

LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

GENDER PAY GAP STRATEGY



CLARE

Leader of London Borough
of Waltham Forest

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I must have drafted and redrafted the letter at least ten times. The injustice I felt – and that sense of humiliation – was awful. I still remember what I wrote: “Dear board members, I’ve become aware that a male colleague in a comparable job is being paid £2,000 more than I am. Can I see the minutes of the board meeting when this was decided?”

It was early in my career and I was working a policy-type job. I was on an informal contract and making a pittance. Earlier that day I had been chatting with one of my male colleagues, who had come in as an intern and who I had trained over the course of several months. Somehow the topic of the conversation moved on to pay, and he told me how much he was earning. He watched my face fall as I realised this was £2,000 more than I was making.

The board couldn’t provide the minutes of the meeting because there weren’t any. My male colleague was concerned, not that I’d been underpaid, but that he might get in trouble. My pay was quickly increased. I was absolutely demoralised.

This experience taught me something about my self-worth. I didn’t mind being paid a pittance until I found out that a man was being paid more. I realised it was down to me to value myself and ask for more. We need to fight these fights, so that our daughters don’t have to fight these fights. We’ve got to be relentless for the next generation of women.

It’s for this reason that I’m proud to lead an organisation; where men and women are paid equally to do that same role. But we can’t be satisfied with that - we have a gender pay gap and need to do more to ensure equality of opportunity for women. We need to see women succeed at every level in Waltham Forest. Only then will I be satisfied.

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FOREWORD

ENABLING WOMEN TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS AT LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST



We are proud to have a talented and diverse workforce here at Waltham Forest Council; and supporting our incredible women is a cause very close to my heart.

As the first female Leader of the council I want Waltham Forest to be a place where every woman can achieve her goals. In the same way that the council is committed to boosting the life chances of residents, we must play an active role in enabling the women that work here to maximise their life chances too.

Although men and women are paid equally for doing the same work at the council, we know that we have a gender pay gap. We also know that this gap is worse for black and ethnic minority women.

Our gap is largely caused by the structure of services in the organisation: we have a high number of lower paid job roles which are historically and, still typically, filled by women, such as in care and catering, whereas lower paid job roles typically filled by men are no longer delivered in-house by the council.

We could close our gender pay gap overnight by changing this organisational make-up, but we will not, since that would do nothing to address the real issue we're seeking to tackle: improve women's experiences and opportunities at work.

That's why our absolute priority is to create an environment where women can thrive – starting with our frontline and lower-paid female staff – even if it doesn't impact the pay gap right away. Year One of this strategy is all about getting the basics right: effective communication with staff, especially on the frontline; consistency across the organisation on invaluable policies like flexible working and professional development; improved development opportunities for frontline staff; and a better understanding of our ethnicity pay gap.

What is most powerful about this strategy – and means that it will work - is that it has been truly co-designed with the diverse women of this organisation. We have run focus groups and workshops with women across service areas, from those working on the frontline to the corporate hub, and we have heard from men and women in an all-staff survey. We have let staff tell us what will and will not work, so that our action plan is rooted in the specific needs and experiences of our women. The result is a strategy that is uniquely Waltham Forest.

The strategy will not only improve things for women – the plans put forward will support all our active parents and those with caring responsibilities. We want to work towards a parity of esteem for women and men in the workplace and in the home, which means changing perceptions around gender roles and how those roles are valued.

Of course, the work does not end with this strategy. We will hold ourselves accountable to you – our staff. We will be checking in regularly to monitor whether the benefits of this strategy are being felt where they are most needed. We will revisit this strategy every year with our staff, to refine our approach and build on the actions set out.

All that remains is for me to thank, from the bottom of my heart, all the staff who gave up their time to bring this strategy to life; it is because of your passion, commitment and honesty that we can make a difference at Waltham Forest.

**Clare Coghill, Leader of London Borough
of Waltham Forest**

SUMMARY

WHAT IS OUR GENDER PAY GAP?

The gender pay gap is not the same as equal pay.

The gender pay gap compares the average pay of men and women across a whole organisation, whereas equal pay compares the pay of men and women who carry out the same or similar job roles.

Our gender pay gap is **13.5%**



This means that men in the organisation make £2.46 more per hour than women on average.

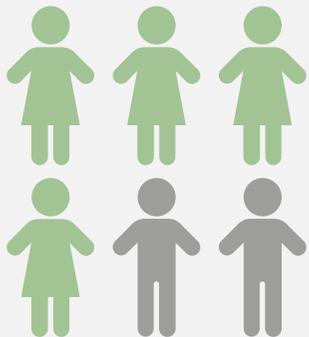


The average gender pay gap for all organisations in the UK is **14.2%**



The average gender pay gap for local authorities is **6.1%**

WHAT'S CAUSING OUR GAP?



We have more women in our lower-paid jobs.

Low-paid roles with lots of women



catering



care



Low-paid roles with lots of men



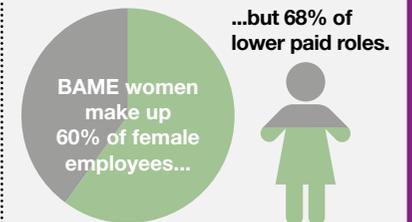
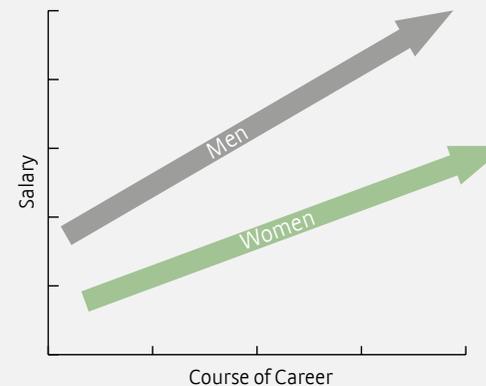
refuse collection



street cleaning



On average, women join the council on lower salaries than men and don't progress as quickly over the course of their career.



The gender pay gap is bigger for black and ethnic minority women, who are over-represented in lower paid roles.

WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT ?

Year One of the strategy is all about getting the basics right and improving women's experience and opportunities at work. We will talk to staff every three months to make sure what we're doing is working, including staff in frontline services.

We will review our strategy with staff after one year to create the next set of actions for Year Two of the strategy.

Progression

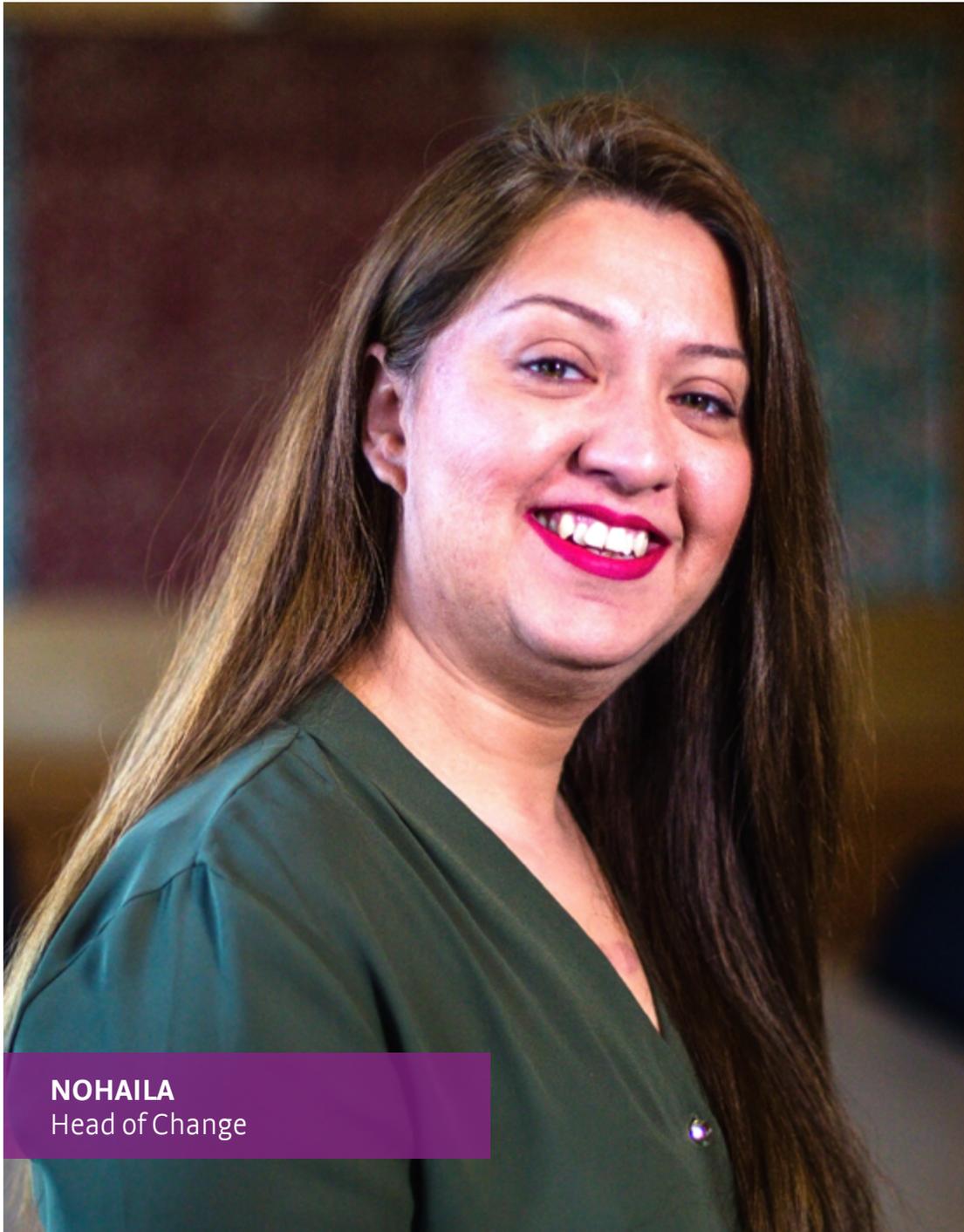
- We will try to recruit from staff already working at Waltham Forest before looking elsewhere.
- We will make sure frontline staff can access training to build their transferable skills, so that they can apply for a more senior job at Waltham Forest if they want to.
- We will make our training programmes better and try offering training at different times to suit those who have different working patterns.
- We will look into matching term-time workers who want more work during the holidays with workers who want to take a break during the holidays.

A great place to work

- We will work with managers to make sure as many people as possible can benefit from flexible working, especially in frontline services.
- We will provide compulsory training to make sure all managers meet an excellent standard for developing their staff and supporting flexible working.
- We will encourage more men to work flexibly to promote equal division of labour at work and at home.
- We will find out more about our ethnicity pay gap and how to fix it.

Communication

- We will create a new communications strategy to reach those who don't have a council email or access to the council intranet.
- We will make sure all staff, especially frontline staff, know about job and development opportunities across the organisation.
- We will make information packages for parents so they know what support is available for different stages of parenthood.
- We will use the new Women's Leadership Network to help women with career planning and professional development.



NOHAILA
Head of Change

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“I’m really pleased to tell you that you got the job!” I remember it so clearly – the day I became a Head of Service. It was such a massive, massive achievement – and having that title still feels very, very good.

It felt like my employer had appreciated all the hard work I’d put in to date. But there was also the other part, the question mark, now I’m a Head of Service how should I be acting? What should I be doing? What are those behaviours? You go on your own internal search and have to do more confidence building.

So on the one hand I was absolutely proud and on the other hand I felt apprehension.

It had been a steady journey for me to get to that point. I joined Waltham Forest in 2004 as a frontline administrative assistant in the building control department. My career path since then has been small increments rather than big jumps – I had some sort of advancement almost every year.

In the whole of my career I’d never openly asked my managers to go to the next level; but my managers have been particularly good at spotting my talent. Management have carried me up my pathway – and so now I always keep an eye out for talent and hard work.

This can really do wonders – as it did for me – so I’m constantly developing people.

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INTRODUCTION

At London Borough of Waltham Forest we are committed to closing the gender pay gap. Beyond that, we also want to improve the experience for all women who work here, enabling and empowering them to achieve their goals.

After publishing our first gender pay gap last year, we knew decisive action was needed. We listened to our staff to understand the causes of our gap and they told us what actions would help reduce it.

We heard from over 350 staff members in our all-staff survey; ran in-depth focus groups with 42 women across services and seniority levels; held three co-design workshops with a large group of women

representing different ethnicities, work areas, and levels of seniority; and conducted quantitative and qualitative analysis of the insights collected.

The result is this: Waltham Forest's first Gender Pay Gap Strategy.

“What is most powerful about this strategy – and means that it will work - is that it has been truly co-designed with the diverse women of this organisation”

*Cllr Clare Coghill,
Leader of London Borough of Waltham Forest*



Co-designed with staff: our final staff workshop on the strategy

DEFINITIONS:

Gender pay gap – the difference in the average pay of all men in an organisation compared with the average pay of all women in an organisation

Equal Pay – men and women being paid equally for doing the same or similar job

Flexible working – any kind of work pattern that falls outside of the traditional full-time, 9 to 5 format. This includes working from home, flexible hours, reduced hours, part-time work, compressed hours etc.

Working from home – carrying out the duties of your job from a location other than your workplace

Honorarium payments – honorarium payments are awarded when employees need to undertake duties and responsibilities in addition to their existing contractual role.

What is the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap shows the difference in the average pay of all men in an organisation compared with the average pay of all women in an organisation. This includes all of those who are directly employed by the organisation, across different job roles and contract types. It also takes into account the number of hours worked by looking at the hourly pay rate.

The gender pay gap is not the same as equal pay, which deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same or similar job roles. At Waltham Forest Council there are policies in place to ensure that men and women receive equal pay.

In general in the UK, more mothers than fathers work reduced hours or work flexibly.



In the UK, the average gender pay gap is 14.2%.

The average for local authorities is 6.1%.

In general in the UK, the gender pay gap widens dramatically after women have children.

More mothers than fathers work reduced hours or work flexibly, which can impact on women's careers by reducing their perceived competence and commitment to their job, limiting access to training and development, and limiting options for suitable jobs.

Our gender pay gap at Waltham Forest

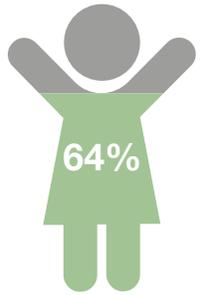
At London Borough of Waltham Forest our gender pay gap is 13.5% , which means that women's hourly pay is 13.5% less than men's on average. This equates to £2.46 per hour.

The gender pay gap is worse for certain groups: black and ethnic minority women working at the council especially. On average, Asian women (£14.21 per hour), black women (£14.66 per hour) and white women (£17.10 per hour) are all paid less than white men (£19.61 per hour).

Our gender pay gap is not influenced by age of employee, and every employee at the council is paid a minimum of the London Living Wage. Furthermore, no significant difference between men and women was found for honorarium payments, which are applied when employees need to undertake duties and responsibilities in addition to their existing contractual role.

AVERAGE £ PER HOUR





64% of our highest-paid employees are

WOMEN
with **3/5** Strategic Directors being Women

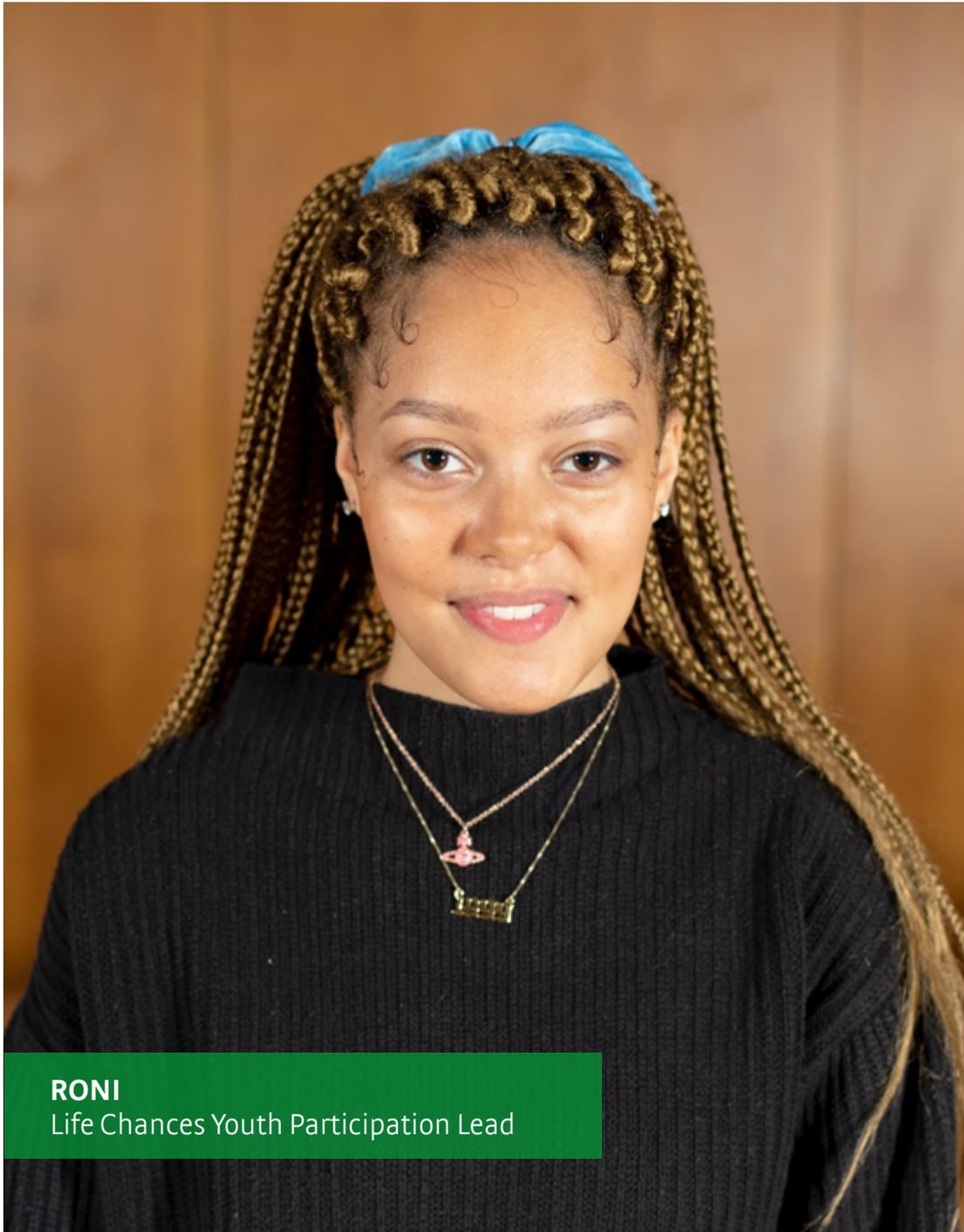
In addition to the gender pay gap, UK legislation requires publication of the bonus gender pay gap. The council makes one payment that meets the definition of a bonus: any employee who reaches 25 years of service receives £300 in gift vouchers as a thank you for their loyalty and service. In the 12 months up to 31st of March 2018 0.1% of men and 1.4% of women received a bonus.

At Waltham Forest there is good representation of women in senior leadership and women make up 64% of our highest-paid employees. Three out of the five Strategic Directors who report to the Chief Executive are women, two of whom started their careers at Waltham Forest as junior officers and were able to progress all the way up to Management Board.

What we've done already

Alongside developing this strategy, Waltham Forest has already begun to take action to tackle our gender pay gap and improve experiences for women in the organisation:

- **We became the first employer in the UK to support The Smallest Things campaign.** The campaign provides additional leave at full pay for parents of premature babies, and four council employees have already benefitted from the scheme. Employers across the country have been inspired to follow suit - Sony Music heard of our scheme on BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour and replicated it, and we've helped the Greater London Authority introduce their version of the policy.
- **We made improvements to our family friendly policies,** including extending maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave, introducing full pay for the first five weeks of shared parental leave, and offering an interest-free loan for employees who need help to cover the cost of a childcare deposit.
- **We strengthened our support for carers** by committing to develop a Carers Charter in consultation with trade unions and staff, and to introduce a carer's compact to make it easier for employees and managers to accommodate the employees' caring responsibilities.
- **We supported the creation of a Women's Network,** an initiative championed by staff as part of the organisation's 'Change Collective'.
- **Our new apprenticeship scheme has seen recruitment of 50 new apprentices** in the last three months – 31 of whom are women. We have also recruited a large number of women into typically male-dominated apprenticeships such as Project Management.
- **We recently launched guidance for managers on supporting staff experiencing the menopause,** and last month we welcomed The Menopause Exchange to the Town Hall to talk to staff about the menopause and menopausal symptoms. This is part of the council's efforts to improve understanding of the menopause at work and fight taboos around the topic.



RONI

Life Chances Youth Participation Lead

“

It's a look. A “we-didn't-expect-you-to-be-here” look. I've been working for the council in some capacity since I was 15. I'd never noticed it until I started working here full-time, but now I'm aware of 'the look'.

It can happen in the corridor or in a meeting. It's like a triple thing: I'm young, I'm a woman, and I'm black. People underestimate you, and you always feel you've got to work even harder. You often get people saying – “you spoke so well, as a young person” – you can just speak well as a person, it doesn't need anything added.

What has helped me is having a team around me that values and supports me. I want to create change and give young people that voice in a top level policy context, and my team has given me the agency and support to do so. Waltham Forest is not the easiest place to grow up and it's pivotal to have young people who have experienced those things in decision making roles.

I've seen over the years that often we talk about innovation, but is it actual innovation? To innovate you've just got to go for it – which is what the council did when they created my role. Having a real role for a young person, and beginning to handover real power, the council are putting everything on the line to do right by young people. It's actual innovation.

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WHY WE HAVE A PAY GAP

Why do we have a gender pay gap at Waltham Forest?

By listening to our staff and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data, we found that there are two main factors contributing to our gender pay gap:

Factor 1: Women are more likely than men to be employed at lower pay grades, partly due to our organisational structure of in-house care and catering services, and outsourced street cleaning and refuse services.

Factor 2: Women experience slower pay progression than men

Qualitative interviews and focus groups with staff suggested that the underlying causes of this are:

- An inconsistency in manager's standards, particularly in their approach to flexible working and staff development
- Inconsistent access to opportunities for development or progression at the council
- Societal norms and expectations around gender roles in and out of the workplace.

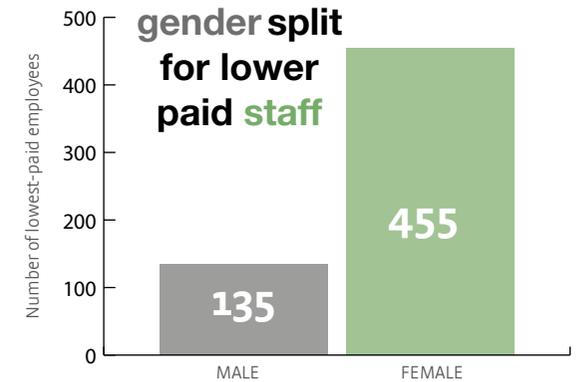
Factor 1: Women are more likely to be employed at lower pay grades than men

Our data analysis showed that there are more women than men employed at every level of the council. However, the proportion of women is much greater in lower paid roles where there are three times more women than men; of our lowest-paid employees 455 are women and 135 are men. Additionally, 68% of women in lower paid roles come from black and ethnic minority (BAME) backgrounds even though BAME women make up just 60% of female employees.

Pay Quartile	Men	Women
Lower	24%	76%
Lower Middle	26%	74%
Upper Middle	32%	68%
Upper	40%	60%

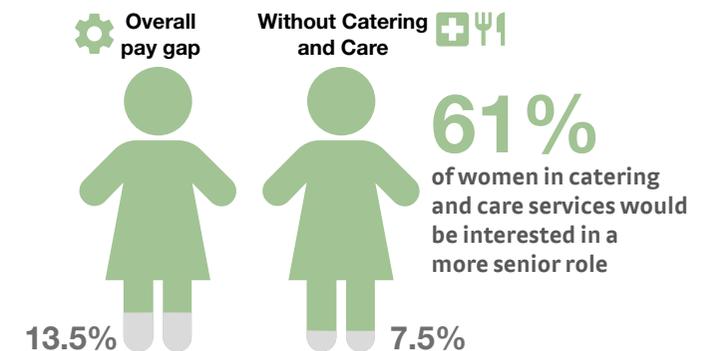
Women are more likely to work in roles in school catering and care, which are typically lower paid and are delivered in-house by the council. Lower paid roles historically filled by men, such as street cleaning and refuse, have been outsourced and are not included in the council's gender pay gap.

This has led to an even greater representation of women in our lowest pay quartiles and an increased gender pay gap. If we separated catering and care services from our gender pay gap calculations, our gap would nearly halve to 7.5% instead of 13.5%. Importantly, our staff survey revealed that 61% of women in catering and care roles would be interested in a more senior role.



The gender pay gap is bigger for black and ethnic minority women, who are over-represented in lower paid roles.

Our gender pay gap reduces if catering and care services are excluded.





LOUISE
Catering Supervisor

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I felt deflated before I even reached the door of her office. We sat opposite each other and I just came out and told her. She nearly fell off her chair – I’ll never forget the look on her face:

“Are you sure you want to go and be a dinner lady?” I had worked with the newspaper for 18 years, working my way up from a receptionist to the point where I was dealing with revenues across 50 different regional titles. I worked with big clients creating national advertising campaigns. I could tell from the way she said it – dinner lady - she was looking down her nose at the job.

“I have to,” I said, “because I want to spend time with my son.” After having my son – my first child - I had gone back to the paper for three days a week, but I was starting at 7 am and not getting home until after 6.30pm, and I felt guilty. I felt torn between two worlds. I loved my job, but my child was more important.

Now I’ve been working as a catering supervisor for ten years on a term-time contract, which is great because it gives me time to be with my children, but I feel like I’m treading water. I love working for the council – I think it’s fabulous – and I would love to be an area catering manager, but this can only be done on a 52-week contract. I feel like a little plant growing in a pot: I’ve got all these roots growing out but nowhere to go! I want to do more and develop my skills, however there are barriers at this present time.

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Factor 2: Women experience slower pay progression than men

Our data analysis showed that women start their careers at Waltham Forest Council in more junior roles and therefore on a lower salary than men, and that this gap widens over time. For employees who have worked at the council for less than five years, the gender pay gap is £2 per hour. For those who have worked at the council for 15-20 years, this has grown to £4 per hour.

Length of time working at LBWF	Gender pay gap
5 years or less	Men earn £2 more per hour than women on average
15-20 years	Men earn £4 more per hour than women on average

This is also reflected in the level of progression that men and women experience. After 15-20 years at the council the average male employee has risen 8.5 scale points on the pay scale, whereas the average woman has only risen 6.5.

Women are also more likely to be working on temporary, part-time and term-time contracts, which are typically more difficult to progress from.

The results of the staff survey and qualitative focus groups revealed several reasons why this might be. Some 19% of women said they'd find it difficult to juggle more responsibility at work with their caring responsibilities outside of work, compared to only 5% of men.

We also found that women often lacked confidence in applying for a more senior role and 16% told us they felt that they don't have the necessary skills, knowledge or experience.

Focus groups revealed that the gap between junior and senior roles is sometimes seen as too big by staff in some services, with a perceived inconsistency in mid-management roles to enable gradual progression.

Some staff felt this had become a particular problem as the organisation has become leaner in response to government cuts.

Importantly, slow pay progression for women is not because women are not interested in more senior roles – only 8% of women told us they were not interested in applying for a more senior role.

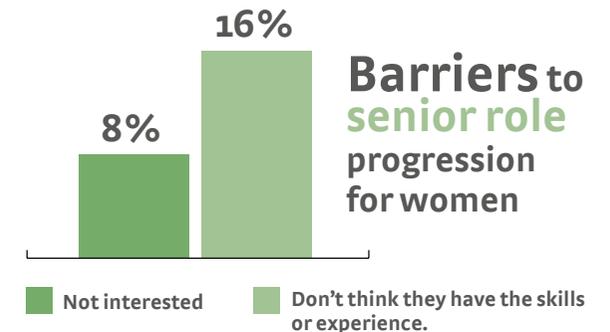
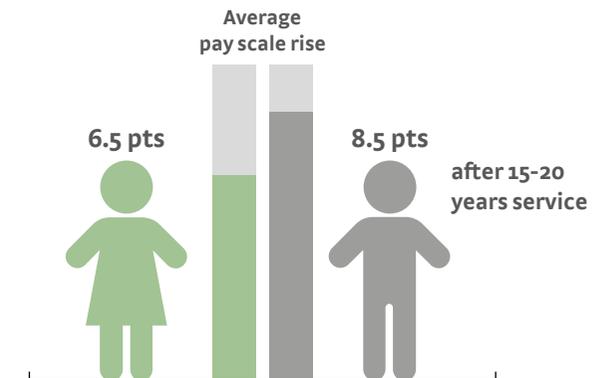
Furthermore, 1 in 4 women would be willing to work in a different service with greater promotion opportunities if it enabled them to progress further.

More women than men find it **difficult** to juggle **more**



responsibility at work with **caring** responsibilities outside of work

Men tend to rise further on the pay scale than **women** during their service





MICHELE

Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods
and Commercial Services

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I've been treated so well throughout my career and especially by this organisation. I'm strong, confident and I work really hard to deliver.

I started at Waltham Forest as a Policy and Performance officer. I was previously at Barking and Dagenham but after having a child I needed a job that would fit better with my new family responsibilities. When I arrived at Waltham Forest every bit of the council was on special measures – and when I say every bit I mean every bit. I came to do a particular job and ended up doing stuff way above my pay grade.

I remember coming into work one day and my manager telling me: “you're leading on this work, I need you to lead it”. I was ushered into a room that had every government department in it – we're talking senior officials from 20 different departments – and they all wanted reports on what we were doing. I was only an SO2 but I was the one who had to chair the officer side of that. Once I was in the room the officials had a million questions - and of course I was nervous, but by the end people were saying, “yeah, that was a good job”.

My advice to man or woman is always: don't wait. When an opportunity arises, take it – don't say I'm not sure – just do it. This will build your skills, build your confidence, and build your CV.

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In depth - What staff told us

The two key factors causing our gender pay gap are that women are more likely to be employed at lower grades than men, and that women experience slower progression than men. When we discussed these with women across the council, they told us what they thought were the most relevant issues and what actions would make the biggest difference. We grouped these into three key themes.

Staff Told Us...

Progression

- Managers played an important positive role in development, but **some managers are not accountable** for the development of their staff, and their **attitude towards development is variable**. The impact of this may be **worse in large teams** spread over numerous locations.
- Access to **training and opportunities is inconsistent**, especially for those in lower grade roles, non-full time contracts, and those working flexibly. This can be **made worse by maternity leave**, particularly in specialist roles such as care.
- Women often have **less confidence** to apply for a more senior role or ask for a job regrade.

A great place to work

- There are lots of managers **proactively supporting flexible working** and embracing different working patterns, but this is **not consistent across the organisation**.
- Many staff felt that **current technology** doesn't enable home working, and that flexible working can be **difficult to accommodate with frontline service demands**.
- More **senior roles are perceived as less flexible**, which can put women off applying.
- Some staff reported **incidences of conscious and unconscious bias** against women and individuals from an ethnic minority group, which can impact both appraisal of performance and individual self-confidence.
- Some staff perceived an **inability to challenge the biases of others**, and that managers or support teams like HR did not always have the skills or resources to take action.

Communication

- Some staff perceived a difficulty in making **sideways movements** between divisions and that **transferrable skills** were not always acknowledged.
- Much **support already exists for parents and parents-to-be** but it could be **signposted more clearly** or brought together into one clear offer.
- Frontline staff in certain services can feel isolated and often **miss out on council communications**. Staff felt that jobs across the organisation are not always advertised effectively, and that adverts should focus on transferable skills for the role.
- Some staff reported a circulation of **inaccurate 'unwritten rules'** around promotion and progression, which can deter women from advancing.



STUART

Head of Human Resources

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The answer was easy: would I, as a manager, agree to an irregular flexible working arrangement that would see my reportee work four days a week, be out of the office two days a week, with different days each week? Of course I would! Flexible working is really important to me and my HR team. It's important that we lead the way here and demonstrate the benefits to the rest of the organisation.

To recruit and retain the best staff, we need to offer jobs that fit people's commitments outside of work. Insisting on 9-5 won't cut it any more - we'd be excluding a lot of talented people from working here, a high proportion of them women.

We've been doing this for years, and by doing so we've managed to keep hold of talented staff that would otherwise have left: one employee works two days a week but delivers output during those two days that is really valued at senior levels. Another employee works flexibly for three days a week around her partner's timetable to ensure that, as a couple, they can cover their childcare needs. In both of these cases it's a win-win: we get to retain high-calibre staff; they can continue the careers they've built at Waltham Forest.

There are some things that need to be considered and that, as an organisation, I hope we can address to make flexible working easier. Some of our IT systems, including SAP, can't cope with the flexibility. Having people out of the office means you need to make more of an effort to actively check in with staff. The shorter working week means we need to plan workloads more actively, and avoid a short-term and reactive culture. But these are small fry compared to the benefits of having a talented team who are able to work in a way that works for them.

We need to move to a world where the working pattern is led by the worker.

”

YEAR ONE OF OUR GENDER PAY GAP STRATEGY

The first year of our Gender Pay Gap Strategy is all about focused and concentrated action to get the basics right, prioritising our frontline and lower-paid staff. The ambition for Year One is not to close the pay gap, but to see an **immediate positive impact on women's experiences at work and the opportunities available to them.**

The actions put forward have been developed directly with staff and reflect what the diverse women working here feel will have the biggest impact.

Our three pillars for focused action in Year One are:

Progression

A great place to work

Communication

Progression

Female staff told us that they wanted better access to the training and support to undertake professional development, especially when working flexibly or juggling caring responsibilities.

To tackle this, we will:

- **Review and improve our training programmes**, with a clear link between learning outcomes, relevant role groups and opportunities to enable women to progress.
- **Improve access for frontline staff to training** designed to build transferable skills.
- **Offer alternative schedules for training** for different working patterns on a trial basis.
- **Prioritise internal recruitment**, emphasising transferrable skills and supporting individuals to move between teams/departments. On a trial basis, require all hiring managers to prove internal talent is not available, with all roles up to SO2 level being opened to external applicants only if no suitable internal applicants are found.
- **Scope and develop proposal to match part-time (such as term-time) workers who want to work additional hours, with workers who want to take time off in peak holiday seasons**, in order to increase earning potential for staff, build transferrable skills, and cover resource gaps.

A great place to work

Female staff told us that they really value the council's flexible working policy, but that it is not applied consistently by managers. Staff also pointed towards potential barriers for ethnic minority women.

To address this, we will:

- **Find innovative ways to enable employees** across all areas (especially frontline services and more senior roles) **to be flexible in the way that they manage work and out-of-work commitments.**
- **Encourage take-up of flexible working by men** in order to promote a more equitable division of labour at home and at work, and to support active fathers and carers across the board.
- **Mandatory training for managers** to set out expectations and establish a core standard for facilitating flexible-working and nurturing professional development.
- **Identify and address the factors behind the ethnicity-pay gap.**

Communication

Female staff told us that communication of internal job opportunities, training and HR policy was not always clear, especially for frontline staff and staff who don't have access to the council's intranet and email.

To tackle this we will:

- **Create a new internal communication strategy** for frontline services, especially those who lack access to the council's intranet and email.
- **Create a single information pack for parents** (maternity, return to work, childcare, etc) that collates all available support into a single offer.
- **Improve communication of HR policy** (including equality and diversity, flexible working, management and professional development) and job/development opportunities.
- **Raise awareness of flexible working policies**, including a guide for 'making flexible working work' and a showcase of great practice across the council.
- **Build on the recently created Women's Leadership Network** to offer targeted support options to enable women to reach their potential, including advice on applying for promotion, opportunities signposting, co-coaching and training, and 'grab-a-coffee introductions' to division leaders to learn more about other services.

Making sure we get it right

To ensure these actions are working, every quarter we will provide informal drop-in sessions for staff to talk to the team leading these actions, including the Strategic Director for Corporate Development.

We will also provide the opportunity to share feedback with an independent researcher, to ensure everyone is comfortable giving their honest views.

These informal drop-ins will be supplemented with formal check-ins with representative staff groups.

Finally, we will analyse our employee statistics to ensure we are making progress across multiple criteria, not just the pay gap.

After Year One we will review, refocus and build on the strategy for each year that follows: we will work with a representative staff group to evaluate progress on the actions from Year One, decide what is and is not working, and identify a new set of priority actions for Year Two.





CHRISTINA
Residential Home Manager

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“The next train on platform 5 is the 07.00 train to Caterham.” The usual announcement played as I boarded my train at Victoria.

I half expected to run into her – as we would often meet on the commute – so when I spotted her sitting down, I went over to take the seat next to her. Julie had been working as a carer for a long time and had been in my team for some years. She was vibrant at work – and proactive – but she showed no signs of wanting to progress and move on.

As I often did during the 30-minute journey to Croydon, I started to drop hints. “You know, Julie, I see you moving further than where you are. What do you think about that?” She chuckled, “Oh I don’t know. I’ve never thought about it.” That’s what she used to say at first.

The next time I saw her on the train I asked her again, “How much have you thought about our discussion?” Each week, on the journey between Victoria and Croydon, I would encourage her. I do a lot of community work on domestic violence to help women with their confidence and to stand on their own two feet; I told Julie the same thing that I tell them: “You look around you, if you see someone doing something – think to yourself – why not you? If they can do it, you can do it too.”

Now Julie is a qualified midwife and a ward manager. When I speak to my staff in my one-to-ones, often I can see that they are good, and some have the skills to progress – but sometimes they need that kick.

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Waltham Forest