Gender Pay Gap Report 2026

We believe our workforce, should reflect the diversity of the MS community. Everyone should feel included and empowered in their role, and safe to bring their authentic selves to work if they choose. We are committed to building and maintaining a culture that values difference as a core strength and fosters inclusion.

In 2025, our mean gender pay gap, which compares the average hourly pay of female colleagues with that of male colleagues, was 9.46%, compared with 4.97% in 2024. Any increase in the gap is disappointing, so we have carried out a more detailed analysis of the data behind the figures to better understand the factors contributing to this change. Several factors influenced the increase. Some reduced the gap, while others widened it. These included the introduction of a new pay and reward policy, which helped reduce the gap and is expected to continue doing so next year, and an increase in the number of female colleagues making higher personal pension contributions through our salary sacrifice scheme, which increased the reported gap. Another factor affecting the gap is the size and composition of our workforce: the MS Society employed 71 male colleagues and 201 female colleagues at the time of reporting. Further context is provided below.

Terminology

This report fulfils our legal obligation to publish gender pay gap information as an organisation with more than 250 employees. The report is based on data drawn from National Insurance and HMRC records, which use the binary definition of sex assigned at birth. To reflect this, the terms male and female are used throughout the report. However, we recognise that some colleagues may not identify with either of these terms.

Our gender pay gap (reported in April 2026, based on the data snapshot from 2025):

• Total number of employees included in the pay gap calculation: 272 (8 employees based in Northern Ireland fall outside this calculation)

• Our mean gender pay gap is 9.46% (4.97% in 2024)

• Our median gender pay gap is 4.56% (1.52% in 2024)

• We do not operate a bonus payment system

This table shows the percentage of female and male colleagues in each pay quartile in April 2025.

Pay	Male	Female	Male	Female
Upper (75-100%)	22	46	32.4%	67.6%
Upper Middle (50-75%)	17	51	25%	75%
Lower Middle (25-50%)	18	50	26.5%	73.5%
Lower (0-25%)	14	54	20.6%	79.4%
Total	71	201	26.1%	73.9%

This table shows the percentage of female and male colleagues in each pay quartile in April 2024.

Pay	Male	Female	Male	Female
Upper (75-100%)	21	48	30%	70%
Upper Middle (50-75%)	16	54	23%	77%
Lower Middle (25-50%)	20	50	29%	71%
Lower (0-25%)	16	54	23%	77%
Total	73	206	26%	74%

Why has our pay gap increased?

Between 2024 and 2025, several factors contributed to the increase in our gender pay gap:

- There were small changes in the number of female and male colleagues in the upper and upper middle quartiles. The number of female colleagues in the upper quartile decreased from 48 to 46, and in the upper middle quartile from 54 to 51. Over the same period, the number of male colleagues in the upper quartile increased from 21 to 22, and in the upper middle quartile from 16 to 17. In an organisation of our size, relatively small movements between quartiles can have a significant effect on the overall mean and median calculations.
- Our further analysis shows that, for colleagues who were in post in both years, the mean pay gap actually reduced from 8.56% to 7.37%. This suggests that the new pay and reward policy helped reduce the gap, although the full effect was not yet visible because pay protection remained in place until July 2025.
- Salary sacrifice has also affected the reported figures. Colleagues can choose to increase their pension contributions above the standard 3%, which reduces the hourly rate used for gender pay reporting. In 2025, 71 colleagues did this, of whom 73% were female, and there was a particular significant change in contribution made among female colleagues in the upper quartile.
- Joiner and leaver patterns also affected the figures. Between April 2024 and April 2025, 58 individuals left the organisation and 51 joined. While the overall gender balance remained broadly the same, the average hourly rate for male colleagues increased by 19% and the average hourly rate for female colleagues decreased by 14%. The most significant change appears to have been in the upper pay band, where the change was driven by timing of recruitment to fill the vacancies

created by the movement rather than by a substantial shift in the overall gender balance.

Why does a pay gap still exist?

Several structural factors continue to influence our gender pay gap:

- A higher proportion of male colleagues are employed in the upper pay quartile compared with other quartiles, including the significant implications a male CEO has on the calculation.
- Changes to the employee pension costs under the salary sacrifice scheme and other benefits such as buying and selling of leave and child care vouchers all have an impact on the hourly rate calculation used to calculate the pay gap. However, these are benefits that are designed to create a more inclusive environment and are more frequently taken up by females.

The gender pay gap does not indicate unequal pay for equal work. Rather, it reflects the distribution of male and female colleagues across different pay levels within the organisation.

What we're doing to close our pay gap

As part of our ongoing Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) work, we are committed to reducing our gender pay gap and improving our understanding of other pay gaps across the organisation. This work forms part of our wider organisational transformation programme to strengthen our internal culture.

To support this, we have:

- delivered a management and leadership development programme to ensure colleagues are supported and led in an inclusive, confident and effective way.
- continued to develop internal talent through the Aspire management programme, equipping colleagues with the skills needed to progress into management roles at all levels.
- committed to advertising all Head and Director-level roles both internally and externally to ensure access to senior opportunities for a diverse pool of candidates.
- improved our recruitment process by making it easier for candidates to request reasonable adjustments at every stage.
- continued to support smart working, flexible working, compressed hours and other policies that help colleagues balance work and personal commitments.

This year, we plan to:

- continue building trust with colleagues so they feel safe sharing personal data, enabling us to expand our reporting to include ethnicity and disability pay gaps.
- strengthen our attraction strategy by advertising roles through channels that reach underrepresented communities. For example, as a Stonewall Diversity Champion, we advertise roles via the Proud Employers recruitment portal.
- strengthen our attraction strategy by raising visibility of the work of our accreditations and memberships including as a Disability Confident Employer, Proud Employer (Champion), Carers Confident L1, Race Equality matters membership and menopause friendly membership.
- review and enhance our recruitment and onboarding processes to further reduce unconscious bias. This includes embedding safer recruitment training to promote inclusive hiring practices.