

Swale Borough Council

Pay Policy Statement – March 2026

1. Introduction

The new Workforce Strategy sets out four key themes:

- Talent and Development;
- Our Brand and Recruitment;
- Wellbeing and Reward; and
- Organisational Change and Design

These strategic themes recognise the importance of pay and rewards in our role as an employer. Our work on pay and rewards began in 2010 with an equal pay audit resulting in significant changes to the Council's terms and conditions. The work continued through the implementation of the Workforce Strategy, and the development of a Total Rewards approach to remuneration for council staff.

Swale Borough Council has its own employment terms and conditions and undertakes local pay bargaining with UNISON.

2. Terms and Conditions – Decision Making

Terms and conditions for employees are a non-executive function, and the responsibility for decisions on these matters is delegated to the Policy and Resources Committee.

The responsibility for agreeing the appraisal and remuneration of the Chief Officers lies with a Member panel. Senior appointments are also the responsibility of a Member panel.

Where the decision of the Policy and Resources Committee has a budgetary implication beyond the agreed in-year budget, this will also require agreement from Full Council.

3. Reward Strategy

The Reward Strategy was developed in full consultation with trade unions, staff, and Members and was agreed by the General Purposes Committee in 2010. This was a very thorough piece of work that ensured the Council managed the terms of employees at all levels in the same way, and applied the principles of equal pay and performance management to the scheme that was developed.

The principles for the reward strategy are to:

- (i) support a **performance** orientated organisation;
- (ii) provide an **attractive** employment package at all levels;

- (iii) be relevant to a **modern** local government authority;
- (iv) have a pay structure that is **transparent** and straightforward;
- (v) reward people **fairly** and consistently;
- (vi) move toward a **Total Reward** approach; and
- (vii) be **affordable** within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The reward strategy takes a 'Total Reward' approach to the benefits package received by employees at the Council to ensure that maximum benefit is gained from all aspects of what is on offer to employees. The key elements of this package are set out below.

3.1 Pay Scale and Pay Progression

Our policy for pay grades within the organisation is to apply an objective assessment of the relative 'size and value' of all our roles using a formal job evaluation process. Posts are graded through the INBUCON Job Evaluation Scheme, and this process identifies the value or size of the role when all the duties are being performed and the employee is fully effective in the role. Job evaluators are drawn from different parts of the organisation and trained to use the INBUCON scheme; every panel has one trade union representative as part of the panel.

The pay scale has up to five increments per grade which recognise that with development in a role over time an employee is of more value to the organisation and therefore warrants a higher salary. There are fewer incremental points in the lower grades and more in the more complex roles. New appointments to post will normally be at the first point of the grade, unless there is evidence of a skill shortage in line with the criteria set out in the Market Supplement Policy. The pay scale is set out at Appendix I (A).

In July 2019, the council agreed to move to the real Living Wage which is independently calculated by the Living Wage Foundation. This gave a significant increase to our low paid staff. The Lowest Paid employees are defined as those whose posts have INBUCON points of 121 to 153, which place them into grade 2 of the pay scale. The real Living Wage has been applied every year since 2019 to ensure our lowest paid staff are rewarded appropriately to meet their living cost needs.

The Council has a process of local pay consultation with UNISON to determine whether there should be an annual pay award, taking into consideration both inflation and affordability.

Incremental progression is assessed against the agreed Competency Profile for the role and evidence of the necessary Performance Standards and agreed objectives. Assessment will be on an annual basis, but will be linked to the clear and continuous performance at the level required at each incremental step. The rules for pay progression are set out in Appendix I (B).

Incremental progression is assessed by an employee's line manager in consultation with the Head of Service and Director who has to approve the recommendations within their Directorate; this is monitored collectively by Senior Management Team.

The process and timetable for appraisals and incremental progression for the Chief Executive and Directors is set out at Appendix I (C).

3.2 Market Supplements

The pay principles recognise that the Council needs to be an attractive employer whilst also balancing this with the needs to manage the budget and protect the public purse. Within local government there are several skill areas that have been extremely difficult over the years in terms of both recruitment and retention - this is particularly in fields where there are private sector employers competing for the same skills, or in unattractive areas of work.

In order to be able to respond to recruitment difficulties the Council has a Market Supplement Policy which sets clear criteria for the agreement and retention of a market supplement. The Policy is at Appendix I (D). Currently, there are twenty four employees in receipt of Market Supplements that are either working in Planning or Legal teams.

3.3 Pension

The Council offers access to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which is a significant benefit to employees and is one of the aspects of the Council's Total Rewards package.

The pension scheme is standard between all local government employers, and in broad terms offers a pension benefit equivalent to 1/49th of pensionable salary per year of service, where pensionable salary is calculated on a career average with benefits paid at state retirement age.

Although most of the rules associated with the scheme are set centrally, there are a few areas where local employers must define their own policy; the discretionary policy is attached at Appendix I (E). In broad terms it is not the policy of the Council to increase pension benefits to employees through any form of enhancement.

The LGPS is a defined benefits scheme which requires contribution rates from employees of between 5.5% and 12.5% depending on earnings, in accordance with the following table; in April 2014 there was an option to lower level contributions with the introduction of the 50/50 scheme.

Pensionable pay	Main Section	50/50 Section
Up to £17,800	5.50%	2.75%
£17,801 - £28,000	5.80%	2.90%
£28,001 - £45,600	6.50%	3.25%
£45,601 - £57,700	6.80%	3.40%
£57,701 - £81,000	8.50%	4.25%
£81,001 - £114,800	9.90%	4.95%
£114,801 - £135,300	10.50%	5.25%
£135,301 - £203,000	11.40%	5.70%
More than £203,001	12.50%	6.25%

The employer contribution rate, calculated as the future service rate excluding past service deficit for 2026 will be 16.4%, although this does vary from year to year.

Kent County Council is the administering authority for the Swale Borough Council scheme.

3.4 Pay Protection and Redundancy Payments

The Council has a Redundancy Policy which sets out the approach that must be followed if posts are going to be affected because of organisational change. The procedure sets out the approval process and the consultation timetable; it also sets out the terms for redundancy and pay protection. The Pay Protection Policy is set out at Appendix I (F).

Any payments paid to an employee in relation to redundancy shall be in accordance with the statutory redundancy payments scheme and any other regulations applicable, except that the Council will calculate a week's pay on actual earnings where this is in excess of the statutory maximum figure (***Local Govt. (Early Termination of Employment)(Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000***).

The policy of the organisation regarding re-employment following redundancy follow the NJC terms and conditions, i.e. if a redundant employee commences local government employment within one month of the redundancy then the redundancy payment must be returned. Any other re-employment will only be considered where all other Council rules on recruitment or procurement have been followed.

3.5 Special Severance Payments

In exceptional circumstances the Council may make a payment to an individual under a formal agreement.

Where this is the case the following authorisation process will apply to all staff:

- payments of £100,000 and above must be approved by a vote of full council, as set out in the Localism Act 2011
- payments of £20,000 and above, but below £100,000, must be personally approved and signed off by the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Leader and that of any others who have signed off the payment
- payments below £20,000 must be approved according to the local authority's scheme of delegation.

Where the proposed payment is to the Head of Paid Service, to avoid a conflict of interest it is expected that the payment should be approved by a panel including at least two independent persons.

3.6 Other payments

Honoraria: the Council has a policy to recognise situations where an employee takes on more responsibility on a temporary basis; normally for an agreed period of up to 6 months. This is often as a cost saving measure when there is a vacancy, maternity leave etc. In 2025/26 there were four people in receipt of honoraria.

Cash and Non-cash Awards

As part of the Total Rewards package the council has mechanisms for recognising exceptional contributions both from individuals and teams. In 2025/26 these were received by seven employees

Flexibility Allowances: certain members of staff (below management grades) are required to work outside of normal council working patterns. To compensate them for this flexibility they are paid a 10% supplement to their salary. In 2025/26 there were four people in receipt of this payment. This allowance has been reviewed and agreement reached with trade unions that the allowance would not be paid in the future to any employees that were aware of the requirement for working 'unsocial' hours at the time they applied for the position; this is the main cause of the reduction of the number of people still in receipt of the allowance.

Stand-by payments: a review of standby duties and payments was carried out in August 2019. This resulted in amending the Standby Allowance Policy to ensure that those employees who are required to take part in standby rotas and respond to call out duties are treated consistently across the Council and remunerated fairly for the duties. The standby payments are paid to a small number of employees (ten in 2025/26) who are on an out-of-hours on-call rota for specialist duties. The outcome of the review has also increased the level of remuneration to £125 each week for being on-call.

Bonuses: the Council does not have a bonus system for any grade of staff.

Car Payments: the Council removed lease cars and lease car allowances in 2010. However, a car allowance of up to £1,239 was given to those employees that are required to have a vehicle for their role and that drive a minimum of 2,000 miles annually. This changed in June 2016 with the allowance being reduced to £1000 per

annum and pro-rata for part time staff as well as an increase to the mileage threshold to 2,500. At the end of March 2026 this allowance was allocated to fifty three members of staff. The majority of staff in receipt of this payment are within the statutory services which require external visits e.g. planning, housing.

3.7 Special fees and arrangements

Special fees may be paid for certain additional duties; in general these are connected to election duties, and the funding for the allowance will not come from the Council's own budget. An additional fee is normally paid for the role of Returning Officer for the District elections however, this was previously incorporated into the Chief Executive's base salary where s/he is acting on behalf of the Council (eg borough and parish elections). This has changed and the additional fees will be paid for undertaking the role of Returning Officer, Counting Officer or other similar role, on behalf of another authority or organisation.

3.8 Other employee benefits

The Council provides access to an **Employee Assistance Programme** which provides staff and Councillors with both telephone and face-to-face counselling on a range of issues. The Council has access to an Occupational Health Service that helps to ensure that employees are properly supported to avoid taking sick leave and to return to work as soon as possible.

The Council supports employees in their role with a **development plan and training opportunities** to ensure they are fully qualified and trained to give excellent service.

On an annual basis the Council has an **Awards Ceremony** that recognises the best achievements of staff during the preceding year.

The Council offers a **salary sacrifice scheme** to employees for the purchase of bicycles. In December 2018, the Council introduced another salary sacrifice scheme for the purchase of cars. There is no cost to the Council of these schemes.

In 2014 the Council updated its **long service awards** scheme to include a wider range of employees. Small benefits (eg £25 shopping voucher) are given to those reaching ten years' service, and at five yearly intervals up to forty years' service. In addition, staff receive an additional day of leave for each long service award milestone achieved.

The Council introduced the opportunity for employees to **buy additional annual leave**, and six employees have used this benefit during 2025/26. This is at no cost to the Council.

Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme – the council offers a salary sacrifice Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (Shared Cost AVC) employee benefit that enables staff to make cost efficient retirement savings alongside their Local Government Pension Scheme.

4. Monitoring

Salary budgets are monitored through the normal budget management processes by line managers. Members and senior officers regularly examine the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and in particular consider ways to reduce costs to the Council.

The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency 2011 required that salary data was published on the highest earning staff within the Council; this was actioned by March 2011 as required by the Code. There has been further qualification of the salary threshold for publication which has been set at £50,000 and above. This information, plus the inclusion of all additional fees, is at Appendix 1 (G).

The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency September 2011 also requires that there is a process established to monitor the rate of growth of senior earnings compared to all other employees in the organisation. The formula required is to calculate the pay multiple of the Chief Executive's salary compared to the median earnings of all other employees; where there is any significant change year-on-year this should be explained. It is the Council's policy to use this pay multiple to monitor the relationship between remuneration of chief officers and other employees.

The recommendation in the 'Hutton Review of Fair Pay' 2011 has been followed:

"the pay multiple should be calculated on the basis of all taxable earnings for the given year, including base salary, variable pay, bonuses, allowances and the cash value of any benefits in kind"

	Chief Executive earnings	Median	Pay Multiple
2023/24*	£118,267	£25,602	4.62
2024/25*	£125,902	£26,568	4.74
2025/26*	£129,115	£26,687	4.84
% change from previous year*	2.55%	0.45%	2.11

*The Local Government Association guidance is that organisations should use taxable pay to calculate the pay multiple. In previous years the multiple has been calculated using the National Insurance pay level which includes the pension contribution paid by the individual and is a higher figure.

The main difference in the Chief Executives earnings relates to the pay award increase for 2025/26.

It is important to emphasise that the pay policy of the Council is to pay at the market median, and this is only reached at the top of the incremental pay points for each grade. This ensures that people are paid at a lower level than the Council policy until they have fully matured into the role. In addition, although these are contractual payments, they are withheld if performance is not satisfactory at the expected level.

From April 2017 under the Equality Act 2010 employers with more than 250 employees are required to publish statutory gender pay gap calculations on an annual basis. The data must be a snapshot of salary data on 31 March and must be published on our own website and a government website. Although there is no statutory requirement to report on the council's ethnicity pay data the council has decided to include this information and report the data in the same format as the gender pay gap reporting. The gender and ethnicity pay gap report for 2024 is at Appendix I (H).

5. Trade Union Facility time

The Council recognises UNISON, and there is a history of co-operative employee relations. As a result of this cooperative approach, a range of fair employment policies are now in place. As a result, there is generally a low level of trade union activity.

The Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 came into force on 1st April 2017 which requires public sector employers to publish specified information relating to facility time provided by trade union officials. Under the regulations, the relevant information will need to be published on an annual basis for the period 1st April to 31st March.

The Council allows reasonable time for trade union duties (eg attending management meetings, pay negotiation, etc) but no time is given for trade union activities (canvassing for additional membership etc.)

The number of trade union representatives is as follows:

	Headcount	FTE
UNISON	6	6

Percentage of time spent by union officials on facility time is:

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	0
1-50%	6
51%-99%	0
100%	0

Note: only 1% of facility time is spent by union officials.

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time:

Total cost of facility time	£763.25
Total pay bill	£12,607,629
Percentage of pay bill	0.01%

There has been no time spent on paid trade union activities.

6. Contact for further information

If you require any further information regarding the salary policy of the council you should contact Bal Sandher, Head of HR Shared Services, on 01622 602165, or by email on baljinder.sandher@midkent.gov.uk

Appendix I (A)

Pay Scale 2025/26

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
2	£22,756				
	12.8357				
3	£23,074	£23,526	£24,469		
	13.0152	13.2700	13.8019		
4	£25,362	£26,382	£27,439	£28,532	
	14.3058	14.8811	15.4771	16.0938	
5	£28,675	£29,764	£30,959	£32,192	
	16.1744	16.7887	17.4627	18.1582	
6	£32,417	£33,713	£35,058	£36,466	
	18.2851	19.0159	19.7748	20.5690	
7	£36,660	£37,975	£39,496	£41,082	
	20.6782	21.4200	22.2783	23.1726	
8	£41,193	£42,841	£44,551	£46,338	
	23.2355	24.1651	25.1296	26.1374	
9	£48,657	£50,600	£52,619	£54,727	
	27.4453	28.5415	29.6804	30.8694	
10	£57,703	£60,014	£62,410	£64,906	
	32.5482	33.8512	35.2030	36.6110	
11	£67,519	£70,219	£73,029	£75,951	£78,983
	38.0848	39.6075	41.1929	42.8406	44.5511
12	£80,537	£83,755	£87,107	£90,596	£94,220
	45.4278	47.2426	49.1337	51.1017	53.1459
13	£99,115	£103,084	£107,202	£111,492	£115,954
	55.9069	58.1457	60.4681	62.8881	65.4050
14	£128,265	£132,114	£136,076	£140,158	£144,363
	72.3490	74.5201	76.7553	79.0575	81.4293

Pay Progression

1. Annual Inflation Award

Annual pay consultation will consider the cost of living and the position of SBC pay in comparison to the market, but affordability will be the foremost consideration. Consultation will commence annually in September with the aim to reach agreement within the budget cycle so that payment can be made in April salaries.

The Chief Executive and Head of HR are responsible for undertaking pay negotiation with trade unions, but the Policy & Resources Committee takes ultimate responsibility for agreeing the budget.

2. Pay progression within grade

The pay scale has up to five increments which recognise that, with development in a role over time, an employee is of more value to the organisation and therefore warrants a higher salary. There are fewer incremental points in the lower grades and more in the more complex roles. New appointments to post will normally be at the first point of the grade unless there is evidence of a skill shortage in line with the criteria set out in the Market Supplement Policy.

Progress through the grade will be assessed annually. This will not be an automatic progression but will require an assessment against the agreed Competency Profile and Performance Standards for the position. Where the employee has progressed towards the full competency profile they will be awarded an increment. Assessment for incremental progression will take place by **October** each year. This will therefore not be linked to the annual appraisal but will take place mid-year. Increased increments will be paid with effect from 1 October.

Employees must have six months' service in their role by 1 October to be eligible for assessment. If they are more recently appointed they will receive a review after six months in the position; thereafter they will be reviewed annually for the October increment.

Individuals will need to consistently demonstrate the behaviours required by the Competency Profile and Performance Standards for their role in order to maintain their incremental position. One-off performance will not be sufficient to merit or maintain an increment.

Where individuals do not sustain the level of performance or where they have been assimilated to the top of the grade but are assessed as not having the full range of competencies, they will be given time to improve, but their pay will be frozen until they drop to the pay level that matches their performance. This includes any rise in annual pay as a result of pay inflation. This is outside the normal Pay Protection Policy as it does not represent an organisational change. Where the individual is assessed as not meeting the requirements of the grade their performance will be treated as a capability issue.

3. Career Grades and Incremental Progression

A Career Grade offers the opportunity of a long path of progression to a particular professional position. As such the nature of the role and the requisite competencies are likely to vary considerably between the entry point and final destination. This means that through Job Evaluation the Career Grade is likely to span several grades and have many steps. To enable this clear stepped progression there may be some need to have interim points between the normal incremental points, e.g. in recognition of the achievement of some particular milestone. These half incremental steps will be allowed providing that there is prior agreement with the Head of HR, that they are applied equally to all those who meet the criteria and are set out as part of the agreed career grade structure.

Progress through the career grade will need to be evidence based, and the Head of HR will need to agree to the progression if it is between grades.

Chief Executive and Director Appraisal Process

The appraisal panel for the Chief Executive will comprise of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Leader of the Majority Opposition Party, supported by HR.

This panel will also take a 'grandparent' role to review and comment on the full annual appraisal and objectives for the Directors as set by the Chief Executive.

The timetable and process for the Chief Executive is set out below:

Month	Activity
January	The Chief Executive undertakes a self-review of achievements against the annual objectives, and suggests possible objectives for the coming year.
January	Feedback from the members of the working group on the Chief Executive's performance is obtained.
Early February	The Chief Executive reviews Member feedback in relation to progress, development and future targets.
February	After the budget has been agreed by full Council, the working group and Chief Executive meet formally, supported by HR for the formal appraisal and objective setting. The outcome of the agreed objectives will be reported at the next full Council by the Leader. The meeting to be documented by HR as the Chief Executive's formal appraisal.
September	The working group and Chief Executive, supported by HR meet to review mid-year progress, and agree whether performance is satisfactory. If the Chief Executive is performing to a satisfactory level the annual increment will be awarded (up to the top of the grade). The summary of this meeting to be reported back to the General Purposes Committee.

The process for Directors is set out below:

Month	Activity
January	The Director undertakes a self-review of achievements against the annual objectives and suggests possible objectives for the coming year. This self-review is submitted to the Chief Executive.
Early February	The Director and Chief Executive meet to discuss progress, development and future targets.
Early February	The Chief Executive prepares a draft appraisal document with assessment of performance in the previous year and against competencies. Draft forward objectives and a development plan are also documented and agreed between the Chief Executive and Director.
February	The appraisal panel, the Chief Executive and the Director meet formally for the 'grandparent review', and finalisation of the Director's objectives. The meeting to be documented by the Chief Executive as the Director's formal appraisal.
September	The Chief Executive and Director meet to review mid-year progress and agree whether performance is satisfactory. If the Director is performing to a satisfactory level the annual increment will be awarded (up to the top of the grade).

Market Supplements for Pay

1. Introduction

The Council will utilise a Market Supplement to ensure that competitive salaries will attract and retain key workers in skill shortage areas without distorting the pay structures for all other employees. A Market Supplement for recruitment or retention purposes will only be used where there are clear business reasons that cannot be better addressed through the total benefits package, the work environment or department skill mix. It is recognised that pay is only one factor contributing to our attractiveness as an employer and other aspects of employment, particularly those relating to development, should be applied rather than using just a Market Supplement.

All jobs are graded using the Inbucon Job Evaluation system and the defined pay policy of the Council is to pay at Market Median where the market used is the Inbucon salary data. This is also checked against local Kent salary surveys to ensure that it is robust for the geographical region. This approach ensures that the employees of Swale Borough Council are paid at a fair level in comparison to other workers in similar employment groups.

However, there is recognition that in certain professions there are either national or regional skill shortages and Swale needs to be responsive to the competition for these skills. In the longer term our aim will be to train employees to move into these specialist areas and to ensure that the specialists' skills are utilised properly within the organisation. In the short term Market Supplements may be used.

2. Identification of the Skill Shortage

2.1 Recruitment Campaigns

Where there is no anticipated shortage there will need to be a minimum of two appropriate external recruitment campaigns within a 12 month period to establish that it is not possible to fill a position before it is agreed there is a requirement for a market supplement.

2.2 KPOG Salary Survey

The salary survey is conducted on an annual basis and gives details of the comparative salaries for defined positions in the Kent Districts. This clearly identifies the median salaries and is particularly relevant for local government roles. This will enable the identification of positions which may be vulnerable and, where there is more than a 10% salary difference from the median, there should be consideration of the need for a market supplement. The existence of this difference alone is unlikely to be sufficient justification and further analysis will be required to identify whether this has had an adverse impact on the Council's ability to recruit and retain relevant staff.

2.3 National Information

Within local government there are certain identified skill shortage areas. These are identified through data collection from the Employers Organisation and the I&DeA. In 2015 these skills were listed as:

- (i) Children's social workers
- (ii) Planning officers *
- (iii) Building control officers
- (iv) Environmental health officers *
- (v) Educational psychologists
- (vi) School crossing patrol
- (vii) Adult social workers
- (viii) Trading standards officers
- (ix) Solicitors and lawyers *
- (x) Mental Health Social Workers

* category of worker employed by SBC

This national picture is the first indicator of a shortage. Where there is an identified shortage nationally the manager will still be required to demonstrate that this applies to the local area. This proof can be gained through the outcome of a relevant recruitment campaign during the previous 12 month period, or through information from agencies about the availability of particular skill sets.

3. Market Supplement for Recruitment Purposes

The level of supplement will be agreed between the Director and the Head of HR Shared Services in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer. It will be paid as part of monthly salary and will be pensionable. The supplement will not be subject to the cost of living award and will not be taken into account for any salary-related enhancements, e.g. overtime, which will be paid at the normal salary rate. The Market Supplement will be given for a minimum two year period initially. This will be annually reviewed to confirm that the supplement is still necessary, and at the appropriate level. Where a reduction in level is the outcome of the review this will not take effect until the minimum two years has expired. Reductions will follow the process set out in Section 5.

The payment of a Market Supplement must be within the Director's agreed budget. Approval must be given by the relevant Director and the Head of HR Shared Services, who will ensure that all alternative options have been explored.

4. Market Supplement for Retention Purposes

Whilst the Market Supplement is principally to enable the Council to be able to compete in a highly competitive market to attract new employees, there may be exceptional cases where a supplement should be considered for existing employees. This may occur in situations where a new recruit is offered a supplement that would then cause equally mobile colleagues to leave and seek a similar salary elsewhere.

There may also be occasions where an employee with a specialist skill needs to be retained to ensure business continuity.

The level of supplement will be agreed between the Director and the Head of HR Shared Services in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer. It will be paid as part of monthly salary and will be pensionable. The supplement will not be subject to the cost of living award and will not be taken into account for any salary-related enhancements, e.g. overtime, which will be paid at the normal salary rate.

The Market Supplement will be given for a minimum two year period initially. This will be annually reviewed to confirm that the supplement is still necessary, and at the appropriate level. Where a reduction in level is the outcome of the review this will not take effect until the minimum two years has expired. Reductions will follow the process set out in Section 5.

Payment of a Retention Supplement must only be considered in exceptional circumstances, and particular attention must be paid to the Equal Pay issues.

5. Removal of the Supplement

The availability of skills varies over time. As professions are identified as skill shortage areas and salaries rise they can attract an increased number of trainees. Where this is the case the Council would not wish to incur unnecessary costs, i.e. paying more for a skill than the median rate, if this would be sufficient to attract high quality applicants. The economic situation may also change so that scarce skills become available from other sectors or organisations.

Senior Management Team will review the posts attracting a supplement annually; this will usually coincide with the annual KPOG salary survey at the beginning of each year, but the date may vary according to information availability. When it is clear that a particular profession or skill area no longer necessitates a market supplement this will be withdrawn over a phased period of two years – with the withdrawal of 25% of the supplement every six months until the employee returns to the normal rate for the job. The assessment of the on-going need will relate to the national skills assessment combined with local salary reviews and the response to recruitment campaigns. When a market supplement is to be withdrawn the employee will be notified and given a minimum of three months' notice that a phased reduction will commence.

Policy and Procedural Issues: Local Government Scheme Regulations - Employer Discretions

This paper confirms the pension policy of Swale Borough Council as it relates to the exercise of discretions contained in the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 and the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and amendments) Regulations 2014. Last updated June 2014.

The policy statement applies to all members of staff who are eligible to be members of the LGPS, as defined in the regulations i.e. employees with a contract of employment of over three month's duration and who are under 75 years of age and are contractually enrolled at the start of employment. Those with contracts of less than three months, including casuals, can join but need to elect to do so.

Employees who are members of the pension scheme are only entitled to receive pension benefits if they have two years or more service. Under LGPS 2014 Regulation 18, if an employee leaves within two years of the start of their employment their contributions can be repaid or transferred to another scheme, unless there is some fraudulent offence or misconduct in connection with the employment.

Principles

The Authority will treat any individual retirement case and decisions on its merits.

Decisions relating to retirement will be made taking into account the business case and business implications, the financial implications, employment law consideration, the regulations and the legality of each case. It may also take into account long term savings, affordability, skills and skills retention and impact on service delivery.

The definition of business efficiency shall include, but not be limited to financial savings and/or quality improvements judged on a case-by-case basis.

Each decision will be made free from discrimination on the grounds of any protected characterising – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other personal criteria.

The Authority's decisions relating to retirement and the release of pension benefits will be in line with the current pension regulations. These regulations may be updated from time to time, and the Authority will default to the regulations if the policy is not explicit on any current or future regulation.

Decisions relating to the release of deferred benefits to former employees will refer to the relevant pension policies applicable at the time of their employment. In such cases, the decision as to the release of deferred benefits will be on a case-by-case basis and will take into account the criteria detailed in these principles. Guidance may be sought from the pension administrators as required.

Decisions taken under these discretions will be reported to the General Purposes Committee.

Regulation 9 (1) & (3) - Contributions

Swale Borough Council will apply the nationally determined employee contribution rates and bands. These are subject to change and may be varied.

Swale Borough Council will pay the rate of contributions determined in the regulations for employees whose pay is reduced through ill health or during authorised unpaid leave, including child related leave.

The calculation of pensionable pay will include basic annual salary plus any other pensionable salary items including – Market Supplement/ Premium, Overtime, Bonus, Honorarium, Salary Supplements. The pensionable pay will be reviewed monthly and based on earnings for that month to identify the appropriate band and contribution percentage

Swale Borough Council will notify employees of their individual contribution rates in their payslips or by letter at least annually.

Regulation 16 (2)e and 16 (4)d – Shared Cost Additional Pension Contributions (SCAPC)

It is not Swale Borough Council's general policy to operate a SCAPC where a scheme member wishes to purchase extra annual pension (up to the limit defined in the regulations).

A scheme member who has a period of child related leave or authorised unpaid leave may elect, within 30 days of return to work, to pay a SCAPC to cover the amount of pension 'lost' during the period of absence. In these circumstances Swale Borough Council is required to contribute 2/3rds of the cost. If an election is made after the 30 day time limit the full costs will be met by the scheme member.

Employees who have the option to pay contributions in respect of a period of unpaid absence must elect to do so within 30 days of the date of the notice issued to them by the Human Resources Section stating the amount of contributions to be paid. This time limit may be extended by the Head of Human Resources if the employee can demonstrate exceptional circumstances so as to justify an extension of time.

TP Regulations 1(1)(c) of Schedule 2 – whether to allow the rule of 85 to be 'switched on' for members age 55-59.

It is not Swale Borough Council's general policy to make use of the discretion to 'switch back on' the 85 year rule protections unless there are clear financial or operational advantages to the council. Each case will be considered on its merits by Head of Human Resources, the Chief Financial Officer, and the relevant Director.

Regulation 17 (1) – Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions (SCAVC)

Swale Borough Council operate a shared cost Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme for employees. This policy will be reviewed from time to time by the Head of Human Resources in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer.

Regulation 21 (5) – In determining Assumed Pensionable Pay whether a lump sum payment made in the previous 12 months is a ‘regular lump sum’.

Swale Borough Council will maintain a list which details what Swale Borough Council considers being a regular lump sum payment made to our employees to be used in the calculation of the Assumed Pensionable Pay.

Regulation 22 (7)(b) & 22 (8)(b) - Aggregation of Benefits

Employees who have previous LGPS pension benefits in England and Wales will automatically have these aggregated with their new LGPS employment, unless they elect within 12 months of commencing membership of the LGPS in the new employment to retain separate benefits. Swale Borough Council has the discretion to extend this period beyond 12 months and each case will be considered on its own merits by the Head of Human Resources, the Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director.

Regulation 30(6) – Flexible Retirement

It is Swale Borough Council's policy to only provide consent for flexible retirement and the immediate payment of benefits where there are clear financial or operational benefits to the Council. Any such consent requires the agreement of the Head of Human Resources and the relevant Director and each case would be considered on its merits.

If consent has been given under Regulation 30 (6) it is not Swale Borough Council's general policy to waive any actuarial reduction unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Regulation 30(8) Waiving of Actuarial Reductions

It is not the policy of the Borough Council to give consent to the immediate payment of benefits to employees under this regulation, unless there is a demonstrable benefit to the organisation which would take full account of any extra costs to be borne by the Authority. In circumstances where a request is made for an early payment of a deferred benefit this is unlikely to be granted except in the most extreme cases of hardship; circumstances must be exceptional and would not reasonably be expected to prevail i.e. the occurrence of a disaster or accident etc. Financial hardship alone would not normally be deemed sufficient. Any such consent shall be agreed by the Head of Human Resources, Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director, taking account of all the details involved in the case.

Where a scheme member has previously been awarded a preserved benefit, it is not generally the policy of Swale Borough Council to give consent under this regulation

to the early payment of benefits; however, each request will be considered and full account taken of any costs to be borne by the authority. Any consent shall be agreed by the Head of Human Resources, Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director, taking account of all the details involved in the case. It is not the Council's general policy to waive any actuarial reduction in these circumstances.

Regulation 31 – Award of Additional Pension

Swale Borough Council has the discretion to award additional pension (up to the additional pension limit defined in the regulations) to an active member or within six months of leaving the scheme to a scheme member who was dismissed on grounds of redundancy or business efficiency.

Swale Borough Council will only exercise this discretion in exceptional circumstances and where there is a proven total benefit to the organisation which includes any costs that might be borne by the authority. Any consent shall be agreed by the Head of Human Resources, Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director, taking account of all the details involved in the case.

Regulation 100 (6) – Aggregation of Benefits

If a scheme member wishes to transfer any pension benefits they have built up in other schemes to the Local Government Pension Scheme, it is the policy of Swale Borough Council that the election must be made within 12 months of the Pension Section being notified that the employee has become an active member of the Kent Scheme.

If the 12 month period has elapsed then the member may make a case for any exceptional circumstances to be considered by the Head of Human Resources, the Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director within Swale Borough Council, and by the Pension Scheme Administrator. Both organisations must agree to the late transfer.

Protection of Earnings Policy

1. Introduction

The Council believes that an integral feature of any successful organisation is its ability to identify the need for change and to manage that change, taking into account management's aspirations as well as the aspirations and well being of its employees.

Whilst the Council is committed to providing security of employment and to minimising the personal impact of organisational change there will be occasions when it will be necessary to reorganise services and the way in which they are delivered. In these circumstances the provisions of this Policy will apply. This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Organisational Change Policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to any employee who, as a consequence of organisational change, is required by management to change their grade or method of working or suffers a reduction in basic hours worked within the standard working week or suffers a reduction in basic pay and allowances.

The provisions of this policy **do not** apply as a result of:-

- a) action taken in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary or Capability procedures
- b) the need for re-deployment on health grounds
- c) unacceptable standards of work performance
- d) a request from the individual or by mutual agreement between the individual and Council
- e) a voluntary application to another position within the Council
- f) the removal of a Market Supplement following an annual review, any loss here would be dealt with in accordance with the Market Supplement Policy.

3. Protection Period

Protection of earnings will be given for a period of 24 months. The first twelve months will be protected at the full earnings of the role held by the employee prior to the change, the second period of 12 months will be at half the rate of the new earnings compared to the old earnings. After a period of 12 months the employee will move to the salary and earnings of the new post. The employee will be moved to the salary point of the pay scale for the grade of the new post that is closest to the salary of the previous post. In most cases this is likely to be the highest incremental point of the relevant grade.

In exceptional circumstances, and where there may be a cost advantage to the organisation there may be agreement with the Chief Executive, the Chief Financial Officer and Head of Organisation Development to extend this period.

4. Calculation of Protection

Earnings protection will be calculated as an average of the earnings in the four months preceding the organisational change. This will include basic salary, essential car user allowance, lease car cash allowance, stand-by payments and an average of overtime and out of hour's payments.

Earnings in the new post will be off-set against protected earnings and if for any particular pay period the earnings in the new post exceed the protected earnings then the higher earnings will be paid for that pay period.

Where the period of protection spans the annual pay award the protected pay will be reduced by an amount equivalent to any increase in pay in the new substantive post.

5. Conditions of Protection

Protection of earnings is conditional upon the employee undertaking any shift work, standby or other duties which may be required in the new post. Where there are increased earnings as a result of these additional duties this will result in an equivalent decrease in pay protection. In circumstance where the employee is required to drive and the post is designated as an Essential Car User or the level of mileage is such that the employee qualifies for the Essential Car User Allowance this will be paid but the level of pay protection will be reduced by the equivalent amount.

Protection of earnings is also conditional upon the employee accepting any subsequent offer of a suitable alternative post which attracts a salary in excess of that of the new post.

Overtime will be paid at the new rate (i.e. the real rate attached to the post) not at the protected rate.

6. Pension Implication

It has been the Borough Council's policy to issue a certificate of protection of pension benefits to protect employees who suffer detriment by being required to take a cut in pay or who are prevented from having future pay increases by having their pay frozen. Any certificates issued may continue to apply to pension forecasts whilst they are still valid. Following the pension changes on 1 April 2008 there were no further certificates of protection issued but up to 31 March 2014 there are options for pension calculation to be based over a longer time period, affected employees should contact the pension administrator.

7. Terms and Conditions other than Pay

Annual Leave entitlements and length of notice period required from the employee will not be protected and those applicable to the new post will be effective from the date of transfer.

Appendix I (G)

Information published in accordance with the guidance associated with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency, which requires the publication of senior salaries within a £5,000 range.

Details of remuneration and job title of senior employees whose basic salary is between £50,000 and £150,000.

Position	Reporting Unit	Remuneration	No of staff	Budget responsibility	Other services/responsibilities
Chief Executive	Chief Executive	£145,000 - £149,999	276	£744,030	Returning Officer responsible for all elections and Head of Paid Service.
Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	£115,000 - £119,999	213	£15,115,620	
Director of Resources	Resources	£115,000 - £119,999	28	£15,859,650	Section 151 Officer.
Communications & Policy Manager	Communications & Policy	£60,000 - £64,999	5	£368,850	
Democratic & Electoral Services Manager	Democratic & Electoral Services	£60,000 - £64,999	7	£920,800	
Head of Environment & Leisure	Environment & Leisure	£90,000 - £94,999	43	£9,430,070	
Climate Change Officer	Environment & Leisure	£50,000 - £54,999	2	£163,300	
Environmental Contracts Manager	Environment & Leisure	£55,000 - £59,999	5	£6,912,780	
Environmental Services Manager	Environment & Leisure	£65,000 - £69,999	13	£6,912,780	
Green Spaces Manager	Environment & Leisure	£55,000 - £59,999	11	£2,027,500	
Leisure & Technical Services Manager	Environment & Leisure	£60,000 - £64,999	21	£3,540,860	
Seafront & Engineering Manager	Environment & Leisure	£50,000 - £54,999	7	£256,590	
Head of Finance & Procurement	Finance & Procurement	£90,000 - £94,999	19	£1,081,660	
Principal Accountant	Finance & Procurement	£50,000 - £54,999	10	£0	
Principal Accountant (Technical)	Finance & Procurement	£50,000 - £54,999	3	£0	
Head of Housing & Community Services	Housing & Community Services	£90,000 - £94,999	112	£5,376,570	

Accommodation & Resettlement Manager	Housing & Community Services	£60,000 - £64,999	18	£3,153,750	
Community & Partnerships Manager	Housing & Community Services	£50,000 - £54,999	2	£0	
Customer Services Manager	Housing & Community Services	£50,000 - £54,999	24	£808,450	
Housing Advice Service Manager	Housing & Community Services	£60,000 - £64,999	25	£177,640	
Housing Standards & Assistance Manager	Housing & Community Services	£65,000 - £69,999	14	£254,230	
Policy & Communities Manager	Housing & Community Services	£70,000 - £74,999	26	£544,710	
Head of Legal Partnership	Mid Kent Legal Services	£95,000 - £99,999	23	£575,380	Head of partnership with Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.
Deputy Head of Legal Partnership	Mid Kent Legal Services	£85,000 - £89,999	12	£0	Manager within shared service with Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.
Planning Team Leader	Mid Kent Legal Services	£65,000 - £69,999	4	£0	Manager within shared service with Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.
Senior Lawyer (Contentious)	Mid Kent Legal Services	£55,000 - £59,999	0		
Senior Lawyer (Contentious)	Mid Kent Legal Services	£55,000 - £59,999	0		
Senior Lawyer (Contentious)	Mid Kent Legal Services	£60,000 - £64,999	0		
Senior Lawyer (Planning)	Mid Kent Legal Services	£55,000 - £59,999	0		
Senior Lawyer (Planning)	Mid Kent Legal Services	£55,000 - £59,999	0		
Team Leader (Contentious)	Mid Kent Legal Services	£65,000 - £69,999	3	£0	Manager within shared service with Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.
Team Leader (Contracts & Commissioning)	Mid Kent Legal Services	£60,000 - £64,999	0		Manager within shared service with Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.
Team Leader (Corporate Governance)	Mid Kent Legal Services	£65,000 - £69,999	1		Manager within shared service with Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.

Head of Place	Place	£90,000 - £94,999	53	£50,220	
Buildings Operations & Maintenance Manager	Place	£50,000 - £54,999	11	£698,680	
Capital Projects Manager	Place	£60,000 - £64,999	1	£0	
Chief Planning Officer	Place	£75,000 - £79,999	34	£360,340	
Heritage & Design Manager	Place	£55,000 - £59,999	2	£0	
Planning Manager (Planning Applications)	Place	£70,000 - £74,999	17	£0	
Planning Manager (Policy)	Place	£65,000 - £69,999	12	£510,920	
Project Manager (Policy)	Place	£55,000 - £59,999	0	£0	
Strategic Programme & Assets Manager	Place	£75,000 - £79,999	3	£606,010	
Team Leader (Planning Applications)	Place	£55,000 - £59,999	3	£0	
Team Leader (Planning Applications)	Place	£60,000 - £64,999	3		
Team Leader (Planning Investigations)	Place	£55,000 - £59,999	3		
Service Improvement & Project Manager	Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	£50,000 - £54,999	0		

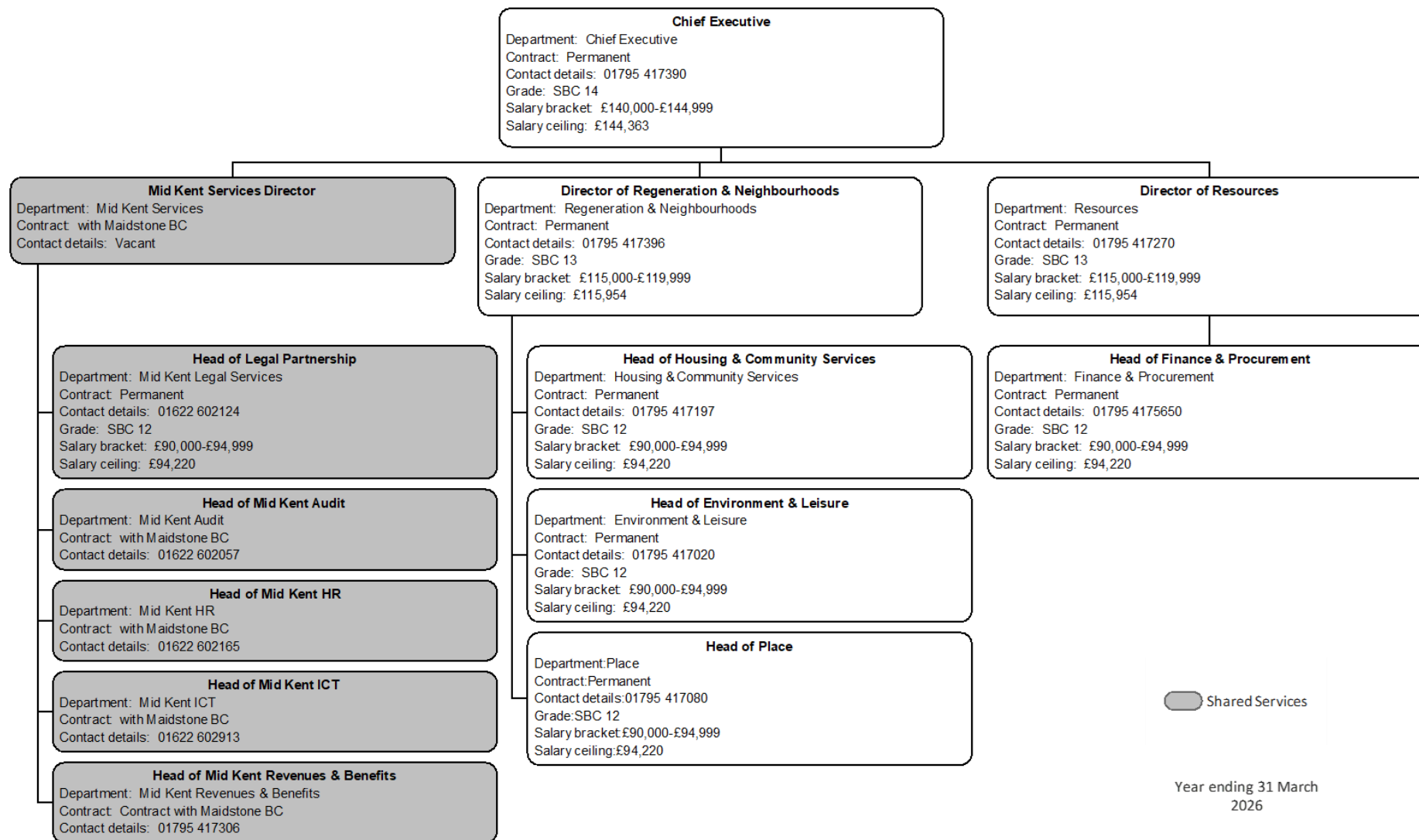
Number of employees whose remuneration in 2025/26 is at least £50,000, in brackets of £5,000

Remuneration band	Number of employees in band
£50,000 - £54,999	9
£55,000 - £59,999	10
£60,000 - £64,999	9
£65,000 - £69,999	6
£70,000 - £74,999	2
£75,000 - £79,999	2
£80,000 - £84,999	0
£85,000 - £89,999	1
£90,000 - £94,999	4
£95,000 - £99,999	1
£100,000 - £104,999	0
£105,000 - £109,999	0
£110,000 - £114,999	0
£115,000 - £119,999	2
£120,000 - £124,999	0
£125,000 - £129,999	0
£130,000 - £134,999	0
£135,000 - £139,999	0
£140,000 - £144,999	0
£145,000 - £149,999	1
Total	47

The Council has four shared services that are managed by Heads of Service not directly employed by Swale Borough Council. The salary details for these post holders may be found in the transparency data of the relevant employing authority.

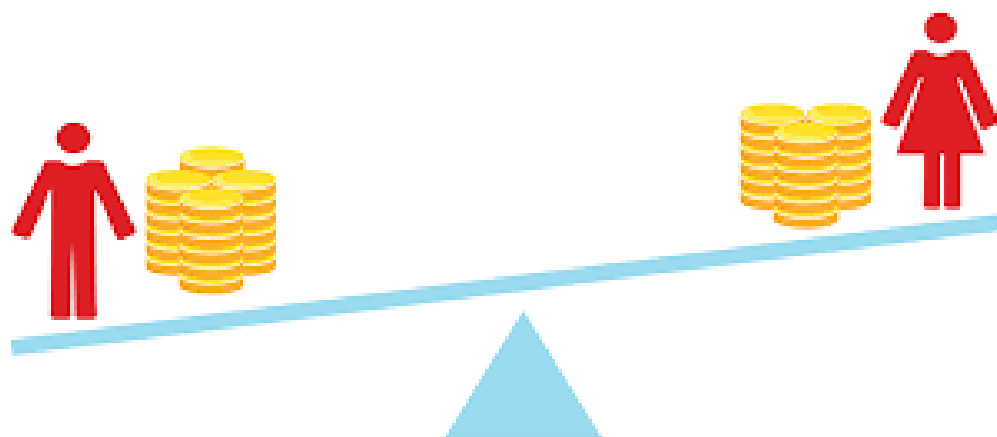
Post	Employing Authority
Head of Audit Partnership	Maidstone Borough Council
Head of HR Shared Services	Maidstone Borough Council
Head of ICT Partnership	Maidstone Borough Council
Head of Revenues and Benefits	Maidstone Borough Council

Swale Borough Council Organisation Chart



Swale Borough Council

Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2025



Snapshot Date: 31st March 2025

Introduction

As a public sector employer with over 250 employees, Swale Borough Council is required to publish data on our gender pay gap – the difference between the average hourly pay of all men and women we employ.

Although we are required to publish this data under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information), by publishing this report Swale Borough Council is reaffirming its commitment to being an inclusive employer. This report is only one way in which we are promoting equality of opportunity for everyone and will help us to identify new ways in which we can become a modern employer of the future.

The information within this report is based on a snapshot of pay on 31st March 2025. This information will only include employees who were employed by Swale Borough Council on this date and in receipt of their normal full pay; it will not include employees who were on reduced pay (such as those on maternity leave).

What is a gender and ethnicity pay gap?

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average earnings of men and women across the organisation. The gender pay gap is calculated as a difference in the mean and median hourly rates at the snapshot date and is expressed as a percentage of the average earnings of men.

The ethnicity pay gap shows the difference in average and median rates of pay between staff from minority ethnic backgrounds and white staff.

It is important to note that a gender pay gap is not the same as equal pay.

Equal Pay is about:



Pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. Men and women are paid equally for the same like work.

Gender Pay Gap is about



Differences in average hourly pay and bonuses between all men and women in a workforce, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings.

-V-

The Gender Pay Gap regulations require employers to publish the following information:

Mean Gender Pay Gap

The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male and female employees.

Median Gender Pay Gap

The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male and female employees.

Mean Bonus Gender Pay Gap

The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male and female employees.

Median Bonus Gender Pay Gap

The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male and female employees.

The Proportion of Employees Receiving a Bonus

The proportion of male and female employees who were paid bonus pay.

The Quartile Pay Bands

The proportion of male and female employees in each of four pay bands. The pay bands are defined as follows (starting with the highest earners):

- Upper quartile
- Upper middle quartile
- Lower middle quartile
- Lower quartile

Swale Borough Council's Gender Pay Gap

Mean Hourly Pay



£22.53

£20.02

11.14% Pay Gap

Median Hourly Pay



£19.95

£17.62

11.68% Pay Gap

Proportion of Employees Receiving Bonus Pay



11.48%

19.47%

Summary of data

Swale Borough Council's pay structure follows a standard public sector approach to pay and grading and covers grades from Cleaner job roles to senior managerial levels. Grades vary according to the level of responsibility and each grade is evaluated through a job evaluation process in accordance with the council's Job Evaluation scheme. The council also has a clear policy of paying employees equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of their gender.

The overall mean gender pay gap at the council is 11.14% which means for all employees (both full time and part time), men earned on average 11.14% more than women hourly.

The makeup of the workforce of the council (which is 76% female) can affect the gender pay gap calculations, as can the distribution of the workforce. The majority of female employees within the council are within the lower and middle grades which will distort the overall pay gap, reflecting workforce composition rather than pay inequalities.

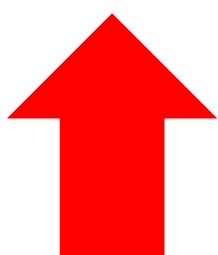
The median gender pay gap of 11.68% demonstrates that a higher proportion of men are working in higher level roles than women as the average median hourly rate for a male is £19.95 and for a female this is £17.62.

Bonus pay is defined as any payment or remuneration that is in the form of money or vouchers that relates to productivity, performance, incentive or commission. For the council, this covers cash awards for exceptional performance and long service awards in the form of vouchers.

The mean gender bonus gap is -199.69%. This significant disparity is primarily due to a higher proportion of female employees receiving the long service award.

How Does This Compare With 2024?

Mean Gender Pay Gap

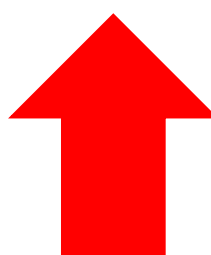


13.51% Increase

9.73% in 2024

11.14% in 2025

Median Gender Pay Gap



15.89% Increase

9.96% in 2024

11.68% in 2025

There has been an increase in both the mean and median gender pay gaps compared to the previous year.

Over the reporting period, 23 new female employees joined the organisation, compared to 13 male employees. Among the new starters, six individuals were appointed to roles within the upper pay quartile, three of whom were male. This distribution contributes to the widening of both the mean and median gender pay gaps.

In addition, a significant structural change occurred with the TUPE transfer of the Revenues and Benefits team, resulting in 32 employees being transferred out of Swale. This restructure has had an impact on the overall gender pay gap figures.

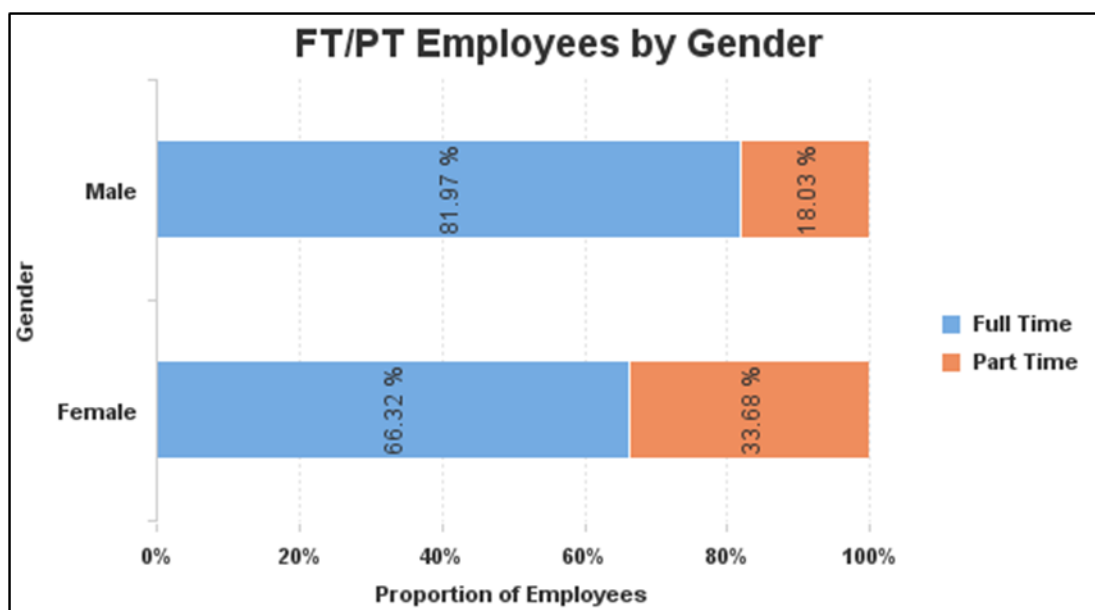
There has also been notable shifts in the gender composition across the pay quartiles. A key factor contributing to this change is the TUPE transfer of the Revenues and Benefits team, which involved the departure of a significant number of employees. This transfer has had an impact on the proportion of male and female staff within each pay band.

Pay Quartile	Proportion of Males	Proportion of Females	Male Proportion Increase
Upper Quartile	30.65%	69.35%	-8.04%
Upper Middle Quartile	34.92%	65.08%	9.33%
Lower Middle Quartile	15.87%	84.13%	-23.81%
Lower Quartile	15.87%	84.13%	-18.36%

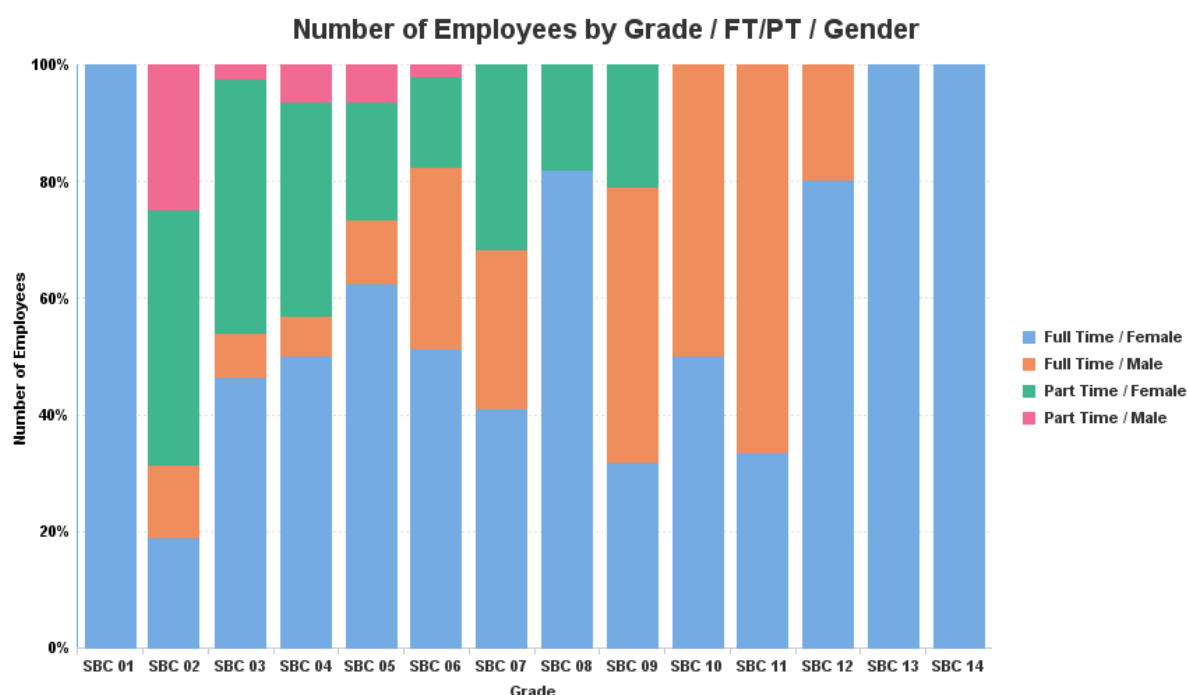
Like most areas of local government, the councils gender split is 76% female and 24% male overall. In order for there to be no gender pay gap, there would need to be an equal ratio of male to female in each quartile. However, the gender split is not evenly spread throughout all the grades within the council as can be seen from gender breakdown for each pay grade in the table. Although the Council employs more females than males, a higher percentage of females are employed within the lower and lower middle quartiles.

Swale Borough Council's Workforce

Swale Borough Council employees 190 female members of staff, and 61 male members of staff. In addition, a higher proportion of males employed are working in full time positions than the proportion of females.



Further analysis show that there are more female workers in the middle pay grades than male workers. The jobs at this level are mainly clerical, administrative and lower level of technical roles which seem to attract a higher number of female applicants.



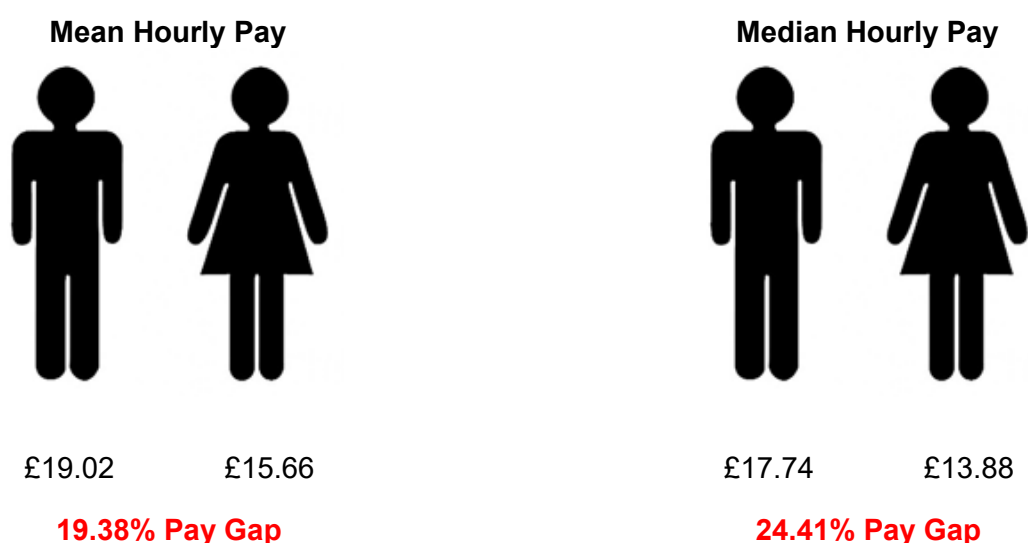
Swale Borough Council also offer numerous family friendly policies and flexible working options such as job share, term time working and from the data it shows that female employees take up of these flexible benefits are at a greater level compared to males which adversely impacts on the council's gender pay gap.

The following table shows the gender pay gap for full time and part time workers:

Working Pattern	Number of Employees	Mean Hourly Pay Males	Mean Hourly Pay Females	Mean Gender Pay Gap
Full Time	176	£24.14	£21.42	11.27%
Part Time	75	£15.22	£17.27	-13.47%

The Gender Pay Gap For New Starters

Below is the gender pay gap for new starters between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.



Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, Swale Borough Council employed 13 males and 23 females into new roles. The mean and median hourly rate of pay was higher for new males compared to females. The main reason for the increase in the mean and median figures is due to 3 males being recruited to senior positions (grade 8 and above). Female staff were appointed to grades below this level.

The council has a very stable workforce with normally a low turnover which means that there are only a few vacancies that give an opportunity for changes in the makeup of the workforce. With such low levels of recruitment and turnover these figures will be difficult to shift significantly in the near future.

How Does This Compare With Similar Organisations?

When looking at other Councils within Kent, the average mean gender pay gap was 6.63%; the average median gender pay gap was 5.89%.

Swale Borough Council's gender pay gap is higher than these averages. A factor in this will be due to the low levels of staff turnover, which means that there are very few new members of staff joining the Council and having an impact on the gender pay gap.

Council	Mean Pay Gap	Median Pay Gap
Ashford Borough Council ¹	7.0%	8.9%
Canterbury City Council ¹	3.4%	0%
Dartford Borough Council ¹	16.1%	20.30%
Dover District Council ¹	5.2%	1.8%
Folkestone & Hythe District Council ¹	1.7%	0%
Gravesham Borough Council ¹	1.4%	-3.5%
Maidstone Borough Council ¹	3.0%	1.6%
Sevenoaks District Council ¹	17.9%	28.3%
Thanet District Council ¹	-3.5%	-15.1%
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ¹	11.2%	8.3%
Kent County Council ¹	9.7%	12.0%
Medway Council ¹	6.4%	8.1%
Kent Average – Local Government	6.63%	5.89%
Swale Borough Council	11.14%	11.68%

Footnotes

¹ gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk (2024/25 submission)

Ethnicity Pay Gap 2025

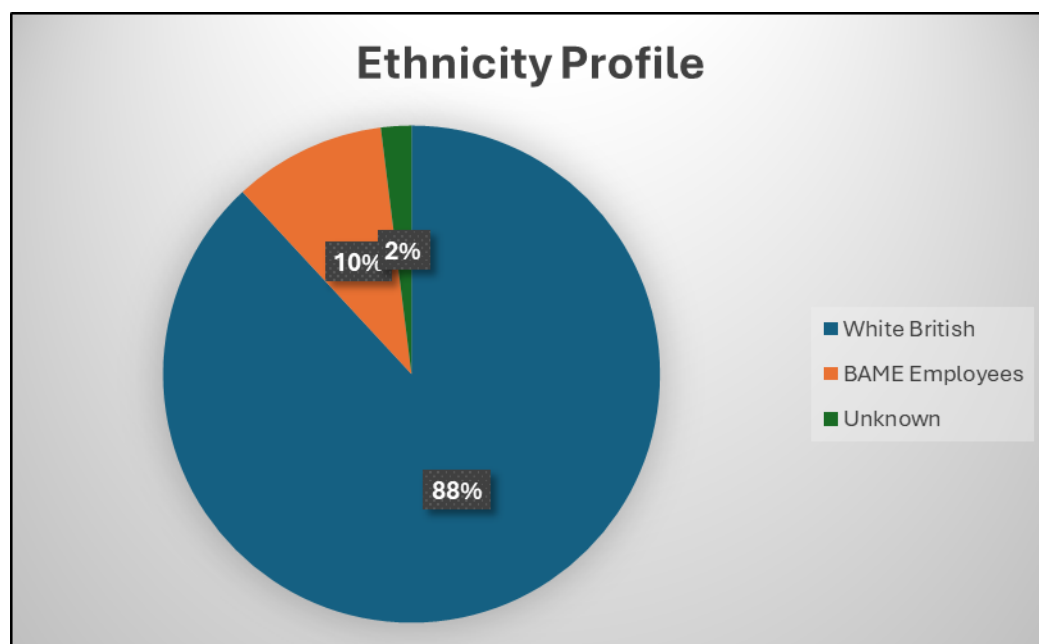
The ethnicity pay gap reflects the contrast in average hourly earnings between employees from minority ethnic backgrounds (i.e. non-Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)) and those categorised as 'White' within a workforce. This information is generally expressed as a percentage of average White employees' earnings.

Where there is a positive percentage, this means that the average pay of a White member of staff is higher than that of an employee from an ethnic minority group. The higher the percentage, the greater the ethnicity pay gap. A negative percentage means that the average pay of the ethnic minority group is higher than that of the White group.

Currently there is no statutory requirement to report on our ethnicity pay data and there is also no formal guidance on the methodology for calculation on the Ethnicity pay gap. Therefore, we continue to take the approach to mirror the legislated pay measures used for Gender Pay Gap reporting in order to calculate the ethnicity pay gap.

Ethnicity Profile

The chart below shows the ethnicity profile of our workforce. 88% of the workforce are White British, 10% are from BAME groups. Currently, the council has a small percentage of 2% employees that have not declared their ethnicity. Employees are encouraged to update their ethnicity in the HR system and this continues to be a priority in order to better report data for ethnic minority staff.

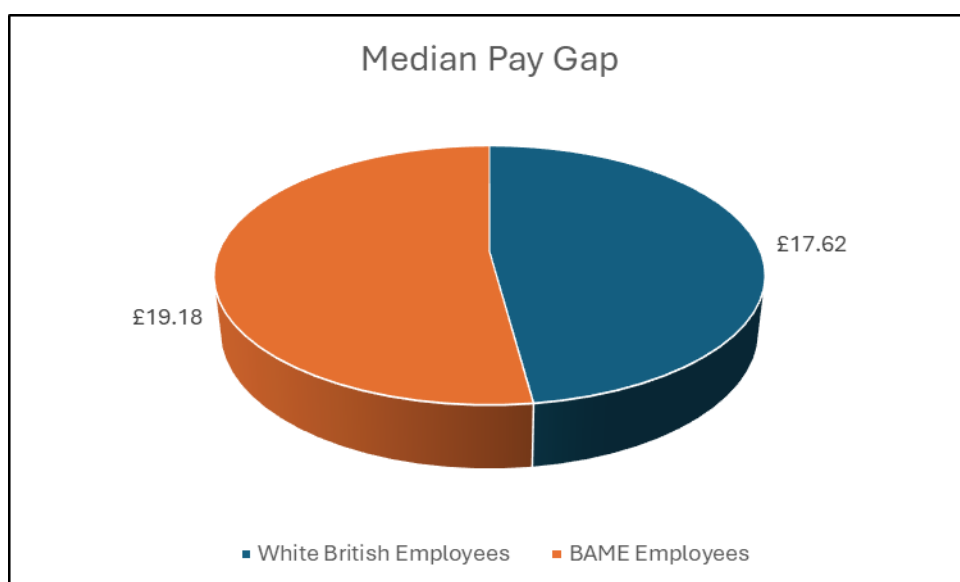


Ethnicity Pay Gap

The chart below illustrates the average (mean) hourly rate of pay of White British employees compared to all BAME employees.



The mean ethnicity pay gap is -3.22% which means the average pay for a person from a black, Asian, mixed race or other ethnic group is £0.66 per hour more than the average pay for a White person. This means that across the workforce BAME staff are paid on average slightly more than White British staff.

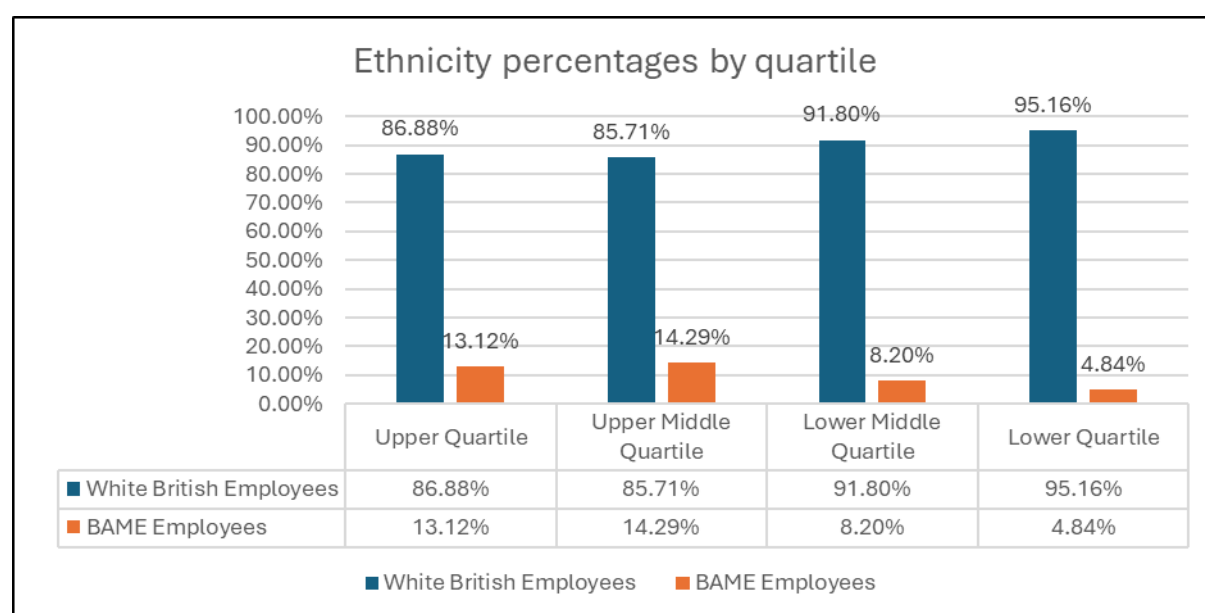


The median ethnicity pay gap is -8.13% which means that the median hourly rate of black, Asian, mixed race or other ethnic group is higher than the median hourly rate of our White colleagues.

Pay quartiles by ethnicity

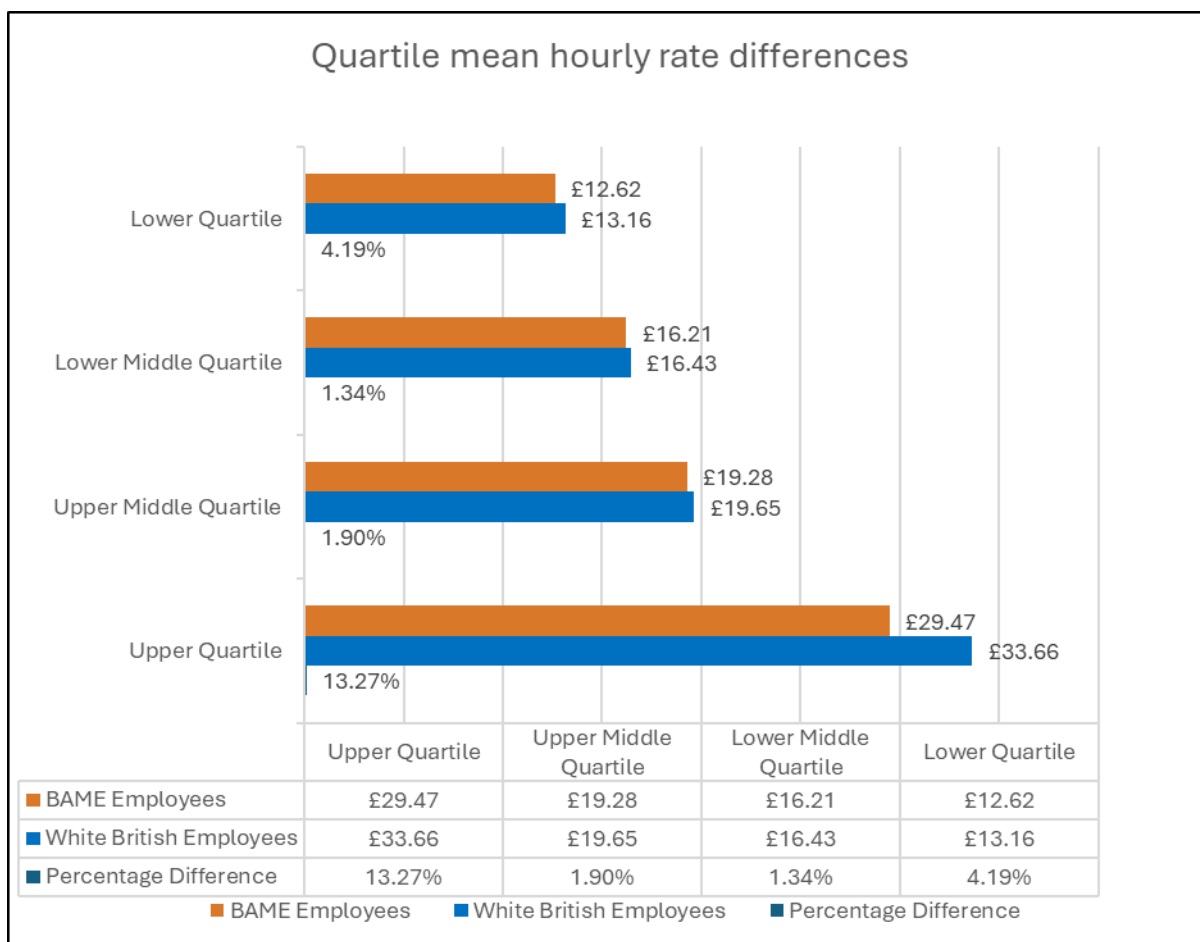
The chart below illustrates the percentage of White British and BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) employees across each pay quartile. This distribution helps explain why BAME employees have a higher mean and median hourly rate of pay.

BAME representation is notably higher in the upper quartiles, 13.12% in the Upper Quartile and 14.29% in the Upper Middle Quartile. Compared to just 8.20% in the Lower Middle Quartile and 4.84% in the Lower Quartile. This underrepresentation in the lower-paid bands means that, on average, BAME employees are more likely to occupy higher-paid roles, which elevates both their mean and median hourly pay figures.



The table below shows the hourly rate difference for each quartile. The data reveals a consistent pattern of lower average hourly pay for BAME employees compared to White British employees across all pay quartiles. While the differences in the Lower, Lower Middle, and Upper Middle Quartiles are relatively small ranging from 1.34% to 4.19%, the gap becomes more significant in the Upper Quartile, where BAME employees earn 13.27% less on average.

The larger gap in the Upper Quartile reflects the underrepresentation of BAME staff in senior roles.



Bonus Pay

There are currently no BAME employees in receipt of Bonus Pay. Bonus Pay is made up of vouchers given to staff for long service awards after 10 years of employment.

Summary

Swale Borough Council's current mean ethnicity pay gap is on average -3.22%, indicating that, on average, White British staff earn 3.22% less than employees from Black, Asian, Mixed Race, or other ethnic minority backgrounds.

The median ethnicity pay gap is -8.13%, meaning that the midpoint hourly rate for White British employees is 8.13% lower than that of BAME employees. This suggests that although the council has a small percentage of BAME employees, staff from other ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to be in higher-paid roles compared to their White British counterparts.

The table above shows that, within each pay quartile, White British employees generally have slightly higher hourly rates than BAME employees. However, the overall pay gap reflects higher average earnings among BAME staff due to their lower representation in the lower quartile roles, where pay is typically lowest. This distribution significantly influences the overall mean and median figures resulting in a positive pay gap for BAME employees overall.

What Steps Do Swale Borough Council Take To Minimise Any Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap?

Swale Borough Council remains committed to continuous improvement in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. Through ongoing monitoring, policy development, and targeted actions, the Council aims to ensure fair pay and equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender or ethnicity.

Swale Borough Council has a number of policies relating to pay that ensure transparency, fairness and equity. These include:

- Job evaluation scheme (Ibucon) for all roles. This is a significant part of ensuring gender-neutral in the assessment of roles as it takes no account of individuals and is purely based on the job role and its requirements;
- A well-designed pay scale with no overlapping grades and a restricted number of incremental points;
- Formal authorisation processes for the change in pay;
- A clear policy at appointment which should be at the first point of grade;
- An equal pay approved Market Supplement Policy;
- Enhanced Shared Parental Pay to mirror Maternity Pay;
- Quarterly workforce report monitored by senior management team. This report includes detailed data on staff turnover, recruitment activity, exit interviews, employee relations matters, and the equalities profile
- Exit interviews to gain feedback on employment experiences;
- The provision of Recruitment & Selection training to ensure interviewers have relevant knowledge and an understanding of Equalities and Diversity including unconscious bias;
- Annual workforce equality report that reports on all protected characteristics for employees;
- New management development programme for aspiring managers/ supervisors/ team leaders that provides training to support career development.

Actions

Swale Borough Council has a clear approach to pay and reward which is well controlled.

One of the factors that can influence the gender pay gap is the distribution of males and females within the grades and under-representation of BAME staff. Therefore, the following actions are recommended:

- The recruitment processes to be monitored by the HR team to avoid any unfairness including the wording in advertisements to ensure there is no gender bias.
- To continue raising managers awareness of 'unconscious bias's as part of the recruitment and selection training.
- Review the recruitment process to ensure this is completely unbiased when considering candidates to positions.
- To monitor and review take up of training and development opportunities for staff from ethnic minority backgrounds
- Encourage managers to consider job redesign if there are aspects of a job that prevents or stops employees applying for them on a part-time or flexible basis.
- Provide training to staff on equality, diversity and inclusiveness to increase awareness and understanding of these issues within the workplace
- To encourage and remind employees to update their ethnicity and other equality data in the HR system.