



Gender Pay Gap Report 2024

We believe our workforce (volunteers and employees) should reflect the true diversity of the MS community. Everyone should feel included and empowered in their role while feeling safe to bring their authentic selves to work if they chose. We're committed to building and maintaining a culture that values difference as a core strength and fosters inclusivity.

We launched our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy in 2021 and committed to introduce disability and ethnicity pay gap reporting for our employees. We plan to do this for all the protected characteristics as soon as we've collected enough data.

In 2023, our gender pay gap was 7.63%. This is higher than in 2022 but is still relatively low amongst the charities we use as a benchmark.

However, there is still a gap which has increased compared to last year. We want to close it entirely and we'll continue to look at ways to do this.

Terminology

This report fulfils our legal obligation to undertake gender pay gap reporting as an organisation of over 250 employees. But we are aware the terminology used is not inclusive of all gender identities and expressions.

The report is based on data captured from national insurance and HMRC information which is based on the binary definition of sex (assigned at birth). To reflect this, the terms male and female are used through this report.

However, we acknowledge that some colleagues may not identify with either of these terms. As we expand our pay gap reporting as we collect more data, we will publish a more inclusive gender pay gap.

Our gender pay gap (reported in April 2024, based on the data snapshot from 2023):

- Total number of employees in pay gap calculation 282 (10 employees based in NI fall outside this calculation)
- Our mean gender pay gap is 7.63% (4.57% in 2022)
- Our median gender pay gap is 3.68% (1.82% in 2022)
- We do not have a bonus payment system

This table shows the percentage of female and male staff in each section of our pay range in April 2023.



Pay	Male	Female	Male	Female
Upper (75-100%)	24	46	34%	66%
Upper Middle (50-75%)	18	53	25%	75%
Lower Middle (25-50%)	15	55	21%	79%
Lower (0-25%)	19	52	27%	73%
Total	76	206	27%	73%

Why has our pay gap increased?

There has been a 3% increase in our pay gap compared to 2023 (reporting for 2022). It is disappointing to see an increase in our pay gap when we are working to close it.

There may be a number of reasons for this increase:

- We have employed more females than males this year. The number of males has stayed the same but the number of females has increased.
- There are more males employed in upper section of our pay scale compared to other sections. While most females are in the lower middle section.
- We have more females who work part-time hours.
- As an organisation we are undergoing a period of transformation. Over the last year we have recruited to several high-level roles to support this transformation. Unfortunately, these appointments have tended to be from historically male dominated levels and backgrounds. This is something we need to address.

What we're doing to close our pay gap

As part of our ongoing EDI work, we have committed to continuing to find ways to reduce our gender pay gap. And understanding more about our other pay gaps. This work forms part of our transformation project which is looking at improving our internal culture. We have also recently undertaken a full pay review.

As part of the pay review process our partners Innecto carried out some equity analysis to determine whether our preferred options for a new pay structure would impact one employee group more favourably than another. The difference in average increase received by males and females is minimal (£239), with women receiving slightly higher increase 9.4%

To reduce our pay gap we have already:

- Commissioned an external pay and reward review to make sure our pay structure and approach is fair and transparent.



- Delivered an updated management and leadership development training programme. We hope this will make sure all colleagues are supported, managed and led sensitively, inclusively and confidently.
- Through our Aspire management programme we have evaluated our approach to hybrid working. The project team provided recommendations for how our managers can support colleagues through hybrid working.
- The Aspire programme gives internal staff the skills needed to become managers and supports our ambitions to redress the gender imbalance at the top of the organisation.

There have been more female than male participants in each cohort since 2021, based on HMRC data. In the most recent (2023) cohort the split was 64% female. We do recognise that there are other imbalances and inequities at the higher levels of the organisation and we are committed to redressing these.

- Introduced new leave policies which give employees the opportunity to buy and sell annual leave (up to 5 days) and the opportunity to choose whether they work bank holidays or not.
- Committed to always advertise internally and externally for roles at Head and Director level, to make sure we make senior opportunities available to a diverse pool of candidates.
- We offer easier ways for candidates to request reasonable adjustments and support with their requests. We now do this throughout the recruitment process.
- We will expand on our EDI training offer. To support this we have recruited an expert EDI trainer. It will raise awareness as well as supporting behavioural change. This will help to support our aspirations to create a more inclusive culture. This training will be delivered to all staff and some of our volunteers, depending on their role.
- Introduced anonymous recruitment. Recruiters do not see any of the personal information of candidates on applications.
- Delivered unconscious bias training to all new managers and other staff involved in recruitment decisions.
- Introduced an apprenticeship scheme. We've already recruited candidates with strong potential and are supporting their learning while they're working with us. Between 2021 and 2024 we have recruited 8 apprentices and 75% were female.

This year we plan to:



- Collect data to allow us to report on other pay gaps. As a minimum we hope to be able to report our ethnicity and disability pay gaps. To do this we need to build trust with colleagues to allow them to feel safe to share their sensitive personal information.
- Make sure we attract diverse candidates for our roles through advertising vacancies in media that will reach candidates from communities currently under-represented at the MS Society. For example, as a Stonewall Diversity Champion we can advertised through their recruitment portal Proud employers.
- Review and update our recruitment and on-boarding processes to make sure our interview processes remove unconscious bias. For example, we now have safer recruitment training which supports good practice when recruiting to roles
- Develop further our employee journey. Building in inclusion at each stage from recruitment to retention and even to exit. We will work with an external organisation to develop this.