




# Gender Pay Gap 2025/26





This Gender Pay Gap Report for the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) presents a comprehensive account of the organisation's gender pay gap as of 31 March 2025. It includes a comparative analysis to the prior year and the actions we plan to take to further close the gap. It has been prepared in compliance with statutory obligations, and in line with SYMCA's continued commitment to prioritise equality transparency and fairness for our employees.

SYMCA is developing an Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) strategy which will be guided by our commitments above, as well as by the core principles that ensure our actions are aligned with the needs of South Yorkshire communities. These principles can be found in our Corporate Plan 2025-2028.



# Our Organisation and Context

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## Our Commitments to Equal Pay

SYMCA is committed to ensuring equal pay for our employees, regardless of gender or any other protected characteristic. We are committed to equal employment opportunities, fair and unbiased pay, and a transparent reward system based on objective criteria.

- We are a **Living Wage Employer** and guarantee that all employees receive at least the real Living Wage, reflecting our dedication to supporting the financial wellbeing of our employees and ensuring they are rewarded fairly.
- By discharging our legal obligations, we ensure that we operate **Equal Pay for Equal Work** in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Occupational segregation, the unequal distribution of workers across jobs or industries based on characteristics such as gender, can often lead to disparities in income and career opportunities. By conducting our annual **Gender Pay Gap** report, we can identify and address these issues.



# Defining and Understanding the Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap represents the percentage difference in average hourly earnings between male and female employees. It gives a snapshot of the gender balance by measuring the difference between the average earnings of all male and female employees, irrespective of their role or seniority. The gender pay gap is influenced by the structure of the workforce, occupational segregation, career progression, and the prevalence of part-time or flexible working arrangements. The gender pay gap is not the same as equal pay, which deals with paying men and women equally for performing the same (or similar) work. Equal pay has been a requirement in law since 1970.

In terms of the Gender Pay Gap, SYMCA has a duty to publish annually the following information relating to pay:

- Requirement 1: The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of relevant male and female employees.
- Requirement 2: The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of relevant male and female employees.
- Requirement 3: The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to relevant male and female employees.
- Requirement 4: The difference between the median bonus pay paid to relevant male and female employees.
- Requirement 5: The proportions of relevant male and female employees who were paid bonus pay.
- Requirement 6: The proportions of relevant male and female employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands.

Mean is the average hourly rate of pay, calculated by adding the hourly pay rate for relevant paid employees then dividing by the number of relevant paid employees. Median is the middle hourly pay rate when relevant pay rates are arranged in order from lowest to highest.

# Summary

Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen our commitment to reducing the gender pay gap and creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace for all colleagues. These actions are designed not only to create an inclusive workplace but also to address the structural factors that influence pay disparities.

Although notable strides were made in narrowing the gender pay gap since 2023, there has been a slight rise in the gap this year, with the causes explained below. Nevertheless, the increase remains well below the national average. We are committed to resolving these structural problems and believe that our planned measures will effectively tackle them.

We have put in place the following over the last year:

- SYMCA is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct by continuously updating and expanding our people policies. In conjunction with our Recognised Trade Union, we have introduced new policies such as Family Friendly Leave, Preventing Sexual Harassment and Flexible Working policies. These policies enable greater flexibility and support for all employees, including helping women balance work and caring responsibilities without limiting career progression. These policies support women to remain in post through a more inclusive culture and to continue to advance through the organisation irrespective of caring responsibilities.
- All employees undertake EDI training, including a separate module on Preventing Sexual Harassment, refreshed annually. This training helps to foster an inclusive culture and ensures managers and staff understand their responsibilities, creating an environment where women can thrive and progress into higher-paid roles.
- To address occupational segregation, SYMCA has advertised transport specific roles through Women in Transport to actively encourage female candidates to apply. Increasing female representation in technical and operational roles helps balance gender distribution across pay quartiles and reduces the gap over time.

- SYMCA provides confidential access to an Employee Assistance Programme, trained Mental Health First Aiders and occupational health services. These initiatives support wellbeing and workplace adjustments, ensuring women can remain in employment and progress without barriers linked to health or caring responsibilities.
- Launched in 2024, SYMCA's Women's Network champions gender equality through mentoring, policy development, and awareness events. In 2025, the Network introduced the Menopause Café, creating a safe space for employees to discuss how menopause symptoms impact work. These initiatives help retain women in the workforce and support progression into senior roles.
- SYMCA promotes cultural events and awareness campaigns throughout the year, reinforcing our commitment to inclusion and ensuring all employees feel valued. This positive culture supports retention and progression, which are critical to reducing the gender pay gap.
- SYMCA is addressing structural pay gaps that continue to exist as a result of TUPE transfers of staff by continuing work to modernise and align our pay and grading framework. This long term programme will support reductions in the gender pay gap by addressing several of the structural factors identified in this report.

# Our Gender Pay Gap Data

SYMCA's Gender Pay Gap data is based on hourly rates of pay as of 31 March 2025.

	March 2025	March 2024	March 2023
Mean Gender Pay Gap	4.21%	4.15%	10.75%
Median Gender Pay Gap	4.44%	4.58%	12.65%


The below table shows the proportion of males and females in four quarter pay bands. The calculation is undertaken by dividing the workforce into four equal parts. Firstly, all relevant employees are ranked from the lowest hourly rate to the highest hourly rate of pay. The list is divided into four sections called quartiles with an equal number of employees in each section.

Quartile	Female (%)	Male (%)	Other (%)
Lower Quartile	60%	40%	0%
Lower Middle Quartile	59%	41%	0%
Upper Middle Quartile	47%	52%	1%
Upper Quartile	51%	49%	0%

## Analysis of the 2025 Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap analysis for the most recent reporting period reveals a modest but persistent difference in pay between male and female employees. On our snapshot date of 31 March 2025, SYMCA had a headcount of 375 employees. 202 employees identified as women, 172 employees identified as men and 1 employee identified as non-binary. This demographic profile provides the basis for the statutory calculations and informs our understanding of workforce composition.

Analysis of pay quartiles reveals that women are well represented in the lower quartile, making up 60% of employees, compared to 40% men. This indicates that a significant proportion of female employees occupy roles at the lower end of our pay framework, which is a key driver of the overall gender pay gap. In the middle and



upper quartiles, the gender split is much more balanced, with men and women each representing approximately half of employees. This balance at higher pay levels is a positive indicator of gender equality in progression and promotion, suggesting that once women enter mid-level roles, they have equitable access to senior positions.

However, the concentration of women in the lower quartile remains a structural challenge. It reflects patterns in recruitment and role types, particularly the prevalence of administrative and support positions, which are often lower paid and more likely to be part-time or have flexible arrangements and is disproportionately taken up by women. Addressing this imbalance is critical to reducing the overall pay gap.

The latest national figures from the Office for National Statistics show that the UK median gender pay gap for full-time employees in April 2025 was 6.9%, with men earning a median hourly rate of £20.27 and women £18.87. This means SYMCA's gender pay gap is below the national average.

But we recognise that any gap is important and requires ongoing attention. Our commitment is to ensure that structural factors such as entry-level recruitment patterns, part-time working, and career progression are actively managed to prevent the pay gap from persisting or widening and reducing the overall gap. Our gender pay gap has seen a small increase this year. This change is the result of several underlying factors visible in our workforce data:

### **1. Changes in Workforce Structures**

There has been an increase in the proportion of women in lower-paid roles, particularly in the lower quartile, where women now make up 60% of employees. This shift means that a greater share of women are in roles with lower hourly rates, which has a direct impact on the overall pay gap.

It is important to situate these findings within a broader organisational context. SYMCA had undergone structural changes through TUPE transfers and at this snapshot date, the presence of multiple pay frameworks amongst our workforce influences our data and has directly increased the number of women within the lower quartile. We are working through these issues at the moment as described above.

### **2. Recruitment Patterns**

Recent recruitment activity has had a notable influence on the gender pay gap. Over the past 12 months, SYMCA has recruited 107 new employees, comprising 61 women and 46 men. A significant proportion of these new starters joined at entry-level positions,

which is reflected in the pay quartile analysis. At the same time, the proportion of men in the upper quartiles has remained steady. This means that the average pay for men has not decreased at the same rate as the overall workforce average, contributing to the persistence of the gender pay gap.

These recruitment patterns highlight the importance of focusing on career progression and development opportunities for women entering at lower grades. Career progression initiatives have been embedded into our action plans to ensure mobility across the organisation.

### **3. Part Time and Flexible Working**

In SMYCA, there are significantly more women than men working in part-time or flexible roles. This trend, whilst playing a vital role in supporting work-life balance and those with caring responsibilities who have returned to work after a period of parental or other leave. This structural pattern can inadvertently contribute to a widening pay gap if not matched by similar patterns among male staff.

65.63% of employees working part time have identified as women which indicates that most roles with reduced hours are occupied by female employees. Equal pay for equal work is firmly in place, the composition effect (more women entering and remaining in lower-paid grades) pulls down women's average and median pay relative to men. When combined with recent recruitment and structural changes that placed more women into entry-level posts, the aggregate impact is a persistent gap driven by structural distribution, not discriminatory pay practices.

### **4. Specialist Resources**

A small number of colleagues within the dataset are engaged on spot salaries that sit outside of the SYMCA pay framework. These individuals provide specialist, time limited expertise to support the delivery of key projects and are therefore remunerated at market aligned rates. While their inclusion in the dataset increases the mean gender pay gap due to the comparatively higher salaries attached to these specialist roles it is important to note that these posts are not representative of the wider SYMCA pay structure. This approach ultimately delivers value for money, as contracting these individuals through payroll is more cost effective than procuring equivalent external consultancy support.

## **Bonus Pay Gap**

The bonus gap is the difference between the bonus pay or one-off lump-sum payments (such as recognition awards) paid to male employees and those paid to female employees. Only relevant employees who received a bonus are included in the calculation.

SYMCA does not operate a Bonus Scheme for employees, however, we do operate a Long Service Award scheme and in March 2025, we paid a one off non-consolidated payment as part of our annual pay award negotiations for employees who are in the lower and middle quartiles. For the purposes of gender pay gap reporting, these payments fall into the definition of a bonus.

	Received a Bonus Payment (%)
Male	94.89%
Female	95.63%
Other	100%

The mean bonus pay gap is 1.90% and the median bonus pay gap is 5.21%.

The relatively low mean bonus pay gap suggests that the schemes are broadly equitable, with only a small difference in the average bonus received by male and female employees. The median bonus pay gap, which is slightly higher, reflects the impact of differences in eligibility for our Long Service Award scheme.

These findings indicate that SYMCA's bonus schemes are applied fairly and consistently, supporting the organisation's commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging. Continued monitoring will ensure that any emerging trends or anomalies are identified and addressed promptly.



# Our Gender Pay Gap Action Plan

Over the past year, SYMCA has made significant strides in advancing opportunities for women across the organisation. Women now make up 53.87% of the workforce, a proportion that exceeds the regional average and demonstrates SYMCA's commitment to gender diversity. Notably, women represent most part-time staff at 65.52%, reflecting SYMCA's support for flexible working arrangements that enable colleagues to balance their careers with other responsibilities.

Our Gender Pay Gap Action Plan is underpinned by a commitment to transparency, data-driven decision making, and continuous improvement. For example, actions to review and update recruitment and selection policies, and improve the collection and analysis of workforce data.

By embedding EDIB considerations into all aspects of our people policies and practices, we can address the root causes of pay gaps and drive sustainable change. Our action plans both emphasise the importance of leadership accountability, robust Equality Impact Assessments, and targeted development opportunities for underrepresented groups. Initiatives such as the roll out of a new Leadership Framework, enhanced flexible working policies, and proactive wellbeing support are designed to benefit all colleagues, while also supporting the specific aim of reducing gender-based disparities.

While the action plan focuses on targeted improvements across recruitment, progression, data capability and inclusive practice, SYMCA recognises that long-term progress also depends on addressing the underlying structural drivers of the gender pay gap. The alignment/ review of our pay and grading structures provides this foundation which will provide an improved foundation for reducing structural drivers of the gender pay gap in future years. This will reinforce the effectiveness of the action plan by ensuring that future policies and decisions operate within a consistent and equitable employment framework.

Looking ahead, we will introduce further pay analysis and begin embedding pay and reward within our EDIB ambitions. Through this approach, we are confident that we will make meaningful progress towards our objectives and continue to foster a culture where everyone can thrive.

Action Area	Future Actions	Date of Expected Completion
Recruitment & Progression	1. SYMCA will review our Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure to ensure that it emphasises diversity to help attract a broad range of candidates and support a Gender Pay Gap reduction.	March 2026
	2. SYMCA will review the way job advertisements are formulated to ensure that they promote flexible working opportunities.	Throughout 2026
	3. SYMCA will review our recruitment and attraction pathways by ensuring we place new roles on diverse job boards.	Throughout 2026
	4. SYMCA will expand career development initiatives such as mentoring, coaching and targeted training to support progression routes.	Throughout 2026
Pay & Reward	1. SYMCA is currently reviewing its pay and grading structure. This review will include a robust Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that there is parity of pay and is closing our Gender Pay Gap. This will also lead to the development of career pathways. This is critical for addressing the structural drivers of our Gender Pay Gap.	June 2026
	2. SYMCA will ensure pay and grading policies are transparent and regularly reviewed for bias.	June 2026
	3. SYMCA will ensure that all Role Profiles will be Gender Decoded to remove any language that that reflects societal stereotypes about gender roles.	June 2026

Leadership & Development

1. SYMCA will roll out a Leadership Framework to set expectations for leaders, including leading inclusivity agendas in their teams.
2. SYMCA will roll out a bespoke leadership and management development programme for all those who manage people. This programme will include EDIB and the responsibility of managers to drive inclusivity.

Launched by April 2026

April 2026

Data, Monitoring & Transparency

1. SYMCA will launch an internal campaign to encourage our workforce to update their EDIB data within our HRIS.
2. SYMCA will increase capabilities in reporting our recruitment data so this can be analysed as part of our recruitment strategies and support deeper analysis into our Gender Pay Gap.
3. SYMCA will begin to report on our Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gaps.

Throughout 2026

Throughout 2026

By March 2027



# Key Success Measures

SYMCA's success in reducing the gender pay gap will be measured through the below indicators. This ensures that progress on pay equity contributes to broader organisational objectives and is monitored.

- SYMCA will see a reduction in mean and median Gender Pay Gap year-on-year.
- SYMCA will see an increased representation of women at senior levels.
- Achieve a 90% completion rate for voluntary disclosures of EDIB characteristics to enable robust analysis and intersectional reporting.
- Achieve a 100% completion of EDI and Preventing Sexual Harassment mandatory training across all colleagues.

# Review and Monitoring

SYMCA will regularly review its Gender Pay Gap Action Plan to ensure it remains effective, evidence-based and closely aligned with our priorities. The Action Plan will be reviewed at least annually.



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