

Scotland's Gender Pay Gap

Scotland's gender pay gap increased between 2023 and 2024.

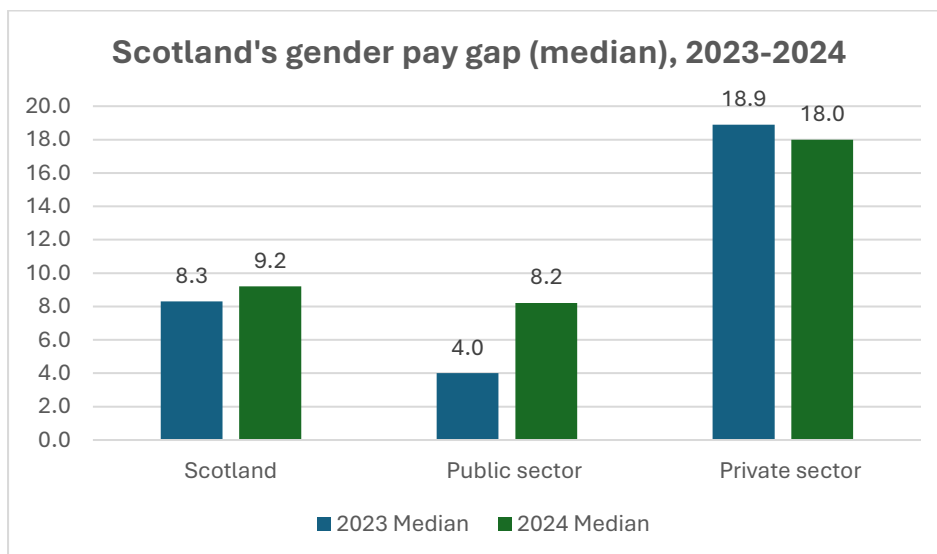
Figures within the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings published this week,¹ shows that the mean pay gender pay gap for all workers (part-time and full-time) rose from 6.4% in 2023 to 8.3% in 2024.²

This increase has been driven by an increase in the gender pay gap within the public sector. The pay gap within the private sector has fallen (although it remains higher than the public sector). More analysis is needed to determine what has driven these trends but the fall in the private sector could be related to the minimum wage benefiting low-paid workers who are more likely to be women, while the increase in the public sector may be related to compositional effects and potentially the timing of pay deals – with female dominated public sector groups such as council workers still in dispute.



STUC analysis based on ASHE data

The median gender pay gap, for all workers (part-time and full-time) rose from 8.3% in 2023 to 9.1% in 2024. Again, this has been driven by an increase in the pay gap in the public sector.

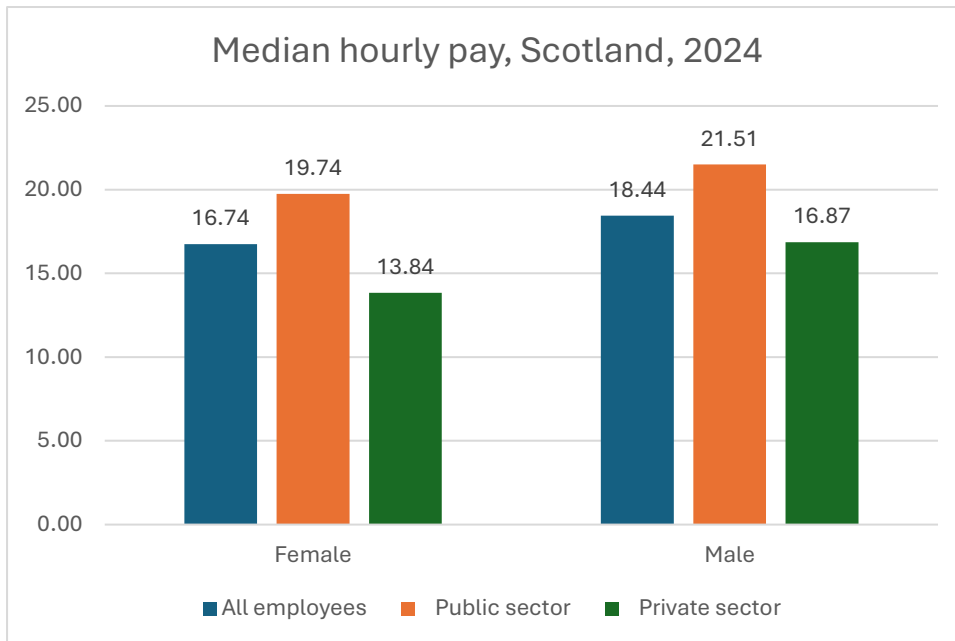


STUC analysis based on ASHE data

What does this mean for the average worker?

While the typical man saw an increase of a £1 to their pay pack, the typical women only saw their pay go up by 74 pence.

Median pay³ for women in 2024 was £16.74, increasing from £16 in 2023, while median pay for men was £18.44, increasing from £17.44 in 2023. These differences in hourly pay, over the course of a year, represent more than £3,000 a year.



STUC analysis based on ASHE data⁴

When we look at hourly mean pay, the difference is even greater. Mean pay for men in 2024 was £22.12, increasing from £20.98 in 2023, while mean pay for women was £20.28 in 2024, increasing from £19.63 in 2023.

When we look at gross earnings for all employees – median earnings are £8,000 less. Median female earnings are £22,382 while median male earnings are £30,739. It should be noted that this doesn't account for differences in hours worked – hence our earlier £3,000 comparison based on hourly pay.

Implications

The pay gap has been falling for decades and this increase, which represents a 30% increase on the mean gender pay gap, appears to be a significant reversal.

As well as investing in childcare provision and undertaking a range of measures to address occupational segregation, inflexible working practice, pay discrimination, and educational and societal stereotypes, the figures highlight the need for the Scottish Government to boost pay in the public sector. Three quarters of the council workforce is female⁵ and boosting pay for council workers could meaningfully reduce Scotland's gender pay gap.

The UK Budget is resulting in additional funding for the Scottish Government of £1.5 billion in 2024-25 and £3.4 billion in 2025-26. This money should be used to settle the local government dispute with UNISON and boost public sector pay.

For further information contact:

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¹<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/annualsurveyofhoursandearningsashegenderpaygaptables>

² While the UK and Scottish Government tend to report the median pay gap, the STUC, women's rights organisations and international measures, prefer to report the mean pay gap as it accounts for the earnings of all workers including the highest paid and lowest paid.

³ While we use mean pay to estimate the pay gap as it incorporates extremes, we use median pay to assess typical pay for the average worker as it excludes extremes.

⁴<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/regionbypublicandprivatesectorashtable25>

⁵ https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0027/53559/Local-Government-Workforce-Report-2024-v4.pdf