

REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

9 October 2025

Gender Equality and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports 2025 Report of the Director of Human Resources and Cultural Change

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:

a) Note the 2025 gender equality and ethnicity pay gap reports.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to RECOMMEND COUNCIL to:

b) Note Oxfordshire County Council's (the Council) statutory Gender Pay Gap report of 2025 and approve it for onward submission to the Gender Pay Gap Service by 31 March 2026.

c) Note the Council's voluntary Ethnicity Pay Gap report of 2025.

Executive summary

1. The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 stipulate that all businesses, public sector and third sector organisations with over 250 employees must publicly report on average pay differences between their male and female employees.
2. Unlike the gender pay gap, the Council is not legally required to publish its ethnicity pay gap. However, positive steps have been taken to measure and be transparent about the Council's performance in this area.
3. The figures are taken at a date of 31 March each year, this year's figures are from 31 March 2025. The figures set out the mean and median pay gaps. The mean is the average pay gap. The median is the middle point of a range of numbers arranged in order. If there is an even number in the range, the median is the mean (average) of the 2 middle numbers.
4. As at 31 March 2025 the Council's mean gender pay gap was 1.89%. This represents a narrowing of the gap since 2024, when it was reported as 2.95%.
5. As at 31 March 2025 the Council's mean ethnicity pay gap was 2.11%. This also represents a narrowing from 2.59% in March 2024.

Context

6. The gender pay gap within the Council is reducing, however while publishing the data will not in itself remove the gap, continuing to do so is the first step towards that aim and the Council is committed to learning from best practice as part of the journey to become an employer, place shaper and partner of choice.
7. The gender pay gap data will be analysed on an annual basis, a comparison of figures will be completed year on year. The council will ensure that job grades continue to be determined through objective analysis and job evaluation to maintain the integrity of the pay and grading system.
8. In respect of the ethnicity pay gap, the Council is continuously applying learning to support development and promotion of a safe environment in which colleagues feel able to share their protected characteristics and help promote a culture of inclusivity.
9. With the Employment Rights Bill working its way through parliament, and the anticipated changes this legislation will bring in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion, it is highly likely that the Council will need to report more widely in some areas. As an example, disability pay gaps is one area likely to become law. The Council is in the process of establishing an Employment Rights Bill working group in preparation of these anticipated changes to determine the steps the Council are required to take and when. This will also provide a framework for our future focus as we move towards Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Gender pay gap

10. As at 31 March 2025 the Council's **mean** gender equality pay gap decreased to 1.89% (39p per hour), as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Oxfordshire County Council mean Gender Pay Gap performance 2022 – 2025

Year	Gender pay gap	Hourly rate (men earn more than women)
2022	2.3%	41 pence
2023	1.2%	22 pence
2024	2.95%	59 pence
2025	1.89%	39 pence

11. As at 31 March 2025 the **median** hourly rate of pay for men working at Oxfordshire County Council was the same as for women, at £18.71 per hour. This gives a median gender pay gap of 0% (0p per hour).
12. This is considerably lower than the national public sector median gender pay gap which currently sits at 13.1% (*Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics*).

13. In comparison to other authorities at the time of reporting data from 2024, the Council's mean gender pay gap was in the lower quartile of responses provided. The Council will continue to benchmark against other councils and compare initiatives that could potentially have an impact on further reducing the gender pay gap.

Table 2: Local Authority Comparison of Gender Pay Gap

Authority	Gender Pay Gap	Median
Buckinghamshire Council	3.9%	0.8%
Cherwell District Council	4.97%	0%
Hampshire County Council	12.8%	13.4%
Oxfordshire County Council	2.95%	0%
Warwickshire County Council	0.4%	2.5%

Ethnicity pay gap

14. The percentage difference in **mean** hourly rate between white employees and employees who identify as Black, Asian, or of minority ethnicity background is 2.11% (43p per hour). This represents a decrease from 2.59% in March 2024 (59p per hour).

Table 3: Oxfordshire County Council mean Ethnicity Pay Gap performance 2022 – 2025

Year	Ethnicity Pay Gap	Hourly difference
2022	0.50%	10p
2023	0.22%	4p
2024	2.59%	59p
2025	2.11%	43p

15. The percentage difference in median hourly rate between white employees and employees who identify as Black, Asian, or of minority ethnicity background is 0% (0p per hour) and has remained at this level for the previous two reporting periods. This is a positive indication of equality.

16. It is also notable that this percentage difference has decreased significantly since the first reporting period in March 2020 where the difference was -5.5% (-82p per hour).

Table 4: Oxfordshire County Council median Ethnicity Pay Gap performance 2023 – 2025

Year	Ethnicity Pay Gap	Hourly difference (white employees earn more than ethnic minority employees)
2023	-2.74%	-48p
2024	0%	N/A
2025	0%	N/A

Equality, diversity and inclusion

17. The Council's 'Including Everyone' Framework outlines the commitment to equalities, diversity and inclusion - across communities, service delivery and the workforce. The Council is working hard to ensure the working culture is inclusive and employee demographics reflect the diversity of the communities served, as well as ensuring that senior leaders and managers lead the way in making sure everyone feels confident to be themselves at work. The Council has partnered with Inclusive Employers, the UK's leading workplace inclusion community, to promote inclusion and best practice, as well as put in place a Reciprocal Mentoring scheme to pair senior leaders with aspiring leaders from underrepresented groups. In addition, a specific EDI HR Consultant is being recruited into the HR and Cultural Change team to embed good EDI practice into people initiatives in accordance with and underpinning the 'Our People and Culture Strategy'.
18. Flexible, agile working, and family friendly policies will also assist the Council to attract and retain employees in a competitive labour market and in a geographical area with low unemployment.
19. Alongside these initiatives, the Women's network and REACH network are two of the colleague inclusion networks, which provide colleagues with the opportunity to get to know others across the organisation and put forward ideas for improvement and to overcome any barriers they may find in progressing.

Financial implications

20. There are no financial implications arising from the report.

Comments checked by:

Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources (S151 Officer)

Lorna.Baxter@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

21. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits both direct and indirect sex discrimination at work and requires equal pay for equal work between the genders.
22. The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 ("the Regulations") imposes a duty on all employers with 250 or more employees to report on the gender pay gap annually. The reporting deadline for public sector employers is 30 March. The aim of the Regulations is to identify and reduce disparities in earnings between the genders.
23. As set out in this report, the Council is not required by legislation to report on any ethnicity pay gaps but the Council chooses to do so as part of its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, it's strategic priority to be an employer of choice and to aid transparency.

Comments checked by:

Jay Akbar - Head of Legal & Governance Services

Staff Implications

24. The Our People and Culture Strategy has been designed with the Council's strategic priority of being an employer of choice in mind which will contribute to closing the gender and ethnicity pay gaps.

Cherie Cuthbertson
Director of Human Resources and Cultural Change

Annex 1: Gender Equality pay gap report data 2025
Annex 2: Ethnicity pay gap report data 2025

Contact Officer: Ellie Harriss, HR Manager – Strategic Pay and Reward,
September 2025