

Outward's Gender and Diversity Pay Gap Report 2025-2026

An abstract painting featuring several faces rendered in a textured, expressive style. The color palette is dominated by warm tones, including yellows, oranges, and browns, with some cooler tones like greys and blues. The brushstrokes are thick and visible, creating a sense of depth and movement. The faces are partially obscured and layered, suggesting a collective or diverse group of people.

Contents

Introduction and purpose of the report	1
Outward Gender Pay Gap	2-3
Overview of the diversity pay gap.	4
Ethnicity Pay Gap analysis	5
Disability Analysis	6
Age Analysis	6
Sexual identity analysis	7
Conclusions and recommendations	8
Next Steps and Priorities for 2026–2027	9-10

Introduction

This report explains Outward's gender pay gap figures for 2025/2026 and presents our wider diversity pay gap analysis, covering ethnicity, disability, age and sexual identity. The figures are based on data collected on 5 April 2025 in line with the Government guidelines.

Under the Equality Act 2010 Regulations 2017, organisations with more than 250 employees must report their gender pay gap every year. The Gender Pay Gap shows the difference in average hourly earnings between men and women across the whole organisation. It does not measure equal pay.

Gender Pay Gap vs. Equal Pay

Important! It is important to distinguish between the gender pay gap and equal pay:

- The gender pay gap measures the difference in average earnings between men and women across an organisation.
- Equal pay ensures that men and women are paid the same for work of equal value, as required under the Equality Act 2010. Failure to meet equal pay requirements is unlawful.

Unlike gender pay gap reporting, diversity pay gap reporting is not required by law.

As part of our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, we first published a broader diversity pay gap report in 2024. This year we continue that work, expanding our analysis and comparing results where possible. Some characteristics present challenges because the number of colleagues in certain groups is minimal or colleagues choose not to disclose information. To protect anonymity, we have grouped some data into broader categories and focused on high level patterns rather than detailed breakdowns. This means the findings will not reflect every individual experience, but they give an important overview of where gaps exist and how representation across pay levels affects pay outcomes.

1.1. National Picture.

Across the UK, the gender pay gap has continued to narrow, although progress remains uneven. Long term data shows steady improvement since 1997, with both the full time and overall gender pay gaps gradually reducing. According to the Office for National Statistics, the national median Gender Pay Gap for all employees in April 2024 was 13.1%. This means that women earned less, on average, than men. The gap had reduced from 14.2% the previous year. For full time employees, the mean gender pay gap fell from 7.5% to 7.0% over the same period.

These figures show that, although the national gender pay gap continues to close, women still earn less than men on average, especially in senior roles and full-time work. Structural factors, including occupational segregation and the underrepresentation of women in higher paid roles, continue to influence national results.

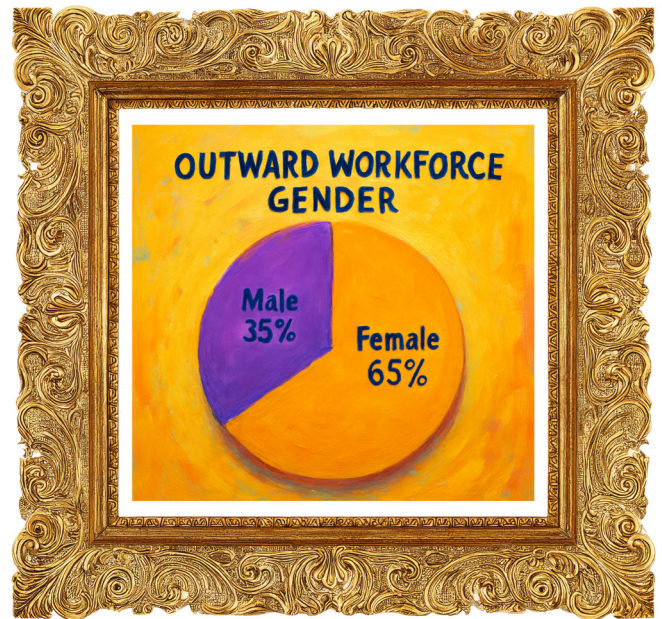
In the 2024 to 2025 reporting year, most large employers reported a gender pay gap in favour of men. 78% of organisations stated that men's median hourly pay was higher than women's. 14% reported a higher median hourly rate for women, and 9% reported no gap.

At present there is no national benchmark for ethnicity pay gaps because data is not collected consistently and few organisations publish their figures voluntarily; guidance for ethnicity pay gap reporting is limited. This makes it difficult to compare Outward's ethnicity pay data with wider trends.

2. Outward Gender Pay Gap

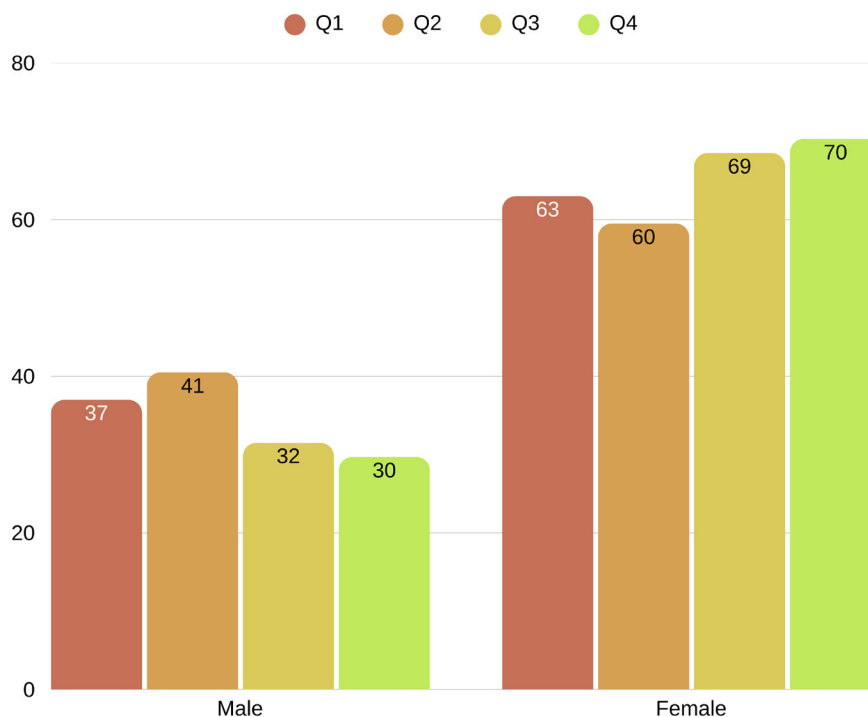
2.1. Workforce and gender distribution

At the time of the annual reporting point, Outward employed 495 staff members across fixed and flexi roles, a small decrease of around 3% from the previous year. Of these, 324 were women (65%) and 178 were men (35%). This means the organisation continues to have a predominantly female workforce. Outward's gender profile is broadly in line with the wider social care sector. Skills for Care's 2025 report shows that 78% of the national social care workforce is female and 22% male. Outward therefore remains more gender balanced than the sector overall.



2.2 Distribution across pay quartiles

The distribution of men and women across the four pay quartiles reflects the overall workforce split. Women make up the majority in each quartile, including the upper quartile. While Outward's pay structure ensures equal hourly rates for equivalent roles, the higher proportion of women in higher paid roles continues to influence the overall pay gap figures.



2.3 Mean (Average) Gender Pay Gap

(The mean average pay is calculated by adding up the pay of all in the group (fixed and flexi) and dividing this by the number of people in the group.)

The average hourly pay for men at Outward is £14.89. For women it is £15.56. This results in a mean gender pay gap of -4.6%, meaning women earn slightly more than men on average. This negative gap has widened by 2.6% points since April 2024.

Over the past year, the average hourly rate for men decreased by 1.20%, while the average rate for women increased by 1.17%. Although overall hourly pay reduced for both groups, the change was more significant for men, contributing to the widening of the negative gap.

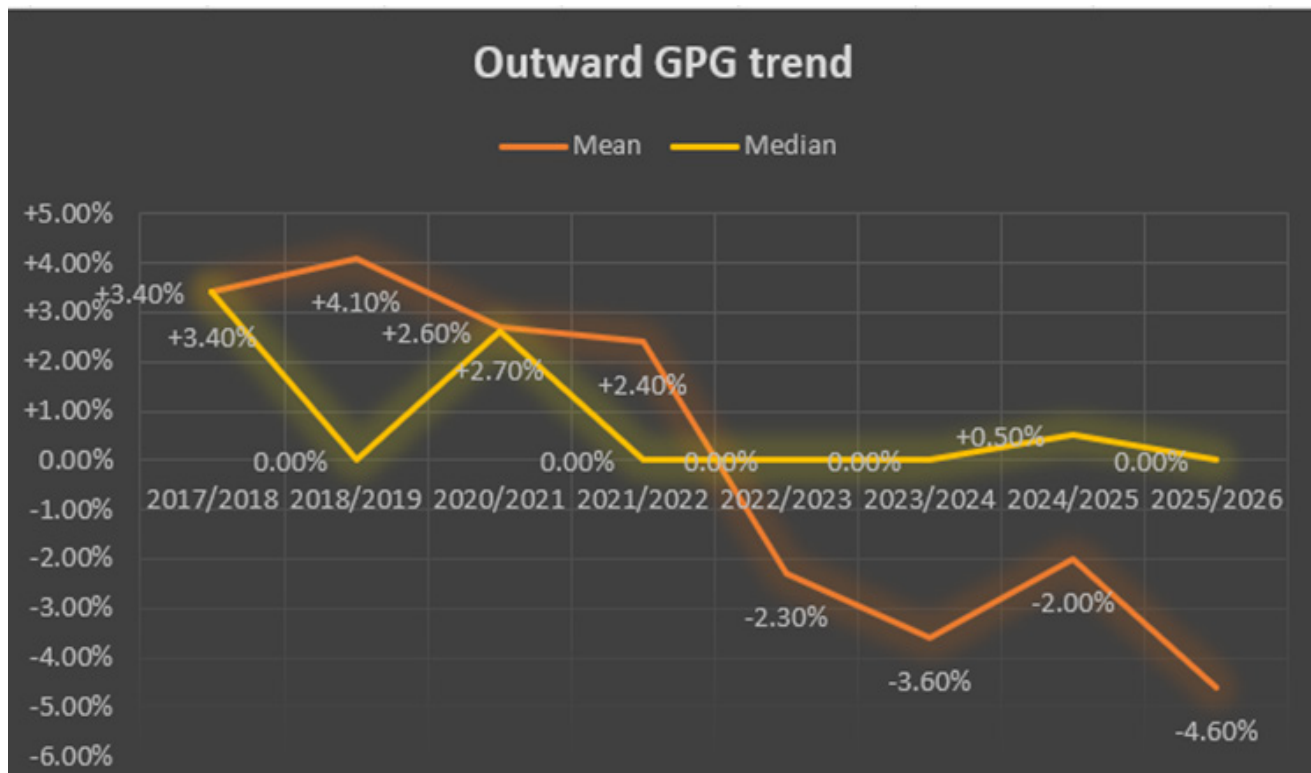
2.4 Median Gender Pay Gap

(The median pay is arrived at by placing the hourly pay for all in the group in order of amount, the mid-point value in the group being the median.)

The median hourly pay is the same for men and women. This results in a median gender pay gap of 0%. Median pay is often seen as the more stable measure, and the absence of a gap here shows that typical earnings for men and women are broadly level across the organisation.

2.5. Outward GPG eight year trend.

Outward's gender pay gap has remained consistently low for eight years. While the figures have moved slightly from year to year, both the mean and median gaps have stayed well below national levels, which reinforces the organisation's long term commitment to a stable GPG.



These stable results reflect a workforce where women and men performing similar roles are paid fairly.

2.6. Bonus GPG

During the reporting period, employees received a mix of one-off non-consolidated payments, long service awards and PRP bonuses. A one-off non-consolidated payment was awarded to non-services staff instead of a consolidated salary uplift. In total, 142 employees received one or more of these payments: 96 women and 46 men. This represents 29.63% of all female staff and 38.01% of all male staff.

The average payment for women was £612.86, compared with £561.33 for men. This results in a mean bonus pay gap of -9.18% (negative figure), meaning women received a slightly higher average bonus amount across the combined payment types. The median payment was the same for both groups, giving a median bonus gap of 0%. This shows that the typical award was identical regardless of gender and that payments were applied consistently.

The distribution of bonus amounts also shows that variation existed within both groups and was not linked to gender.

3. Overview of the diversity pay gap.

For this part of the report, we use the mean average to compare pay between different groups.

The analysis covers four protected characteristics: ethnicity, disability, age and sexual identity. As in previous years, some groups are small or colleagues choose not to disclose information. To protect privacy and ensure meaningful results, some categories are grouped together. This means we cannot present detailed breakdowns, but the findings still help show where differences exist and how representation across pay quartiles affects pay outcomes.

Across all characteristics, the most significant influence on the pay gap is how colleagues are distributed across different pay levels. Groups with more staff in lower paid or entry level roles tend to have a lower average hourly rate, even when people in equivalent roles are paid the same.

4. Ethnicity Pay Gap analysis

The Ethnicity Pay Gap shows the difference between the average hourly pay of colleagues from different ethnic backgrounds. Unlike gender pay reporting, ethnicity pay reporting involves several groups and therefore needs more careful interpretation.

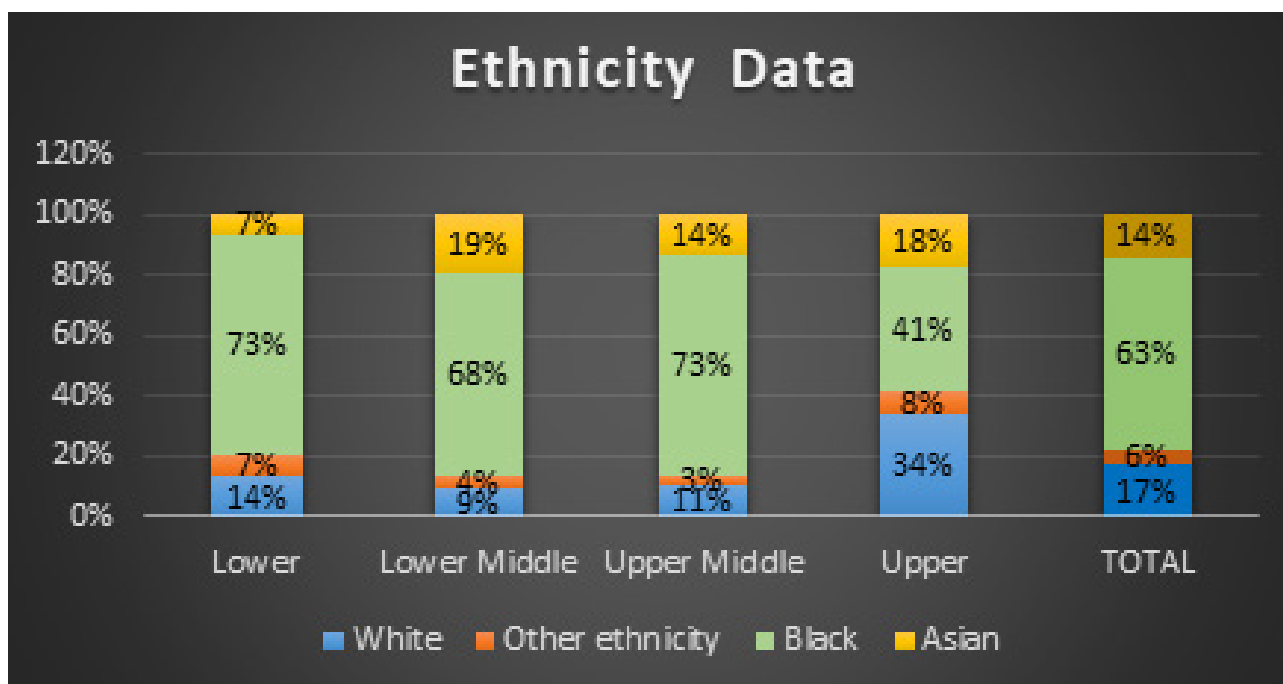
In line with government guidance, ethnic groups have been combined into broader categories to protect confidentiality where numbers are small. This helps ensure the findings are meaningful while avoiding identification of individuals.

This year's analysis shows that the main driver of the ethnicity pay gap is representation in higher paid roles. A greater proportion of white colleagues are in the upper pay quartile, which increases their overall average hourly rate. Ethnically diverse colleagues, while strongly represented across the organisation, are more concentrated in lower and middle quartiles, where roles tend to have lower pay rates.

Regional Context

Outward operates within the London social care sector, which is one of the most ethnically diverse workforces in the country. According to Skills for Care, the workforce across London is made up of around 22% white staff, 22% Asian or Asian British staff, and 50% Black African, Caribbean or Black British staff. At Outward, the workforce is even more diverse, with 17% white colleagues and 83% from ethnically diverse groups.

Nationally and across the sector, research shows that ethnically diverse colleagues are often underrepresented in more senior or higher paid roles. This pattern is also reflected in Outward's results, although the gaps have reduced compared to the previous year.



2025 ethnicity pay gap summary

The 2025 findings show positive movement across most comparisons:

- The gap between white and Asian colleagues is 1.56%, down from 2.71% last year.
- White colleagues earn 2.19% more than colleagues in the other ethnic group category, a decrease from 6.64%.
- Black colleagues earn 2.28% less than white colleagues, down from 8.88%.
- The Asian to Black gap moved from minus 6.34% in 2024 to plus 0.83% in 2025, 7.17% decrease.
- The gap between Black colleagues and the other ethnic group is 0.19% in favour of Black colleagues, compared to 2.46% last year.

Although differences remain, the gaps this year are smaller and overall, more positive.

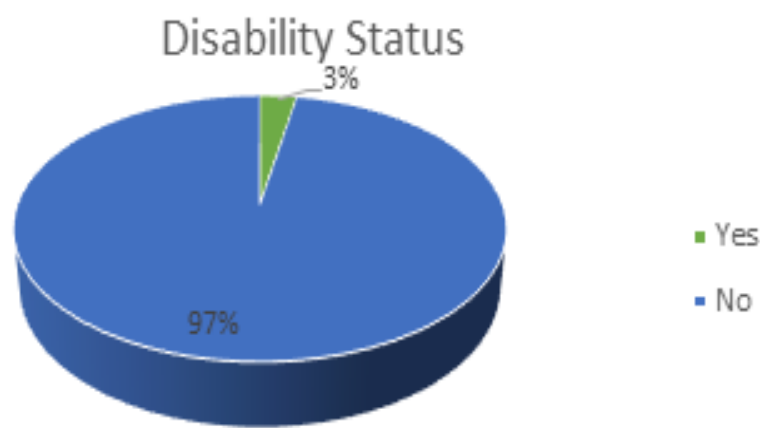
A full comparison table is included in the report to show the mean hourly pay differences between each ethnic group.

5. Disability Analysis

The Disability Pay Gap compares the average hourly pay of disabled colleagues with that of non disabled colleagues. For 2025, Outward's Disability Pay Gap is 10.8%. However, the number of colleagues who have declared a disability is very small, which makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions. The disabled group is almost 30 times smaller than the non disabled group, and this imbalance can significantly skew the results. Patterns in disclosure may also influence the gap. Senior employees may be less likely to disclose a disability, and colleagues in lower paid roles may be more likely to disclose, leading to a higher proportion of disabled staff in the lower pay quartiles. This affects the overall average pay for the group.

The Labour Force Survey for 2024/ 2025 reported that 21% of workers in social care occupations were disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act definition. Outward's declared figures are much lower, which may indicate under reporting.

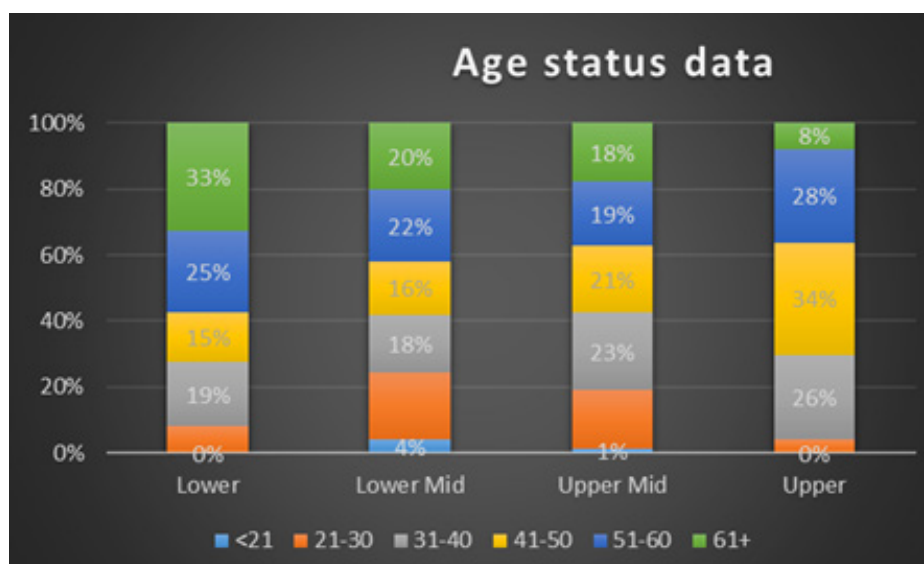
Further work is needed to encourage comfortable and confident disclosure.



6. Age Analysis

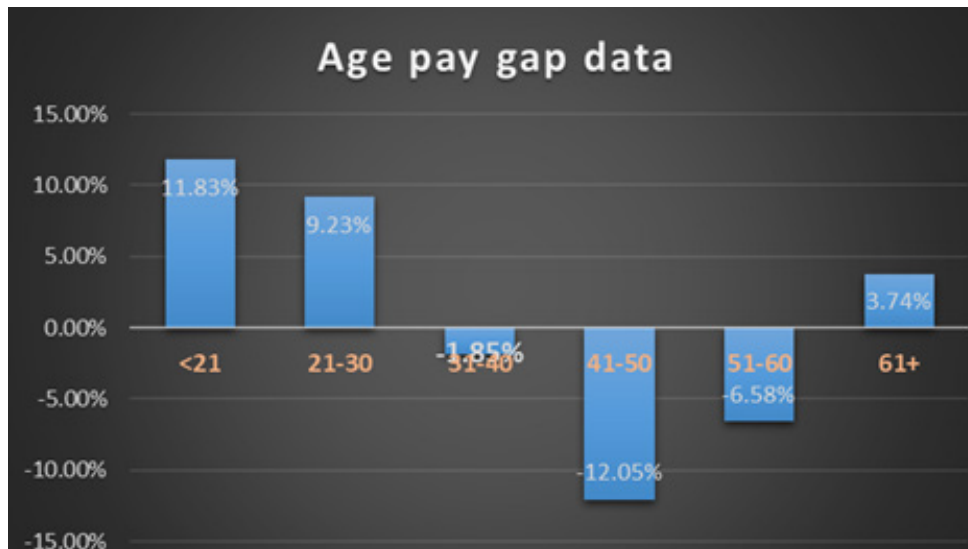
We compare the average hourly pay of each age group with the overall organisational average. A negative figure means the group earns more than the overall average, and a positive figure means the group earns less.

The pattern at Outward reflects a typical career journey. Younger colleagues are more likely to be in entry level or lower paid roles, so their average pay tends to sit below the organisational average. Pay usually rises through early and mid-career as people gain experience and move into more senior roles, often peaking in the middle age ranges before levelling off later in working life.



At Outward, this pattern appears clearly in the figures:

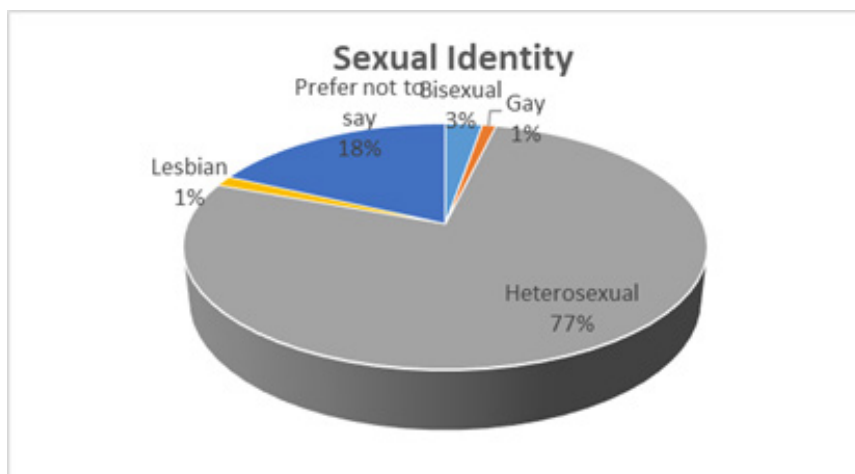
- 31 to 40: -1.85. This group earns slightly more than the organisational average, showing progression beyond early career roles.
- 41 to 50: -12.05%. This is the largest negative difference, indicating that colleagues in this age group are, on average, the highest paid and likely at or near peak career level.
- 51 to 60: -6.58%. Pay remains above the organisational average, although slightly lower than the 41 to 50 group, reflecting a gentle levelling after peak earnings.



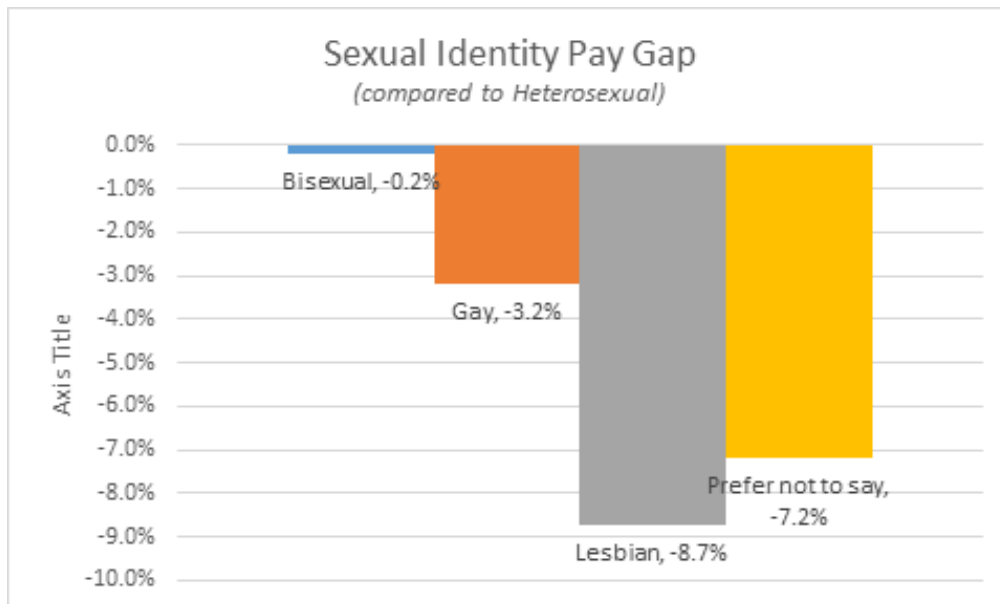
These differences are mainly driven by the distribution of roles across pay quartiles rather than differences in pay for the same job. It highlights the need to support younger colleagues to move into higher paid roles over time, and to ensure colleagues later in their careers continue to have access to development and fair pay.

7. Sexual identity analysis

The Sexual Identity Pay Gap compares the average hourly pay of colleagues who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+) with the pay of heterosexual colleagues. For 2025, the mean pay gap is -1.13%, which means LGB+ colleagues earn very slightly more on average than heterosexual colleagues. The difference is insignificant, and it does not indicate any significant pay advantage or disadvantage.



As with other diversity characteristics, the accuracy of the data depends on disclosure. Some colleagues may choose not to share information about their sexual identity, which can influence the results.



Although the gap is small, it remains important to monitor representation across pay levels to make sure that progression and development opportunities are fair and inclusive for all colleagues.

8.0 Conclusions and recommendations

Outward's gender pay gap is low and negative. The mean gap is -4.6% and the median is 0%. In most public reporting, a pay gap is a concern when women are paid less on average than men. Our negative gap means women earn slightly more on average and, taken with a 0% median, indicates no pay gap in the usual sense of disadvantage to women. Equal pay requirements continue to be met.

Across the diversity pay gap analysis, representation across pay levels is the main driver of differences. Ethnicity gaps have narrowed, the disability result should be read with care due to very small numbers, the age pattern follows a normal career path, and the sexual identity gap is small and negative.

What is done

- Equal pay for equivalent roles, in line with the Equality Act 2010, with regular checks to keep roles aligned.
- Support Workers paid the London Living Wage.
- Long service awards and other payments applied equally.
- Senior management team predominantly female, reflecting our workforce profile.
- New staff survey launched with EDI questions to track progress on morale and inclusion.
- Board member lead for EDI and a People Strategy workstream with a clear action plan.
- Funded places on Skills for Care's Moving Up programme for underrepresented groups.
- Staff Engagement Forum co designing survey questions to strengthen employee voice.
- Accreditation with Inclusive Employers and working towards the next level.
- Ongoing updates to the EDI strategy and a refreshed EDI questionnaire aligned to current standards.
- Aspired to the Disability Confident Employer status, including an interview offer for disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria.
- Easy Read versions of key policies to improve accessibility for colleagues with learning disabilities, dyslexia or for whom English is an additional language.

Looking ahead

- Strengthen data quality and disclosure, with clear definitions and simple routes for colleagues to update their information.
- Increase representation in management roles through internal progression and inclusive recruitment into middle and upper quartiles.
- Provide targeted development for underrepresented groups and transparent progression pathways for early career colleagues.
- Keep recruitment and promotion processes inclusive through the Workable system, from advert to induction.
- Maintain regular equal pay reviews, monitor starting salaries and off cycle adjustments to prevent unintended disparities.
- Build capability and culture through training on unconscious bias and inclusive management, and maintain open dialogue via staff forums.
- Continue to publish diversity pay gap analysis each year, refine the approach as data quality improves, and report progress to the Board.

These steps will help shift representation where it matters most, keep pay practices fair and transparent, and ensure our reporting remains robust and meaningful over time.

