first child and never fully recover, while men's earnings are unaffected (Kleven, Landais, Posch, Steinhauer and Zweimüller, 2019).

In Ireland, childcare exacerbates this. Long waiting lists (Pobal, 2026) mean that women are often left with no choice but to extend their maternity leave by taking unpaid parental leave while they wait for an available childcare space. With no legal requirement to pay maternity leave, many women are already on a severely reduced income throughout their maternity leave to begin with. Irish childcare costs are also among the highest in Europe (OECD, 2025 data).

2 A glass ceiling

The gap is not the same at every pay level. In the private sector, the gap rises from about 5% among lower earners to about 15% at the top (Doorley et al., 2021). Among the highest earners, women earn 12–20% less than men with the same qualifications, experience and type of job (Doorley et al., 2021). The pay gap data also shows this: when we examine the quartiles, we see that women do not hold the senior roles in most companies.

3 Different sectors, different pay

Women and men still tend to work in different sectors and jobs, and the industries where women cluster pay less in general (Eurostat, Leythienne and Pérez-Julián, 2022). Jobs in female-dominated workplaces pay less, for both men and women alike, but the penalty falls more heavily on women (Russell, Smyth and O'Connell, 2010).

4 Fewer paid hours

Women represent two thirds of Ireland's part-time workers, and among women who work part time, 30% say the main reason is childcare or looking after adults who need care. On average, women are paid for 30.1 hours a week, versus 35.7 for men (CSO, Women in the Labour Market 2024–2025).

This is why the annual earnings gap is much larger than the hourly gap: women lose out on worked hours every year to take on unpaid care work, facilitating men to work the additional time.

Paid hours a week

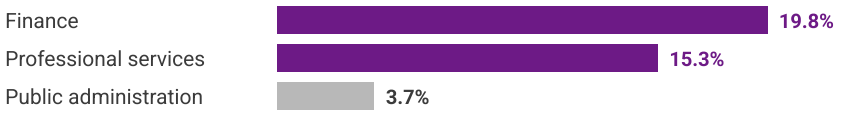
Men	35.7
Women	30.1

5 Greedy jobs, big rewards

Claudia Goldin's research on greedy jobs (high-paying careers that disproportionately reward long hours, constant availability and inflexible schedules, rather than output or basic skill alone) won her the Nobel Prize in economics. She found that this explains much of the remaining gap in wealthy countries (Goldin, 2014).

Most of the best-paid jobs pay a premium for long hours and 24/7 availability. Someone who works twice the hours in these jobs can earn twice the pay. With women still responsible for most of the caring, they are less able to take these jobs, and often have to move to more flexible roles that pay less per hour.

This is reflected in the Irish data. The gap is widest at the top of the pay scale (19.8% in finance, 15.3% in professional services) and among workers in their 40s. It is smallest where pay follows set scales and hours are more regular, such as in public administration (3.7%).



Is reporting working?

Reporting might have made the gap visible, but it has not yet made anyone accountable for it. Roughly 1 in 5 reports contain errors every year, most explanations stop short of concrete commitments, and there is no meaningful enforcement. Report quality has not improved over time, with around 20% of reports containing errors in each year of reporting to date. Research shows that data quality and accountability, along with encouraging action to address reported gaps, are essential for pay reporting to be effective (Benedí Lahuerta, Rejchrt and Patrick, 2024).

1 in 5

reports contain errors, every year since reporting began

≈ 60

employers gave the government portal different figures from their own report

4 in 10

employer narratives commit to specific actions (2024)

Common problems include figures that don't add up, missing figures, missing narratives, and reports that have been removed before they should have been. With the launch of a government portal there is an additional dimension to check: around 60 employers gave different figures to the government portal from those in their own published report.

The law requires employers to explain their gap and make clear their planned actions to change it. Ongoing analysis shows that many still don't commit to specific, measurable targets. Research on the first year of reporting found that many employers used their narratives for "happy talk" about diversity, rather than engaging with what's really driving their gap (O'Sullivan, 2024).

Weak enforcement, soft law

There are no automatic penalties for late, wrong or missing reports. IHREC can apply to the courts to make an employer comply, or an employee can bring their employer to the WRC to seek compliance. In both cases, the "punishment" is that an employer produces the report which they should have produced anyway. Compared to other reporting regimes, Ireland scores poorly (cited in O'Sullivan, 2024).

Well-designed transparency can work

International evidence suggests that tools like pay gap reporting and pay transparency can meaningfully help move the needle on the gender pay gap, when well designed (Bennedsen, Larsen and Wei, 2023; Duchini, Simion and Turrell, 2023).

An examination of Canada's public sector salary disclosure laws found robust evidence that the laws reduced the gender pay gap by between 20 and 40% among Canadian university faculty (Baker, Halberstam, Kroft, Mas and Messacar, 2023). Active disclosure of pay information (rather than providing passive mechanisms that require employees to do the research) leads to a greater reduction in the pay gap, and public dissemination of the results invites greater public scrutiny, which amplifies the effects and drives change (Baggio and Aumayr-Pintar, Eurofound, 2025).

THE EU PAY TRANSPARENCY DIRECTIVE

The Directive (Directive (EU) 2023/970) will bring many of these measures into force across the EU. Measures include the right of job applicants to receive information about the starting pay or its range, a ban on asking candidates about past pay, and the right for workers to ask for information about their own pay and the average pay of colleagues doing the same work or work of equal value, broken down by gender (Articles 5 and 7).

Alongside gender pay gap reporting, the Directive requires employers to carry out a joint pay assessment with workers' representatives where there is a gap of at least 5% within a category of workers that is not justified by objective, gender-neutral criteria and has not been remedied within six months of reporting (Article 10).

The Directive was due to be transposed across member states by 7 June 2026, but Ireland (like 21 other EU member states) did not transpose it in time.

What can we do?

The gap has no single cause, so we can't close it with a single measure. The evidence points to three fronts where we can act: care, how pay is set, and accountability. The responsibility for these lies with both the government and employers.

Care	How pay is set	Accountability

What the government can do

1 **Make childcare affordable and available.** Parenthood is the largest single driver of the gap (Kleven, Landais and Søgaard, 2019).

2 **Longer, non-transferable paid leave for fathers.** Turn Parent's Leave into paid parental leave that is also available after children turn two. When Quebec introduced five weeks of paid leave (at 70–75% of pay) for fathers, the number of fathers taking leave rose by 250% (Patnaik, 2019).

3 **Value work done mostly by women.** Women's concentration in lower-paid sectors is a significant factor in the pay gap (Eurostat, Leythienne and Pérez-Julián, 2022). Many of these sectors (care, early years, education, etc.) are funded by the State with fixed pay scales.

4 **Keep pay floors strong and up to date.** The national minimum wage cut the pay gap among the lowest-paid workers from 24% to 5% (Bargain, Doorley and Van Kerm, 2018).

5 **Make reporting count.** Fully transpose the EU Pay Transparency Directive. Introduce penalties for non-compliance, and give IHREC the support and resources to enforce the law. Review reports in the portal for errors and require corrections. Research shows that high reporting rates can coexist with weak data quality and limited enforcement, which limits how effective reporting can be (Benedí Lahuerta, Rejchrt and Patrick, 2024).

What employers can do

1 **Get the numbers right.** Too many reports still contain errors. Check the quartiles add up, check that every figure is included, that you are not reporting 0 instead of N/A, etc.

2 **Look beyond the headline.** The report is your starting point, not the end. Break your gap down further by grade, function, length of service, etc. Use it to find where women stop progressing, and make a plan to change it. A more detailed breakdown can show whether the gap reflects who works in different roles and grades, differences in pay within comparable groups, or both (Benedí Lahuerta and Aumayr-Pintar, 2024). Audit bonuses separately too: the bonus gap deserves its own in-depth analysis, looking at who is eligible, who decides, etc.

3 **Make pay rules clear.** Set pay according to the value of the work, not the job title. Carry out gender-neutral job evaluations, set pay bands for each category of work of equal value, and limit discretionary individual negotiation and top-ups.

4 **Be transparent about pay and promotion criteria.** Share pay bands and promotion criteria with employees so that negotiation, where possible, can be informed, and employees can understand progression potential. During recruitment, share the starting pay or pay range and don't ask about salary history. This gives candidates a clearer basis for negotiation, and stops past pay inequalities carrying over into a new job (Benedí Lahuerta, 2022).

5 **Design senior roles to be done flexibly.** Much of the gap comes from jobs that pay a premium for long, inflexible hours. It would shrink considerably if we approached these roles differently, and designed work so that people can stand in for each other (Goldin, 2014).

6 **Keep careers moving with parenthood.** Track pay and promotions for employees returning from leave. Encourage fathers to take the leave they are entitled to. Encourage senior leaders to model this behaviour and set the tone.

7 **Commit to something measurable.** Name a target, and report on it year on year.

What won't work

Transparency alone

Reporting laws narrow the gap, but only by a fraction (Blundell, 2021; Bennedsen, Simintzi et al., 2022). Comparative research suggests that disclosure is more likely to prompt action when employers face internal or external scrutiny, and are expected to investigate and address unjustified pay differences (Benedí Lahuerta and Aumayr-Pintar, 2024).

Telling women to negotiate harder

Women who ask for higher pay are penalised more than men who do the same (Bowles, Babcock and Lai, 2007). Clear pay rules work better (and more fairly) than individual bargaining.

Waiting

Women have already waited a lifetime. We can't wait another one.

APPENDIX

Key facts at a glance

Fact	Source
In 2025 the median woman in Ireland earned €41,765 a year and the median man €50,520, a gap of €8,755 (17.3%).	CSO, DEA06 (2025)
The annual earnings gap was 22.1% in 2011 and 17.3% in 2024. It has not narrowed since 2023.	CSO, DEA06 (2024)
Women aged 25–29 earn 5.6% less than men of the same age. Women aged 50–59 earn 23.1% less.	CSO, DEA06 (2024)
1,922 employers published gender pay gap figures for 2025, up from 712 in 2022.	PayGap.ie
The typical employer reports a mean hourly pay gap of about 10% in women's disfavour.	PayGap.ie (2025 median employer: 9.5%)
8 in 10 employers pay men more per hour on average than women.	PayGap.ie (2025: 81%)
Almost 1 in 4 employers report a pay gap of 20% or more.	PayGap.ie (2025: 23%)
Among employers reporting every year since 2022, the average gap fell from 12.0% to 10.1%.	PayGap.ie (615 employers)
Women hold 51% of the lowest-paid quarter of jobs but only 40% of the highest-paid quarter.	PayGap.ie (2025 average)
In 3 out of 4 employers, women are under-represented in the top-paid quarter of jobs.	PayGap.ie (2025: 74%)
Women and men are equally likely to get a bonus (64% vs 65%), but women's bonuses are 22% smaller on average.	PayGap.ie (2025)
One in three employers report a bonus gap of 40% or more.	PayGap.ie (2025: 34%)
Finance and construction have the largest pay gaps (about 20%). Public administration has the smallest (under 4%).	PayGap.ie (2025, sector averages)
About 1 in 5 employer reports in 2025 contained errors.	PayGap.ie (2025: 21%)
Only about 4 in 10 employer narratives commit to specific actions to close the gap.	PayGap.ie automated narrative analysis (2024)
In the UK, mandatory reporting narrowed the gap by 1.6 percentage points in affected firms.	Blundell (2021), LSE
Retired women's pension income was 35% lower than men's: €280 a week against €433.	Nolan et al. (2019), ESRI; TILDA data for 2010
Women would need to work about 8 years longer than men to build the same pension pot.	Irish Life (2025), members of its workplace schemes

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