

How Employers Can Help Close the Gender Pay Gap

In the UK, mandatory gender pay gap reporting has increased transparency, but many gaps persist, shaped by factors such as the concentration of women in lower-paid sectors and roles, the career impact of caregiving responsibilities, and biases in recruitment and progression.

1. Understand the Root Causes:

Before acting, companies should analyse their gender pay gap data to identify specific issues—such as disparities in promotions, recruitment into lower-paid roles, or exit rates among women in senior positions.

2. End Salary History Practices:

Avoid asking candidates about previous salaries. This perpetuates existing inequalities, especially for women, disabled people, and ethnic minorities. Instead, base offers on skills and experience, and publish salary ranges in job ads.

3. Promote Flexible Working by Default:

Offer flexible work arrangements like remote/hybrid working, compressed hours, or job sharing. This supports employees with caring responsibilities—most often women—and improves retention and productivity.

4. Ensure Transparent Career Progression:

Create clear, fair pathways for promotion and development. Women are disproportionately represented in part-time and lower-paid roles, so transparency helps remove barriers to advancement.

5. Encourage Shared Parental Leave:

Support and normalise men taking parental leave. This helps balance caregiving responsibilities and reduces the career impact on women.

6. Use Structured and Skills-Based Recruitment:

Implement structured interviews and skills-based assessments to reduce bias. Diverse selection panels and inclusive job adverts also help attract a broader talent pool.

7. Monitor and Address Bonus and Overtime Disparities:

Ensure that bonuses, overtime, and unsociable hours pay are distributed fairly across genders. Analyse starting salaries and performance scores for bias.

8. Tackle Workplace Harassment:

Create a safe and respectful workplace by implementing strong anti-harassment policies and training. This improves retention and supports women's career progression.

Resources:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gender-pay-gap-reporting-guidance-for-employers>