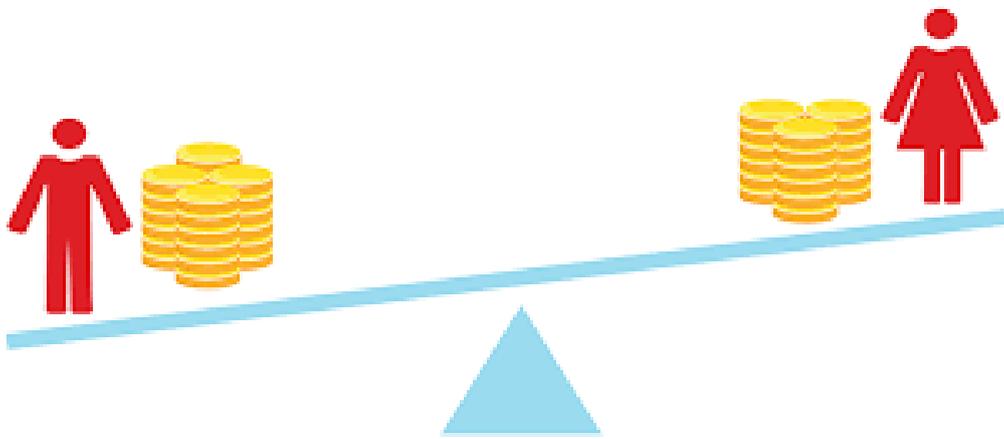


Swale Borough Council

Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2025



Introduction

As a public sector employer with over 250 employees, Swale Borough Council is required to publish data on our gender pay gap – the difference between the average hourly pay of all men and women we employ.

Although we are required to publish this data under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information), by publishing this report Swale Borough Council is reaffirming its commitment to being an inclusive employer. This report is only one way in which we are promoting equality of opportunity for everyone and will help us to identify new ways in which we can become a modern employer of the future.

The information within this report is based on a snapshot of pay on 31st March 2025. This information will only include employees who were employed by Swale Borough Council on this date and in receipt of their normal full pay; it will not include employees who were on reduced pay (such as those on maternity leave).

What is a gender and ethnicity pay gap?

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average earnings of men and women across the organisation. The gender pay gap is calculated as a difference in the mean and median hourly rates at the snapshot date and is expressed as a percentage of the average earnings of men.

The ethnicity pay gap shows the difference in average and median rates of pay between staff from minority ethnic backgrounds and white staff.

It is important to note that a gender pay gap is not the same as equal pay.

Equal Pay is about:



Pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. Men and women are paid equally for the same like work.

Gender Pay Gap is about



Differences in average hourly pay and bonuses between all men and women in a workforce, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings.

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The Gender Pay Gap regulations require employers to publish the following information:

Mean Gender Pay Gap

The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male and female employees.

Median Gender Pay Gap

The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male and female employees.

Mean Bonus Gender Pay Gap

The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male and female employees.

Median Bonus Gender Pay Gap

The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male and female employees.

The Proportion of Employees Receiving a Bonus

The proportion of male and female employees who were paid bonus pay.

The Quartile Pay Bands

The proportion of male and female employees in each of four pay bands. The pay bands are defined as follows (starting with the highest earners):

- Upper quartile
- Upper middle quartile
- Lower middle quartile
- Lower quartile

Swale Borough Council's Gender Pay Gap

Mean Hourly Pay



£22.53

£20.02

11.14% Pay Gap

Median Hourly Pay



£19.95

£17.62

11.68% Pay Gap

Proportion of Employees Receiving Bonus Pay



11.48%

19.47%

Summary of data

Swale Borough Council's pay structure follows a standard public sector approach to pay and grading and covers grades from Cleaner job roles to senior managerial levels. Grades vary according to the level of responsibility and each grade is evaluated through a job evaluation process in accordance with the council's Job Evaluation scheme. The council also has a clear policy of paying employees equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of their gender.

The overall mean gender pay gap at the council is 11.14% which means for all employees (both full time and part time), men earned on average 11.14% more than women hourly.

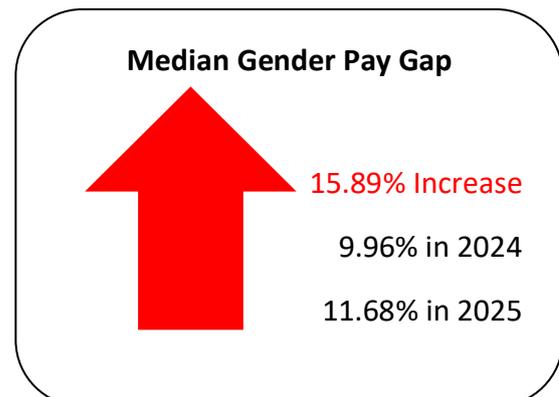
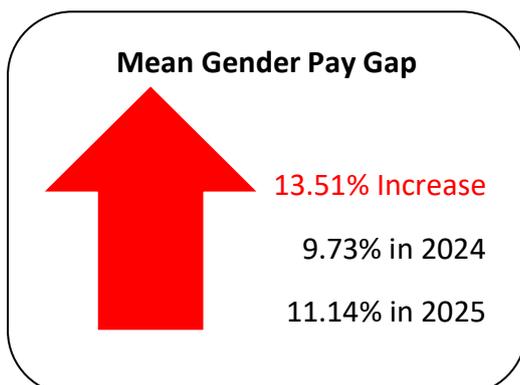
The makeup of the workforce of the council (which is 76% female) can affect the gender pay gap calculations, as can the distribution of the workforce. The majority of female employees within the council are within the lower and middle grades which will distort the overall pay gap, reflecting workforce composition rather than pay inequalities.

The median gender pay gap of 11.68% demonstrates that a higher proportion of men are working in higher level roles than women as the average median hourly rate for a male is £19.95 and for a female this is £17.62.

Bonus pay is defined as any payment or remuneration that is in the form of money or vouchers that relates to productivity, performance, incentive or commission. For the council, this covers cash awards for exceptional performance and long service awards in the form of vouchers.

The mean gender bonus gap is -199.69%. This significant disparity is primarily due to a higher proportion of female employees receiving the long service award.

How Does This Compare With 2024?



There has been an increase in both the mean and median gender pay gaps compared to the previous year.

Over the reporting period, 23 new female employees joined the organisation, compared to 13 male employees. Among the new starters, six individuals were appointed to roles within the upper pay quartile, three of whom were male. This distribution contributes to the widening of both the mean and median gender pay gaps.

In addition, a significant structural change occurred with the TUPE transfer of the Revenues and Benefits team, resulting in 32 employees being transferred out of Swale. This restructure has had an impact on the overall gender pay gap figures.

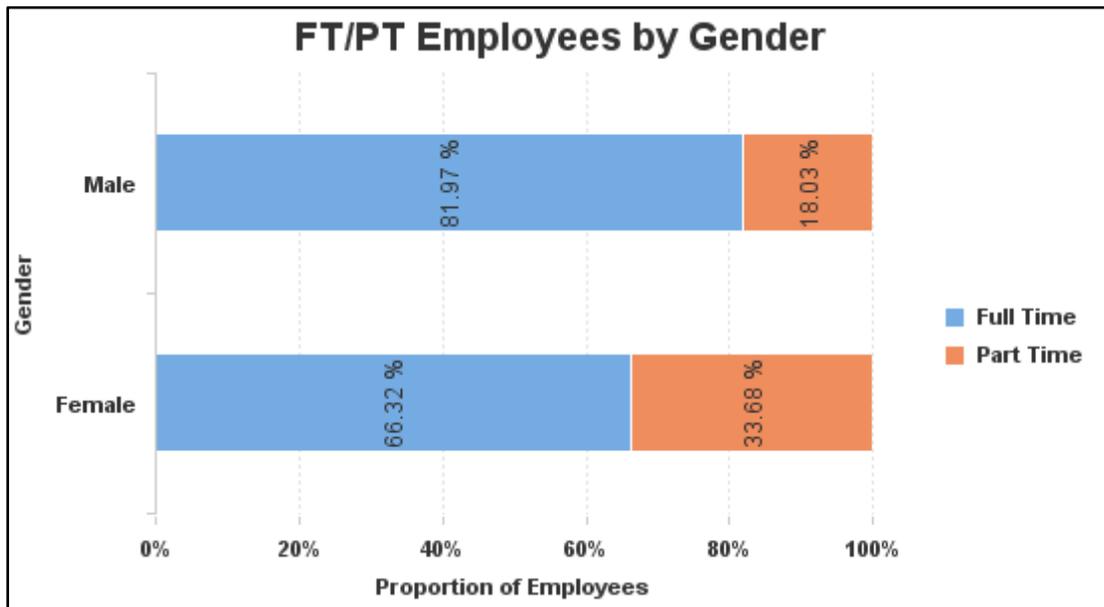
There has also been notable shifts in the gender composition across the pay quartiles. A key factor contributing to this change is the TUPE transfer of the Revenues and Benefits team, which involved the departure of a significant number of employees. This transfer has had an impact on the proportion of male and female staff within each pay band.

Pay Quartile	Proportion of Males	Proportion of Females	Male Proportion Increase
Upper Quartile	30.65%	69.35%	-8.04%
Upper Middle Quartile	34.92%	65.08%	9.33%
Lower Middle Quartile	15.87%	84.13%	-23.81%
Lower Quartile	15.87%	84.13%	-18.36%

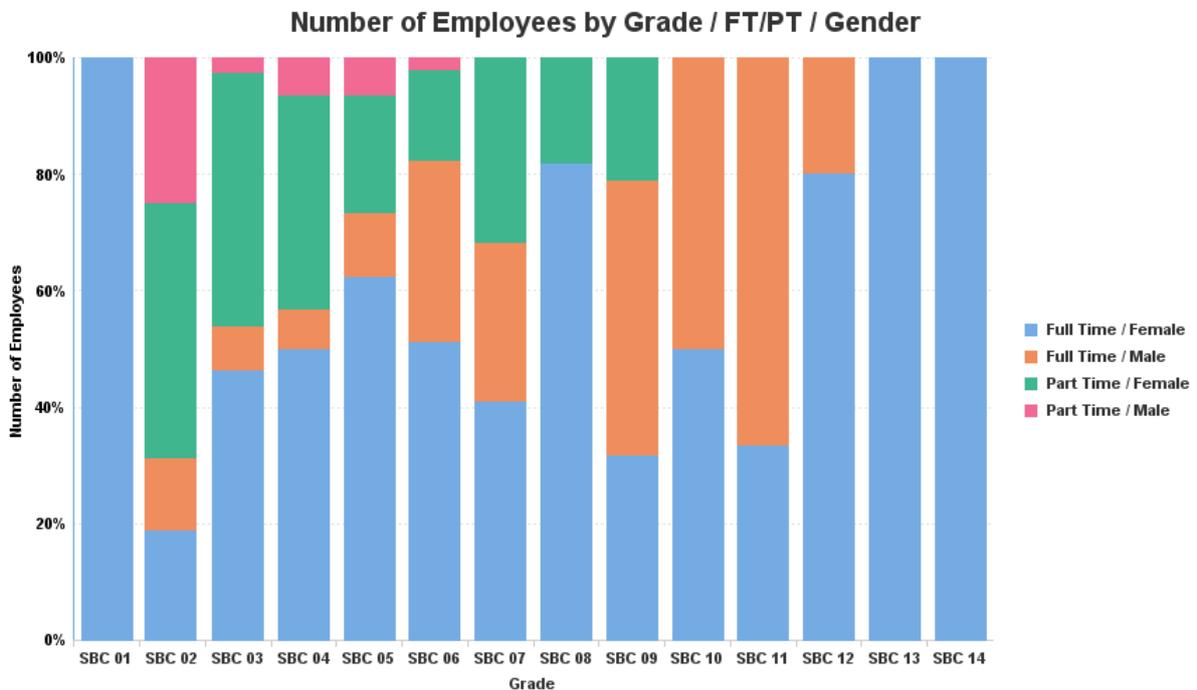
Like most areas of local government, the councils gender split is 76% female and 24% male overall. In order for there to be no gender pay gap, there would need to be an equal ratio of male to female in each quartile. However, the gender split is not evenly spread throughout all the grades within the council as can be seen from gender breakdown for each pay grade in the table. Although the Council employs more females than males, a higher percentage of females are employed within the lower and lower middle quartiles.

Swale Borough Council's Workforce

Swale Borough Council employees 190 female members of staff, and 61 male members of staff. In addition, a higher proportion of males employed are working in full time positions than the proportion of females.



Further analysis show that there are more female workers in the middle pay grades than male workers. The jobs at this level are mainly clerical, administrative and lower level of technical roles which seem to attract a higher number of female applicants.



Swale Borough Council also offer numerous family friendly policies and flexible working options such as job share, term time working and from the data it shows that female employees take up of these flexible benefits are at a greater level compared to males which adversely impacts on the council's gender pay gap.

The following table shows the gender pay gap for full time and part time workers:

Working Pattern	Number of Employees	Mean Hourly Pay Males	Mean Hourly Pay Females	Mean Gender Pay Gap
Full Time	176	£24.14	£21.42	11.27%
Part Time	75	£15.22	£17.27	-13.47%

The Gender Pay Gap For New Starters

Below is the gender pay gap for new starters between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.



Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, Swale Borough Council employed 13 males and 23 females into new roles. The mean and median hourly rate of pay was higher for new males compared to females. The main reason for the increase in the mean and median figures is due to 3 males being recruited to senior positions (grade 8 and above). Female staff were appointed to grades below this level.

The council has a very stable workforce with normally a low turnover which means that there are only a few vacancies that give an opportunity for changes in the makeup of the workforce. With such low levels of recruitment and turnover these figures will be difficult to shift significantly in the near future.

How Does This Compare With Similar Organisations?

When looking at other Councils within Kent, the average mean gender pay gap was 6.63%; the average median gender pay gap was 5.89%.

Swale Borough Council's gender pay gap is higher than these averages. A factor in this will be due to the low levels of staff turnover, which means that there are very few new members of staff joining the Council and having an impact on the gender pay gap.

Council	Mean Pay Gap	Median Pay Gap
Ashford Borough Council ¹	7.0%	8.9%
Canterbury City Council ¹	3.4%	0%
Dartford Borough Council ¹	16.1%	20.30%
Dover District Council ¹	5.2%	1.8%
Folkestone & Hythe District Council ¹	1.7%	0%
Gravesham Borough Council ¹	1.4%	-3.5%
Maidstone Borough Council ¹	3.0%	1.6%
Sevenoaks District Council ¹	17.9%	28.3%
Thanet District Council ¹	-3.5%	-15.1%
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ¹	11.2%	8.3%
Kent County Council ¹	9.7%	12.0%
Medway Council ¹	6.4%	8.1%
Kent Average – Local Government	6.63%	5.89%
Swale Borough Council	11.14%	11.68%

Footnotes

¹ gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk (2024/25 submission)

Ethnicity Pay Gap 2025

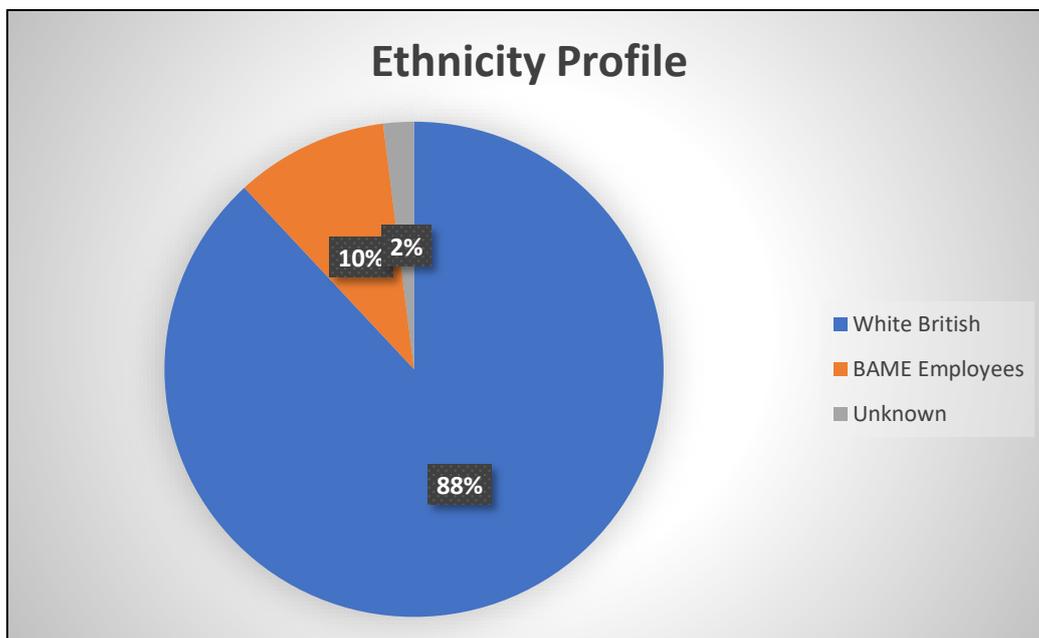
The ethnicity pay gap reflects the contrast in average hourly earnings between employees from minority ethnic backgrounds (i.e. non-Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)) and those categorised as 'White' within a workforce. This information is generally expressed as a percentage of average White employees' earnings.

Where there is a positive percentage, this means that the average pay of a White member of staff is higher than that of an employee from an ethnic minority group. The higher the percentage, the greater the ethnicity pay gap. A negative percentage mean means that the average pay of the ethnic minority group is higher than that of the White group.

Currently there is no statutory requirement to report on our ethnicity pay data and there is also no formal guidance on the methodology for calculation on the Ethnicity pay gap. Therefore, we continue to take the approach to mirror the legislated pay measures used for Gender Pay Gap reporting in order to calculate the ethnicity pay gap.

Ethnicity Profile

The chart below shows the ethnicity profile of our workforce. 88% of the workforce are White British, 10% are from BAME groups. Currently, the council has a small percentage of 2% employees that have not declared their ethnicity. Employees are encouraged to update their ethnicity in the HR system and this continues to be a priority in order to better report data for ethnic minority staff.

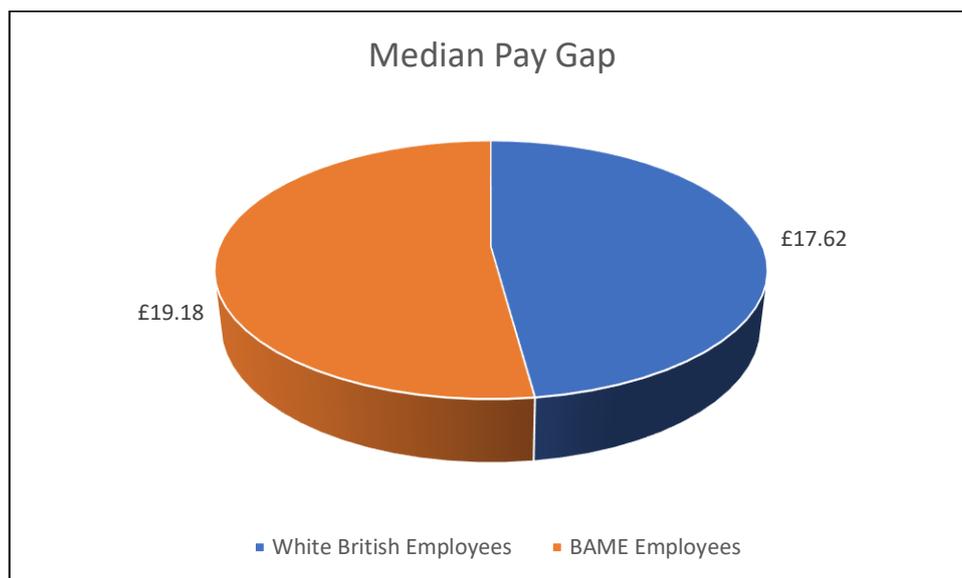


Ethnicity Pay Gap

The chart below illustrates the average (mean) hourly rate of pay of White British employees compared to all BAME employees.



The mean ethnicity pay gap is -3.22% which means the average pay for a person from a black, Asian, mixed race or other ethnic group is £0.66 per hour more than the average pay for a White person. This means that across the workforce BAME staff are paid on average slightly more than White British staff.

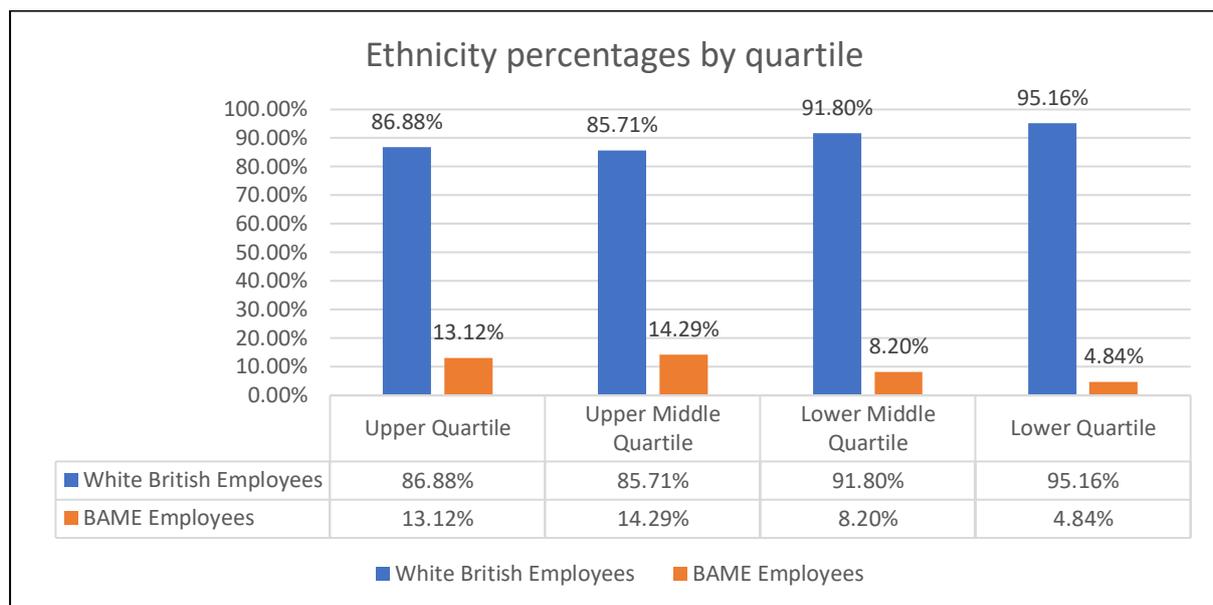


The median ethnicity pay gap is -8.13% which means that the median hourly rate of black, Asian, mixed race or other ethnic group is higher than the median hourly rate of our White colleagues.

Pay quartiles by ethnicity

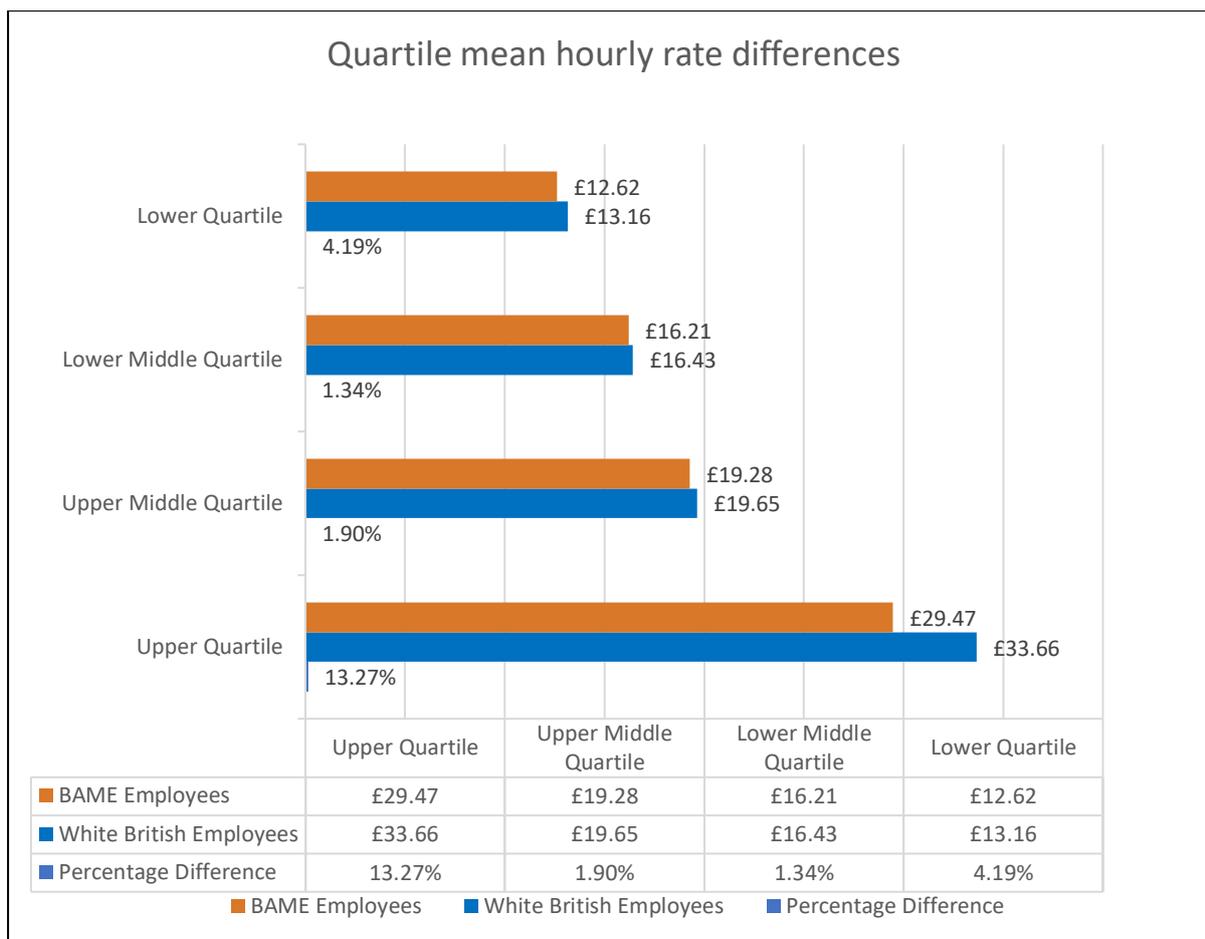
The chart below illustrates the percentage of White British and BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) employees across each pay quartile. This distribution helps explain why BAME employees have a higher mean and median hourly rate of pay.

BAME representation is notably higher in the upper quartiles, 13.12% in the Upper Quartile and 14.29% in the Upper Middle Quartile. Compared to just 8.20% in the Lower Middle Quartile and 4.84% in the Lower Quartile. This underrepresentation in the lower-paid bands means that, on average, BAME employees are more likely to occupy higher-paid roles, which elevates both their mean and median hourly pay figures.



The table below shows the hourly rate difference for each quartile. The data reveals a consistent pattern of lower average hourly pay for BAME employees compared to White British employees across all pay quartiles. While the differences in the Lower, Lower Middle, and Upper Middle Quartiles are relatively small ranging from 1.34% to 4.19%, the gap becomes more significant in the Upper Quartile, where BAME employees earn 13.27% less on average.

The larger gap in the Upper Quartile reflects the underrepresentation of BAME staff in senior roles.



Bonus Pay

There are currently no BAME employees in receipt of Bonus Pay. Bonus Pay is made up of vouchers given to staff for long service awards after 10 years of employment.

Summary

Swale Borough Council's current mean ethnicity pay gap is on average -3.22%, indicating that, on average, White British staff earn 3.22% less than employees from Black, Asian, Mixed Race, or other ethnic minority backgrounds.

The median ethnicity pay gap is -8.13%, meaning that the midpoint hourly rate for White British employees is 8.13% lower than that of BAME employees. This suggests that although the council has a small percentage of BAME employees, staff from other ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to be in higher-paid roles compared to their White British counterparts.

The table above shows that, within each pay quartile, White British employees generally have slightly higher hourly rates than BAME employees. However, the overall pay gap reflects higher average earnings among BAME staff due to their lower representation in the lower quartile roles, where pay is typically lowest. This distribution significantly influences the overall mean and median figures resulting in a positive pay gap for BAME employees overall.

What Steps Do Swale Borough Council Take To Minimise Any Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap?

Swale Borough Council remains committed to continuous improvement in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. Through ongoing monitoring, policy development, and targeted actions, the Council aims to ensure fair pay and equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender or ethnicity.

Swale Borough Council has a number of policies relating to pay that ensure transparency, fairness and equity. These include:

- Job evaluation scheme (Ibucon) for all roles. This is a significant part of ensuring gender-neutral in the assessment of roles as it takes no account of individuals and is purely based on the job role and its requirements;
- A well-designed pay scale with no overlapping grades and a restricted number of incremental points;
- Formal authorisation processes for the change in pay;
- A clear policy at appointment which should be at the first point of grade;
- An equal pay approved Market Supplement Policy;
- Enhanced Shared Parental Pay to mirror Maternity Pay;
- Quarterly workforce report monitored by senior management team. This report includes detailed data on staff turnover, recruitment activity, exit interviews, employee relations matters, and the equalities profile
- Exit interviews to gain feedback on employment experiences;
- The provision of Recruitment & Selection training to ensure interviewers have relevant knowledge and an understanding of Equalities and Diversity including unconscious bias;
- Annual workforce equality report that reports on all protected characteristics for employees;
- New management development programme for aspiring managers/ supervisors/ team leaders that provides training to support career development.

Actions

Swale Borough Council has a clear approach to pay and reward which is well controlled. One of the factors that can influence the gender pay gap is the distribution of males and females within the grades and under-representation of BAME staff. Therefore, the following actions are recommended:

- The recruitment processes to be monitored by the HR team to avoid any unfairness including the wording in advertisements to ensure there is no gender bias.
- To continue raising managers awareness of 'unconscious bias's as part of the recruitment and selection training.
- Review the recruitment process to ensure this is completely unbiased when considering candidates to positions.
- To monitor and review take up of training and development opportunities for staff from ethnic minority backgrounds
- Encourage managers to consider job redesign if there are aspects of a job that prevents or stops employees applying for them on a part-time or flexible basis.
- Provide training to staff on equality, diversity and inclusiveness to increase awareness and understanding of these issues within the workplace
- To encourage and remind employees to update their ethnicity and other equality data in the HR system.