



Pay Gap Data Report (Gender, Ethnicity & Disability)

**Covering the period of
1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026**

Published: July 2026

Introduction

Pay gap reporting provides an opportunity to understand how different groups of staff are represented and rewarded across the organisation, helping to identify where inequalities exist and where action is needed. For North West Ambulance Service, it is an important part of our commitment to creating a fair, inclusive and supportive workplace where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. By addressing disparities, we aim to strengthen our workforce, maximise talent, and ultimately improve the care we provide to our patients and communities.

This report provides an overview of NWS's gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps as at 31 March 2026, using pay gap reporting data drawn from the Electronic Staff Record (ESR). On this date, the pay gap reporting cohort comprised 8,008 staff. This may differ slightly from workforce totals reported through WRES and WDES due to reporting methodology and inclusion criteria.

The reporting period covers 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. Hourly pay has been calculated in line with government guidance, in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

Reporting follows guidance issued by the Government Equalities Office and measures the difference in average hourly pay between the following groups:

- Men and women (Gender Pay Gap)
- White staff and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff (Ethnicity Pay Gap)
- Non-disabled staff and disabled staff (Disability Pay Gap)

While the Trust has published gender pay gap information for many years, 2025/26 represents the second year that ethnicity and disability pay gap data has been published and the third year that the data has been analysed to better understand workforce inequalities and inform targeted action.

Pay gap analysis considers differences in average and median hourly pay between staff groups. These differences are influenced by workforce distribution across pay bands and positions within those bands.

It is important to note that pay gap reporting is distinct from equal pay. Equal pay relates to differences in pay between individuals performing the same or similar roles, or work of equal value, whereas pay gap reporting reflects the overall distribution of different groups across the organisation.

Monitoring of workforce equalities data from a race (Workforce Race Equality Standard), disability (Workforce Disability Equality Standard) and pay gap perspective is central to ensuring that we are delivering on our equality, diversity and inclusion priorities:

- Priority 1: We will embed fair and inclusive recruitment and progression processes to improve the diversity of the workforce at all levels.
- Priority 2: We will educate and empower our workforce and leaders to promote a positive psychologically safe culture, to support a reduction in the experience of bullying, harassment, discrimination and an improvement in retention.

Note: Pay gap data for gender, ethnicity and disability relies on self-declaration. Due to limitations in ESR, not all colleagues are able to or choose to self-declare or identify their protected characteristics, including ethnicity, gender identity etc. As such, the data used for pay gap reporting may not fully reflect the diversity of the workforce, but efforts to improve data capture are ongoing.

Gender Pay Gap Data

Table A: 2025/26 Gender Split by Quartile

Quartile	Female	Male
Lower pay quartile (LQ)	57.72%	42.28%
Lower middle quartile (LMQ)	62.49%	37.51%
Upper middle quartile (UMQ)	51.45%	48.55%
Upper quartile (UQ)	47.67%	52.33%

Female representation within the NWS workforce has continued to increase over recent years. As at 31 March 2026, 56.58% of staff were female, compared with 56.19% in 2025 and 53.13% in 2024.

Table A demonstrates a varied position across the pay quartiles. Female representation has increased in the lower-middle, upper-middle and upper quartiles when compared with the previous reporting year. Representation in the upper quartile saw a notable increase to 47.67% (from 45.66% in 2025), while the upper-middle quartile rose slightly to 51.45% (from 50.03%). The lower-middle quartile also experienced a modest increase to 62.49% (from 61.89%).

In contrast, female representation in the lower pay quartile has decreased to 57.72%, compared with 59.89% in 2025.

Overall, women continue to comprise the majority of staff within the lower and lower-middle quartiles and remain marginally overrepresented in the upper-middle quartile. Although men continue to represent a higher proportion of staff in the upper quartile, the gap has narrowed from 7.7% in 2024/25 to 4.7 this year.

Table B: Historic gender split by quartile for comparison

Quartile	2020/21 F	2020/21 M	2021/22 F	2021/22 M	2022/23 F	2022/23 M	2023/24 F	2023/24 M	2024/25 F	2024/25 M
LQ	60.95%	39.05%	55.1%	44.9%	58.78%	41.22%	57.63%	42.37%	59.89%	40.11%
LMQ	56.04%	43.96%	58.5%	41.5%	60.63%	39.37%	60.29%	39.71%	61.89%	38.11%
UMQ	47.43%	52.57%	49.4%	50.6%	50.11%	49.89%	50.54%	49.46%	50.03%	49.97%
UQ	37.23%	62.77%	37.8%	62.2%	39.05%	60.95%	44.06%	55.94%	45.66%	54.34%

Table C: 2025/26 Hourly Pay Gap

	Average Hourly Rate	Median Hourly Rate
Male	£21.31	£20.26
Female	£19.96	£18.17
Difference	-£1.35	-£2.10
Pay Gap %	-6.34%	-10.34%

Table C shows that the mean (average) hourly gender pay gap is -6.34%. This represents an improvement compared to -7.63% in 2025 (see Table D) and is the lowest mean pay gap reported in the last seven years.

The median hourly pay gap is -10.34%, which also reflects an improvement from -12.68% in 2025. While the gap remains notable, this indicates a positive shift in the distribution of earnings between male and female employees.

Differences in pay continue to be influenced by workforce distribution across pay quartiles. A higher proportion of female staff remain concentrated within the lower and lower-middle pay quartiles, which lowers the overall average and median hourly pay for women. In contrast, male staff are more highly represented in the upper pay quartile, contributing to a higher average and median hourly rate.

The upper-middle quartile shows a near-equal gender distribution, with a slightly higher proportion of female staff. The upper quartile continues to have a higher proportion of male employees, although the difference has decreased yet again year on year. This distributional imbalance remains a key factor influencing both the mean and median pay gaps.

Length of service is also likely to be a contributing factor. On average, male employees have longer tenure, increasing the likelihood of being positioned at higher incremental pay points within bands.

Table D: Historic hourly pay gap for comparison

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Average hourly pay gap	-8.79%	-10.89%	-9.80%	-10.77%	-7.27%	-7.63%
Median hourly pay gap	-7.2%	-9.26%	-8.66%	-10.54%	-11.17%	-12.68%

Ethnicity Pay Gap Data

BME representation in the Trust increased to 7.2% in 2025/26, up from 6.7% in 2024/25. However, the WRES Indicator 1 data shows representation remains uneven across the workforce, with BME staff more highly represented in lower band roles and less represented in senior clinical leadership and management roles. This distribution is likely to remain a key factor influencing the ethnicity pay gap.

91.9% of NWS staff identify as White, and 0.9% did not declare their ethnicity. By comparison, data from the 2021 Census indicates that 85.6% of the North West population identified as White, with 14.4% representing ethnic minority groups.

Table E: 2025/26 Ethnicity split by quartile

Quartile	White	BME	Unknown
Lower pay quartile	89.84%	9.33%	0.83%
Lower middle quartile	92.28%	6.89%	0.83%
Upper middle quartile	93.94%	5.13%	0.93%
Upper quartile	92.07%	6.01%	1.92%

BME representation remains lowest in the upper-middle quartile (5.13%) and highest in the lower pay quartile (9.33%). In numerical terms, there are 180 BME staff within the lower quartile compared to 116 in the upper quartile. In contrast, White staff are consistently represented in significantly higher numbers across all quartiles, with approximately 1,750 individuals in each.

There are also a small number of staff who have not declared their ethnicity across each quartile, with the highest proportion (1.92%, 37 staff) recorded in the upper quartile.

Comparison with the previous year (Table F) shows a mixed but generally positive trend, with BME representation increasing in three of the four pay quartiles, most notably in the lower quartile and upper middle quartile.

Table F: Historic Ethnicity split by quartile for comparison

Quartile	2023/24 White	2023/24 BME	2023/24 Unknown	2024/25 White	2024/25 BME	2024/25 Unknown
LQ	92.76%	6.37%	0.87%	91.70%	7.50%	0.80%
LMQ	92.59%	6.48%	0.93%	92.39%	6.71%	0.90%
UMQ	92.81%	6.26%	0.93%	93.08%	5.96%	0.96%
UQ	93.57%	4.63%	1.80%	92.76%	5.27%	1.97%

The mean hourly pay gap between White and BME staff has increased to -5.65% (-£1.17), while the median pay gap has almost doubled to -11.23% (-£2.17), as shown in Table G.

Table G: 2025/26 Hourly Pay Gap

Ethnicity	Average Hourly Rate	Median Hourly Rate
White	£20.62	£19.30
BME	£19.46	£17.13
Difference	-£1.17	-£2.17
BME Pay Gap %	-5.65%	-11.23%

Both the mean and median ethnicity pay gaps have widened compared with the previous year. The mean hourly pay gap increased from -4.38% in 2024/25 to -5.65% in 2025/26, while the median gap increased from -6.28% to -11.23%.

This widening has occurred despite improvements in BME representation in some pay quartiles and highlights the need for further analysis of workforce distribution, length of service, role type and progression patterns.

Table H: Historic hourly pay gaps for comparison

	2023/24	2024/25
BME Average hourly pay gap	-2.67%	-4.38%
BME Median hourly pay gap	-4.53%	-6.28%

Given the limited data available over three years, caution should be exercised in drawing definitive conclusions. However, workforce distribution continues to be a key influencing factor. BME staff remain proportionately more concentrated within the lower pay quartile and less represented in the upper quartiles, which continues to impact both average and median earnings.

Length of service may also be a contributory factor. White staff, on average, have longer tenure, increasing the likelihood of progression to higher pay points within bands.

Ongoing monitoring and further analysis will be required to better understand the drivers behind these trends and to inform targeted actions to address identified disparities.

Disability Pay Gap Data

As at 31 March 2026, 10.1% of staff in the organisation identified as disabled – and increase from 9.3% in the previous year. The proportion of non-disabled staff remained at 85%, and 4.9% (down from 5.7% previous year) of staff did not disclose their disability status.

Table I: 2025/26 Disability split by quartile

Quartile	Non-disabled	Disabled	Not declared	Prefer not to answer	Unspecified
Lower pay quartile	85.54%	10.67%	1.81%	0.36%	1.61%
Lower middle quartile	88.50%	9.43%	1.04%	0.21%	0.83%
Upper middle quartile	82.18%	9.22%	3.73%	0.62%	4.25%
Upper quartile	83.89%	10.88%	2.69%	0.52%	2.02%

The distribution of disabled staff across the four pay quartiles remains relatively even. Representation ranges from 9.22% in the upper middle quartile to 10.88% in the upper quartile. The proportion is slightly higher in the lower (10.67%) and upper (10.88%) quartiles compared to the middle quartiles.

The upper middle quartile also contains the highest proportion of staff who have not declared their disability status (including “not declared,” “prefer not to answer,” and “unspecified”), indicating a higher level of non-disclosure than other quartiles.

Table J: Historic Disability split by quartile for comparison

Quartile	2023/24 Non-disabled	2023/24 Disabled	2024/25 Non-disabled	2024/25 Disabled
LQ	92.10%	7.90%	85.66%	10.19%
LMQ	92.76%	7.24%	88.21%	9.07%
UMQ	92.65%	7.35%	81.33%	9.10%
UQ	92.48%	7.52%	84.79%	8.83%

Comparison with previous years shows there has been a clear increase in the representation of disabled staff across all pay quartiles. In 2024, disabled representation ranged from 7.24% to 7.90%, and in 2025 it increased to between 8.83% and 10.19% across the quartiles.

This upward shift reflects improved representation and also indicates increased confidence among staff in disclosing their disability status, supported by internal communication campaigns and continuing work by the Disability Network.

Table K: 2025/26 Hourly Pay Gap

Disability status	Average Hourly Rate	Median Hourly Rate
Non-disabled	£20.57	£19.19
Disabled	£20.62	£19.18
Difference	£0.05	-£0.01
Disability Pay Gap %	+0.24%	-0.05%

In 2025/26, the average hourly pay rate for disabled staff was slightly higher than that of non-disabled staff. Disabled staff earned an average of £20.62 per hour, compared to £20.57 for non-disabled staff, resulting in a small positive pay gap of +0.24% in favour of disabled staff.

At the median level, disabled staff earned £19.18 per hour, compared to £19.19 for non-disabled staff. This represents a very small negative gap of -0.05%, indicating near parity between the two groups.

Overall, the differences in both average and median hourly pay are minimal, suggesting a broadly equitable pay position between disabled and non-disabled staff.

Table L: Historic hourly pay gaps for comparison

	2023/24	2024/25
Disability Average hourly pay gap	-0.79%	-0.71%
Disability Median hourly pay gap	-1.06%	-1.29%

As with the Ethnicity Pay Gap, it is difficult to attribute the Disability Pay Gap to any single factor. While the overall gaps are small and indicate a broadly equitable position, continued monitoring is important.

Understanding the underlying drivers of these differences will require ongoing engagement with key stakeholders, including the Disability Network. A collaborative and evidence-based approach will support NNAS in maintaining progress and ensuring equitable outcomes for all staff.

Bonus Pay – Gender / Ethnicity / Disability

Bonus pay includes payments related to profit sharing, performance, productivity, commission, incentives, or long service awards with a monetary value.

In 2025/26, no bonus payments were made under the reporting criteria.

Trust-wide actions

The Trust applies national NHS terms and conditions of service, alongside the national job evaluation system, to determine job banding. These frameworks have been equality impact assessed and are subject to joint national review by trade unions and management. Collectively, they provide a robust, non-discriminatory foundation that supports equal pay for work of equal value. NWAS remains committed to reducing pay gaps by improving representation within the upper pay quartiles.

Our approach focuses on addressing systemic barriers that affect all staff, while also taking targeted action to address inequalities experienced by specific groups, including those defined by gender, ethnicity, and disability.

We are committed to creating an inclusive workplace and we aim to build on the range of actions underway to address identified pay gaps:

- Job descriptions and person specifications have been reviewed, particularly for entry-level and high-volume recruitment roles such as ICC Call Handlers and EMT Apprenticeships, to ensure requirements are relevant, accessible and inclusive
- Work is underway to improve the diversity of interview and assessment panels
- A review and refresh of the leadership recruitment process has been undertaken in 2025/26, which aims to reduce the risk of unconscious bias and promotes greater fairness and consistency in decision-making in the recruitment of leaders
- Positive Action Team has improved processes to track and monitor the progress of BME applicants throughout the recruitment journey. This will support a clearer understanding of where applicants may be disproportionately exiting the process and inform further targeted interventions
- We have reviewed and updated our Flexible Working Policy, Menopause Policy, Sexual Safety Policy, Career Break Policy and Dignity at Work Policy
- Continued to encourage staff to declare the equality monitoring information to help better understand the diversity of our workforce and increase declaration rates.