



**Ambition
Institute**

Gender pay gap report 2025

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Equality, diversity, and inclusion are central to Ambition Institute's mission. Our work equips teachers and school leaders to keep improving, ensuring every child can thrive, regardless of their background. Just as we rely on evidence, data, and research to guide our support for educators, we use the same approach to cultivate a genuinely inclusive and diverse workplace for all colleagues.

Ambition Institute is, and continues to be, a great place for women to work and lead. Women are strongly represented at the most senior levels of the organisation, making up 75% of our Executive Committee (up from 66.7% at the time of reporting) and 83% of our directors (up from 80%). We are also committed to creating an environment where colleagues can succeed alongside their commitments outside of work. As a family-friendly employer, we actively support flexible and hybrid working, with around a third of colleagues working non-standard patterns. This reflects our belief that impact and flexibility go hand in hand – enabling our people to contribute fully while balancing the realities of life beyond work.

I am pleased to share our 2025 gender pay gap report, our third year of reporting. We continue to compare favourably to the national picture, with a median gender pay gap of 7.6%, which is down from 10.2% last year. This reflects positive movement in how our workforce is structured and how opportunity is distributed across the organisation.

Our report highlights a clear next step: strengthening gender balance at middle leadership so it aligns more closely with the wider organisation, where around 70% of colleagues are women. This is part of our commitment to keep getting better, aligning representation and progression at every level. We will build on what is already working, including blind shortlisting, inclusive recruitment, and transparent pay practices, while setting clear, evidence-informed goals to support fair and consistent progression.

This work sits within a broader commitment: to ensure Ambition Institute is a place where everyone can thrive and contribute fully. We will continue to take a deliberate, evidence-led approach – building on what works, being transparent about where we can improve, and holding ourselves accountable for sustained progress. You can [read more about Diversity and Inclusion at Ambition Institute on our website](#).



Hilary Spencer, Chief Executive Officer

Gender pay gap reporting

All UK organisations with 250 or more employees are required to publish annual data on gender pay and bonus gaps. At Ambition Institute, we see this as more than a statutory requirement. It is an important part of how we ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability across our organisation.

The gender pay gap measures the difference in average hourly pay between women and men, expressed as a percentage of male earnings. It is shaped primarily by how colleagues are distributed across roles, functions, and levels of seniority.

This means a gap can exist even in organisations like ours, where women are strongly represented in senior leadership. Where women are more concentrated in lower-paid or more junior roles, this will be reflected in the overall pay gap. In this context, the gap is a measure of workforce composition rather than pay differences for the same work.

It is important to distinguish this from equal pay. We are committed to, and compliant with, equal pay requirements under the Equality Act, ensuring that men and women are paid equally for equal or equivalent work. The gender pay gap does not indicate unequal pay but instead highlights where we need to continue to strengthen representation and progression across the organisation.

Our reporting is based on a 5 April snapshot each year. Now in our third year of reporting, we have a clear commitment to transparency, to accountability, and to keep getting better over time.

Gender identity

Current legislation requires reporting on binary sexes, which does not fully capture the experiences of colleagues with non-binary or other gender identities. While this report focuses on differences between male and female employees, we are committed to going beyond these requirements. We actively support trans inclusion, recognition of non-binary genders, and the right of all colleagues to self-define their gender without unnecessary medicalisation.

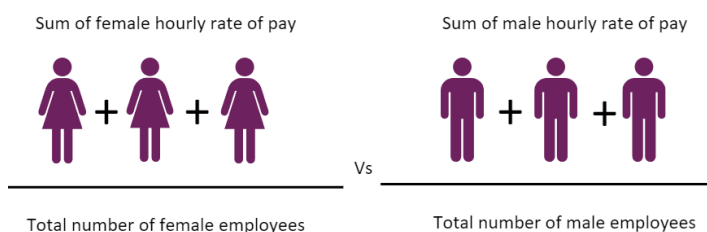
All pay data is recorded and analysed regardless of gender identity, and any pay concerns are addressed proactively to ensure equity across our workforce.

Calculating the gap

We follow Government Equalities Office guidance in calculating and reporting our gender pay gap.

Mean pay gap

The mean (average) pay gap compares the average hourly rate of pay for women and men. To calculate this, we add together the hourly pay of all female employees and divide by the number of women in our workforce. We repeat the calculation for men, then compare the two averages to determine the difference.



Median pay gap

The median pay gap compares the middle point in the range of hourly earnings for women and men. Imagine lining up all female employees from lowest to highest pay and doing the same for male employees. The pay of the person in the middle of each line represents the median. The difference between these two midpoints is the median pay gap.



Quartile distribution

To understand how men and women are distributed across the organisation, we divide the workforce into four equal-sized groups, or quartiles, based on hourly pay. By comparing the proportion of men and women in each quartile, we can identify patterns in representation across lower-, mid-, and higher-paid roles.

Who is included?

Gender pay gap calculations only include 'full-pay relevant employees' – those receiving their normal pay on the snapshot date (5 April). Employees on reduced pay due to maternity leave, sick leave, or other unpaid/reduced-pay leave are excluded, as including them would distort the results.

For 2025, our calculations are based on 302 full-pay relevant employees, with 31 colleagues excluded due to receiving reduced pay on the snapshot date.

Our gender pay gap (5 April 2025)

The tables below set out our median and mean gender pay and bonus gaps, based on hourly pay at the snapshot date of 5 April 2025.

Gap	Median	Mean
Gender pay gap	7.6%	5.1%
Gender bonus gap	N/A	N/A

Quartile	Female	Male
Upper	59%	41%
Upper middle	71%	29%
Lower middle	73%	27%
Lower	68%	32%

Our median gender pay gap has reduced to 7.6%, down from 10.2% in 2024. The median compares the pay of the 'typical' woman and man, and this decrease indicates that pay at the midpoint has become more balanced.

This improvement is driven in part by a shift in our lowest pay quartile. Women now make up 68% of this group, compared with 73% last year, with a corresponding increase in male representation. This more even distribution has reduced the concentration of women in the lowest-paid roles and contributed to narrowing the median gap.

Our mean gender pay gap is 5.1%, a slight increase from 4.8% in 2024. The mean reflects average pay and is more sensitive to changes at the upper and lower ends of the organisation. In this case, the increase is driven by a reduction of three women in the upper pay quartile at the snapshot date. Women now make up 59% of this group (75 employees across grades C–E), compared with around 70% in each of the lower and middle quartiles. In a relatively small population, changes in a small number of senior roles – whether through vacancies, maternity or parental leave, or role changes – can have a noticeable impact on the overall average.

Both measures point to the same underlying driver: how men and women are distributed across pay levels. While pay is equal for equivalent roles, women are underrepresented in the higher-paying positions relative to their overall share of the workforce. Although representation is strong at senior levels, where 80% of our Executive Committee and 79% of our directors are female, this imbalance is most evident at the *Head of* layer and within operational functions such as Technology and Finance, where senior roles have higher male representation.

Our focus is therefore clear. We will continue to strengthen gender balance across pay quartiles, particularly at more senior levels, so that representation more closely reflects the wider organisation. This is how we will continue to make sustained progress over time.

Addressing our pay gaps

We take a deliberate, evidence-led approach to understanding and addressing our pay gaps across gender, ethnicity, and disability. These are monitored internally on an ongoing basis, allowing us to track progress, challenge ourselves, and focus our efforts where they will have the greatest impact.

Building on strong foundations, we are committed to keep getting better – ensuring fairness, consistency, and opportunity across our organisation. Over the coming year, we will focus on three priorities:

Improving workforce diversity data

High quality data underpins effective action. Many colleagues already share their diversity information, and we are building on this by improving completeness and consistency across the organisation.

We have introduced a refreshed equality, diversity, and inclusion form, supported by a targeted campaign to increase completion rates. For new starters, this is now embedded within the probation process, helping us establish a strong baseline from the outset.

Improving the quality and completeness of our data will enable more precise insight, better decision-making, and more targeted interventions to support continued progress.

Embedding fair and transparent pay practices

Clear and consistent pay practices are central to maintaining fairness and reducing pay gaps over time. This year, we will introduce a new pay policy that strengthens the principles, governance, and transparency underpinning all reward decisions.

We remain committed to being an accredited Living Wage Foundation Real Living Wage employer, ensuring a strong and fair minimum pay baseline across the organisation. This supports equity across our workforce and helps address structural inequalities that can emerge at lower pay levels.

Our approach will be applied consistently, with strong oversight and minimal exceptions. By increasing transparency and clarity, we aim to support equitable progression, reduce unwarranted variation, and build confidence in how pay decisions are made.

Strengthening inclusive recruitment and setting representation goals

We will continue to build a workforce that reflects the communities we serve, with a particular focus on progression into senior roles. Our inclusive recruitment practices are well established, including blind shortlisting, diverse panels, and structured selection processes.

We will build on this by widening outreach, investing in hiring manager capability, and ensuring consistency in how these approaches are applied. For senior roles, we will take a deliberate and evidence-informed approach to building diverse candidate pools, aiming for strong representation at shortlist stage while recognising the realities of the external market.

Closing statement

This report reflects our ongoing commitment to building a fair, inclusive, and high performing organisation. The positive shifts in our gender balance and pay measures demonstrate the progress we can achieve through evidence-led, deliberate action.

Looking ahead, we will continue to enhance our workforce data, embed transparent pay practices, and strengthen inclusive recruitment and career progression. These actions will ensure all colleagues have equitable access to opportunities and support continued growth across all levels of the organisation.

We recognise that sustained progress requires time, particularly in building balanced representation at management and leadership levels. By maintaining momentum, reviewing our progress regularly, and remaining transparent about where further work is needed, we can continue to create an environment where everyone thrives.

Through annual reporting and visible accountability, we remain committed to ensuring Ambition Institute reflects the diversity of the communities we serve while providing an equitable and empowering workplace for all colleagues.