GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2026

comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

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Statement from the Chief Executive



*As Chief Executive of Meath County Council, I am proud to be introducing our Gender Pay Gap Report for **2026**. This is the **fifth year** that we have published this report.*

Local Government is at the forefront of delivering services to our citziens and we recognise the importance of the data in this report, not only to the workplace but to wider society.

In our Strategic Workforce Plan, we committed to having the right policies and procedures in place to facilitate organisational change, to support better understanding of the needs of an increasingly diverse society and to ensure that our workplace adequately reflects key principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

This Gender Pay Gap Report is a key part of this commitment.

People are at the core of our organisation. As we strive to embed a **Culture of Excellence** in everything they do, we will examine what the data in this report is telling us, continue to monitor trends over time and implement initiatives that help reduce our Gender Pay Gap. Some of these initiatives are outlined in this report and we will also work with our colleagues in the local government sector to share and implement best practice.

Kieran Kehoe
Chief Executive

Meath County Council - About Us

Local Government in Ireland

There are 31 local authorities and 3 regional assemblies in Ireland. Local authorities are the closest and most accessible form of government to citizens. They have responsibility for the delivery of a wide range of services in their local area, with a focus on making cities, towns, villages and the countryside attractive places in which to live, work and invest. Local authority services make a significant contribution to the physical, cultural, social and environmental development of communities and include housing, planning, infrastructure, environmental protection and the provision of amenities and recreation and community infrastructure.

Local authorities play a key role in promoting social inclusion and quality of life and supporting economic development and enterprise at a local level. Local authorities take the lead role in shaping the strategic vision of the county or city. They also work in partnership with other state, public and private bodies in the delivery of critical infrastructure and shared services. Local authorities deliver hundreds of services and implement policy across a range of areas including:

Arts and Culture	Housing	Roads and Transport
Climate Action	Integration	Tourism
Community Services	Libraries	
Economic Development	Parks and Open Spaces	
Environment	Planning and Development	

Local authority employees come from a wide range of backgrounds with diverse skill sets, qualifications and experience. Roles in the sector include:

Accountants	Engineers	Planners
Administrators	Fire Fighters	Quantity Surveyors
Apprenticeships	General Service and Tradespeople	Scientists
Archaeologists	Graduates	Senior Management roles
Architects	Health and Safety	Technicians
Archivists	Information technology	
Conservation Officers	Library services	

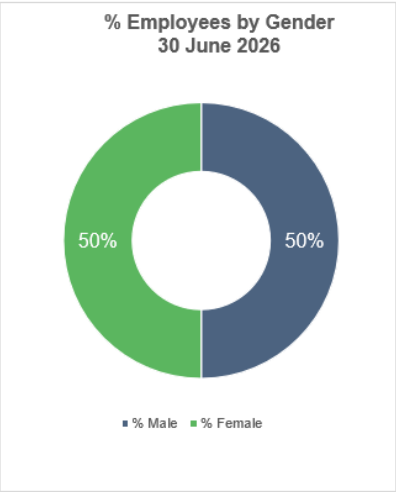
Working for Meath County Council gives our employees the opportunity to gain experience at the heart of local government and to make a real difference for the county. Everything we do in Meath County Council is geared towards 'Making Meath Even Better' and our employees play a vital role in that ambition.

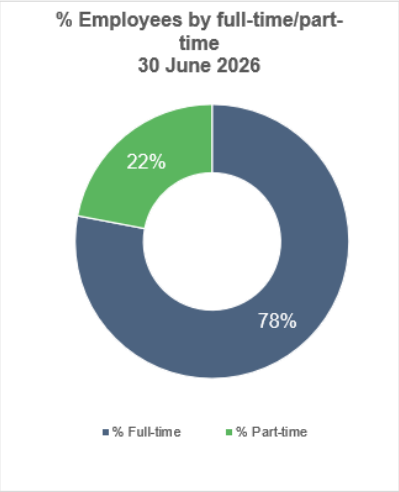
Meath County Council

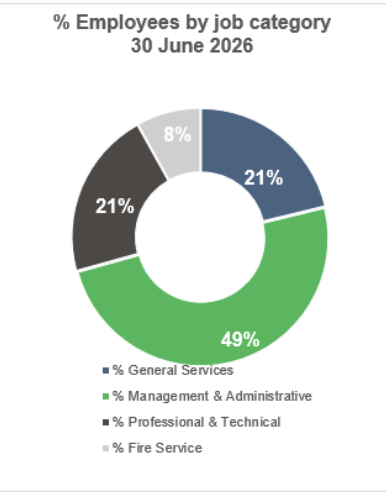
Meath is situated along the east coast of Ireland and occupies a land area of over 230,000 hectares. It adjoins Dublin to the south and this proximity and its strong functional ties results in Meath being a vital component of the Greater Dublin Area.

Meath County Council provides a diverse, multi-layered and evolving range of services to both citizens and visitors to the county which includes the provision of housing, planning, economic development, environmental, roads and active travel, leisure and community services. The organisation's vision to 'Make Meath Even Better' seeks to enhance the county's attraction as a place in which to invest, work, and live, and takes the lead role in shaping the strategic vision of the county.

At 30 June, 2026, Meath County Council employs a workforce of 1,059 employees. Our employees are our most valuable asset and we remain committed to their wellbeing, health and safety. We promote learning and development to improve our skills-base, to support job satisfaction and the delivery of essential public services.







Gender Pay Gap Reporting

Gender Pay Gap Reporting 2026

The Gender Pay Gap Information Act, 2021 requires organisations with over 50 employees to report on their Gender Pay Gap. 2026 is the fifth year that organisations will have to report on their Gender Pay Gap. Organisations are asked to select a 'snapshot' date in the month of June. The reporting period is the 12-month period immediately preceding and including the snapshot date. For local authorities, the snapshot date is 30 June 2026. The information must be published on the employer's website or in some other way that is accessible to all its employees and to the public. From 2026, organisations are also required to publish their figures on the government Gender Pay Gap Portal www.genderpaygapireland.gov.ie

Who is Included?

All persons employed by the employer on the snapshot date, including employees not rostered to work on that date and employees on leave. The mean and median figures must also be given separately for part-time and temporary employees.

What do we mean by the Gender Pay Gap?

The Gender Pay Gap calculates the percentage difference between the average earnings of males and females irrespective of their role.

The Gender Pay Gap is not the same as equal pay. Employment Equality legislation provides for equal pay for like work. All male and female employees in the local government sector are paid equally for work that is the same or similar or for work of equal value, therefore this report does not examine equal pay. Rates of pay within the sector are agreed through national wage agreements negotiated regularly between employers and staff representatives. Most employees are paid according to an incremental salary scale and the salary ranges for various roles are available on the local government jobs website at www.localgovernmentjobs.ie

Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap

The Gender Pay Gap calculates the percentage difference between the average earnings of males and females irrespective of their role, using the following measures:

The **mean** is the average. It is calculated by getting the difference between the average hourly rate of pay for males and the average hourly rate of pay for females (male hourly rate minus female hourly rate), expressed as a percentage of the male hourly rate. If this figure is negative, the average hourly rate of females is higher than the average hourly rate of males on the snapshot date. If this figure is positive, the average hourly rate of males is higher than the average hourly rate of females on the snapshot date.

MEAN GENDER PAY GAP
This shows the % difference between the average hourly rate of pay for males and average hourly rate of pay for females $\frac{\text{(average male hourly rate) – (average female hourly rate)}}{\text{average male hourly rate}} \times 100$

The **median** is the figure that falls in the middle of a range where the salary of all relevant employees is listed, from the lowest to the highest. This can provide a more accurate representation of the 'typical' differences in pay.

MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP
This shows the % difference between the median hourly rate of pay for males and median hourly rate of pay for females $\frac{\text{(median of male hourly rates) – (median of female hourly rates)}}{\text{median of male hourly rates}} \times 100$

It is useful to look at both the mean and median figures, as each one can tell us something different about the underlying factors affecting the pay gap. For example, a small number of higher paid employees can impact the mean figure and if this is the case, the median figure may be more representative of difference between what a male and a female is paid.

If there is a significant difference between an organisation's mean and median pay gap, this may indicate that the data is impacted either by the presence of very low earners (making the mean lower than the median) or by a group of higher earners (making the mean higher than the median).

It is also important to remember that this report uses data on a snapshot date in June. Gender pay gaps can fluctuate from month to month and across quartile pay bands, depending on changes to headcount. However, headline figures will give a good indication of the differences between average earning between males and females.

Quartile Pay Bands

Dividing employees into four more-or-less equal groups (or quartiles) with pay graded from lowest to highest helps us to examine pay across different levels of the organisation. Organisations must report on the percentage of employees who fall within the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile hourly pay bands.

In order to group employees into these Quartile Pay Bands, the organisation lists all employees from lowest to highest, based on their hourly rates. The employees are then divided into four equal groups or Quartiles based on this - lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper. The employer then shows the proportion of male and female employees in each quartile as a percentage e.g. percentage of male employees in the lower quartile and percentage of female employees in the lower quartile (and so on).

Bonus and Benefit-in-Kind

Figures must also be provided for bonus payments or benefit-in-kind payments if these apply. Bonus payments do not apply within the local government sector.

Benefit-in-Kind may arise in certain circumstances, such as where some professional fees are paid by the employer.

Factors that can Impact on the Gender Pay Gap

As mentioned, this report does not look at equal pay. Every employee, regardless of gender is paid equally for work that is the same or similar or for work of equal value. However, differences between what employees are paid can be impacted by a number of complex factors including:

- Occupational segregation – some job categories or occupations may have traditionally attracted more females than males or vice versa.
- Working patterns – full-time and part-time work. It may be that more females than males seek part-time work or career breaks and although this does not impact on their hourly rate of pay, it may impact on choices around career progression.
- Length of service – incremental pay increases may mean that new joiners are paid less than more experienced employees.
- Time of year – temporary or seasonal workers may be recruited for different roles which may attract a different rate of pay.
- Gender breakdown of senior roles at higher salaries – a small number of higher paid employees can affect the average figures.
- Gender breakdown of lower paid roles – a large number of lower paid employees can affect the average figures.

If an organisation reports a **positive gender pay gap**, it does not mean that females are paid less than males for doing the same job, but it does show that, on average, males occupy higher paid roles than females.

If an organisation reports a **negative gender pay gap**, it does not mean that males are paid less than females for doing the same job, but it does indicate that, on average, females occupy higher paid roles than males.

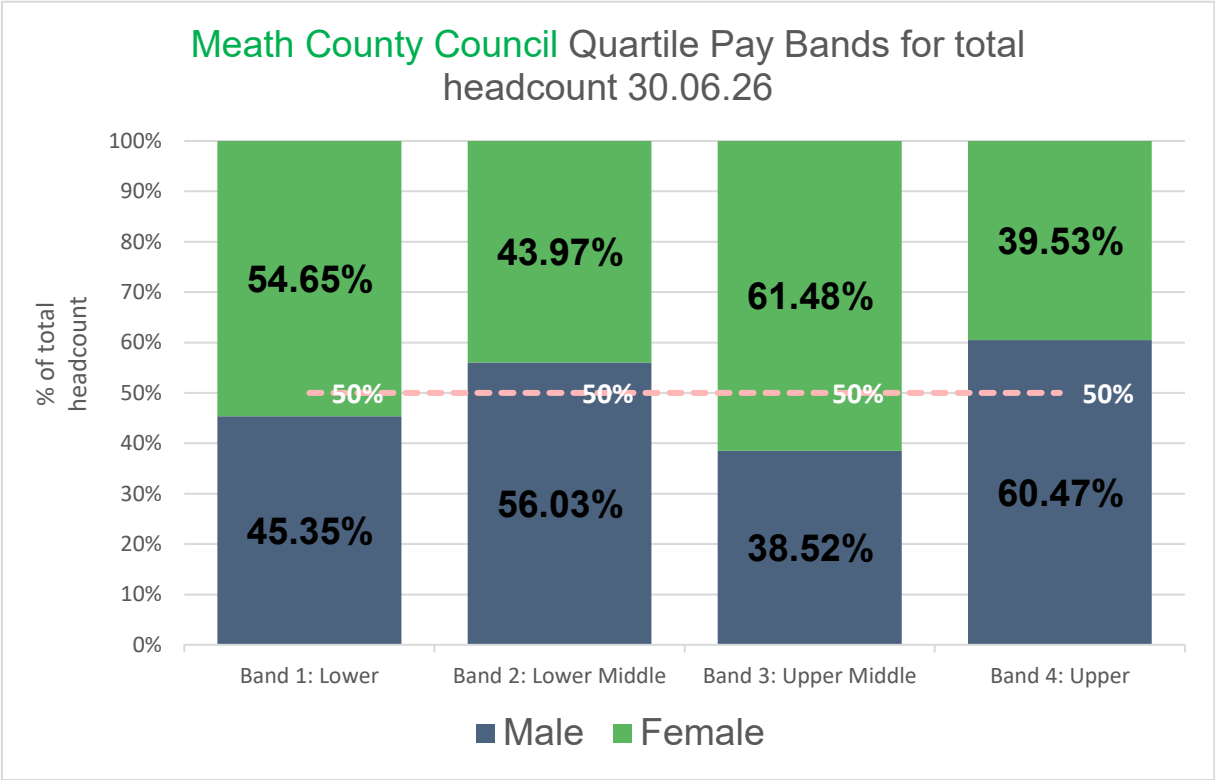
The larger the positive or negative pay gap is, the more marked the differences in hourly rates of pay will be and the more males or females proportionally working in either higher or lower paid roles within the organisation.

Our Figures

Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap - all employees

Meath County Council Gender Pay Gap 2026
All employees for the reporting period to 30 June 2026

MEAN GENDER PAY GAP	MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP
7.52%	-1.00%



Note: Note: 50%:50% Meath County Council (male:female) is the gender breakdown of all employees on 30 June 2026. This is shown in the dotted line above.

The Mean Gender Pay Gap shows that on average, males are paid 7.52% more than females. The Median Gender Pay Gap shows that the median rate of pay for females is 1% higher than the median rate of pay for males.

Looking at the distribution of employees across the four **Quartile Pay Bands** helps us examine pay at different levels of the organisation.

These Quartile Pay Bands show the distribution of male and female employees by Pay Band across the organisation. (The organisation has listed all employees from lowest to highest, based on their hourly rates, then divides this into four equal Pay Bands or Quartiles - lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper. The table above shows the proportion of male and female employees in each quartile).

The split for each of the 4 quartiles shown above is broadly in line with our workforce demographics of 50% male and 50% female. For there to be no Gender Pay Gap you would expect to see the workforce demographics reflected more closely in each quartile.

There is a higher proportion of males in Band 4 at 60%:40% (male:female), reflecting that there are proportionately more males in higher grades, and that gap has increased since the 2025 gender breakdown of 58%:42% (male:female).

However, there is a higher proportion of females in Band 3 at 61%:39% in favour of women, (female:male). This is an increase on the gender breakdown Band 3 figures in 2025 which came in at 59%:41% (female:male). This increase is welcomed as it builds on an ongoing trend in the organisation, reflecting that women occupy more of our upper middle paid Croles.

Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap - Part-time employees

Meath County Council Gender Pay Gap 2026 Part-time employees for the reporting period to 30 June 2026	
MEAN GENDER PAY GAP	**MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP**
-14.69%	**-8.72%**

Approximately 22% of all our employees on 30 June, 2026, were working part-time. Of these, 61% are female and 39% are male.

Factors influencing the pattern of part-time employees across the organisation include a range of flexible work options for part-time work, which, while available to all employees, have greater rates of take-up in administrative and clerical job categories.

Another factor is job categories where part-time work is an occupational feature of the role, including the fire service, library service, community wardens and caretakers for burial grounds.

Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap - Temporary employees

Meath County Council Gender Pay Gap 2026 Temporary employees for the reporting period to 30 June 2026	
MEAN GENDER PAY GAP	MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP
-18.72%	-31.63%

On 30 June, 2026, 7% of our employees were employed on temporary contracts. Of these, the majority, 64%, are female and 36% are male. These contracts include temporary/seasonal employees such as lifeguards, community wardens and general operatives, as well as graduate engineers, technicians and drivers/machinery operators.

Benefit-in-Kind

On 30 June 2026, no employees of Meath County Council received a Benefit in Kind payment.

Bonus Payment

Bonus payments do not feature as part of pay in the local government sector.

How We Support Gender Equality

Strategic Workforce Planning

In March 2025, Meath County Council submitted its Strategic Workforce Plan to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. This Plan seeks to foster excellence through people, ensure that our Core Values guide what we do in proactively managing our current and future workforce and enabling the organisation to respond to its strategic challenges and its changing needs.

The Plan commits to further skills development and investing in learning and professional development; it underpins our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, seeks to developing an Age-Friendly workplace and to protecting the health and wellbeing of our employees to support staff retention and attract future employees.

Fair and Transparent Recruitment Practices

As an equal opportunities employer, we work to promote a culture of equality and we strive to embrace genuine equality of opportunity through our recruitment and selection process which are open to all.

We provide appropriate assistance and accommodation throughout our recruitment and selection process, including providing easily accessible interview facilities, agreeing an appropriately timed interviews, and supplying or arranging appropriate equipment.

All our Interview Boards are gender balanced and all Interview Board members receive a briefing on ensuring that interviews are conducted in accordance with the Council's recruitment and selection policies, which are based on best practice.

Recruitment websites highlight family friendly and flexible working options, and our job descriptions and job advertisements are gender neutral.

We provide training and support, open to all employees to help them prepare for job applications and interviews.

Employees are paid according to an incremental salary scale, and we offer strong career progression opportunities which are open to all employees.

Work-Life Balance

We offer employees a wide range of flexible working and leave options, including carer's leave, career breaks, paid maternity and adoptive leave, paid paternity leave, parent's leave, parental leave and work-sharing.

Blended Working

Blended working is now a part of our flexible working policies, with options to combine office and home/hub working. We also provide access to the Cycle to Work Scheme to support alternative commuting options.

Learning and Development

We are committed to providing ongoing learning and development opportunities so that all employees can develop to their full potential. All employees are actively encouraged to pursue education opportunities through the Education Assistance Scheme, with study and examination leave also available.

Health and Wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of all employees is paramount, and this is underpinned by a strong health and safety ethos across the organisation. Meath County Council runs a comprehensive Employee Wellbeing Programme which includes free Health Screening for employees, as well as, free Flu Vaccinations on an annual basis. The programme provides access to regular online and in-person events which deal with financial, physical, social and mental wellness. Gender positive events focus on key dates throughout the year, including International Women's Day, World Menopause Day and International Men's Day. In 2026, Meath County Council continues to provide employees with access to the free EAP (Employee Assistance Programme), a secure and confidential Freephone Helpline and an online advice service which is available to all employees, their spouse/ partner and their children over the age of 16. The MCC Connect employee app ensures that all our employees can be communicated with regularly, to promote wellbeing initiatives and further awareness of the Council's policies and procedures.

Dignity at Work

We promote and support a culture of dignity, respect and equality and we have a Dignity at Work Policy which guides us in the implementation of these values among the workforce.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Meath County Council is continually developing as an employer of choice to attract, develop and promote an inclusive and diverse employee population.

The Council continues to design and provide responsive services and customer care that meet the needs of an increasingly diverse customer base.

Public Sector Duty

Meath County Council progressively embeds the Public Sector Duty in its current management, policy development and service delivery processes.

An assessment has been conducted of equality and human rights across all Council functions and services and the Council has developed an Equality and Human Rights Values Statement and which has been incorporated into the Council's corporate plans and strategic plans.

The Public Sector Duty is set out in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014. Section 42 requires a public body, in the performance of its functions, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services and protect human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

Public bodies are required to set out in a manner that is accessible to the public in its strategic plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to its functions and purpose and the existing or proposed policies, plans and actions to address those issues. Furthermore, public bodies are required to report annually on developments and achievements in that regard in its annual report in a manner that is accessible to the public.

Meath County Council acknowledges the commonality of purpose stated in both the “Duty” and Gender Pay Gap reporting requirements and the publication of this report serves to underline and support the three-step approach advocated by the IHREC i.e., Assess, Address and Report.

Women in Leadership

A large number of Meath County Council’s senior staff are female (in the Upper Middle Pay Band), filling positions that have been traditionally dominated by men, such as the Fire Service, engineering and finance. We will continue to support our female employees in leadership initiatives.

Coaching

Meath County Council continues to take part in the LGMA coaching programme and has a panel of qualified coaches in place to support our staff. The Council considers that coaching is a means to unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance, as well as, fostering a space for collaboration and change and encouraging a learning environment for the individual and across the organisation.

Apprenticeships and Graduate Programme

As part of our inclusive approach to recruitment, Meath County Council offers apprenticeship opportunities. This includes new apprenticeship programmes linked to areas of work within local authorities, including IT and engineering as well as more traditional apprenticeship areas.

Similarly, the Council participates in the Graduate Programme coordinated by the LGMA on behalf of the sector.

Data Collection and Evidence-based Policy Development

We welcome the opportunity to report on our gender pay gap and have worked collaboratively across the sector to provide a standard and consistent approach to reporting. We will work with the LGMA and our colleagues in other local authorities to share learnings and best practice.

