OHCAT Gender Pay Gap Reporting 2024-25

Introduction

Orchard Hill College Academy Trust (OHCAT) is a large multi-academy trust of specialist education providers for pupils and students from nursery to across London, Surrey, Sussex and Berkshire. Our ambition is to contribute further to improving the education offer for all pupils and students in our communities, including those with SEND.

Pupils and students within OHCAT have a wide range of learning abilities and additional needs including autistic spectrum disorder; speech, language and communication difficulties; social, emotional and mental health; profound and multiple disabilities; and physical disabilities including multi-sensory impairment and complex health needs.

Working together to transform lives is what we do and across the whole organisation we have a range of experts and practitioners who advocate for children and young people with SEND to ensure they receive the best possible opportunities to achieve their full potential.

As a large specialist education provider, we employ over 1200 people across our schools and central support team. We aspire to become an employer of choice in special education and our staff do a wide range of job roles, ranging from teaching and therapy to business support roles and we offer significant career progression opportunities.

The Trust is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all its pupils, students, staff and stakeholders, and to the celebration of diversity in all its forms. We are committed to addressing our gender pay gap through our People Strategy.

This report contains the information that OHCAT is legally required to provide at the snapshot date of 31 March 2025, explains the reasons for the gap and details a summary of the plans in place to continue to address it. The information has been collated in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017. It is important to note that this report focuses on data taken on 31st March 2025. Therefore, a lag between the work undertaken in the People Strategy and their impact on the data is expected.

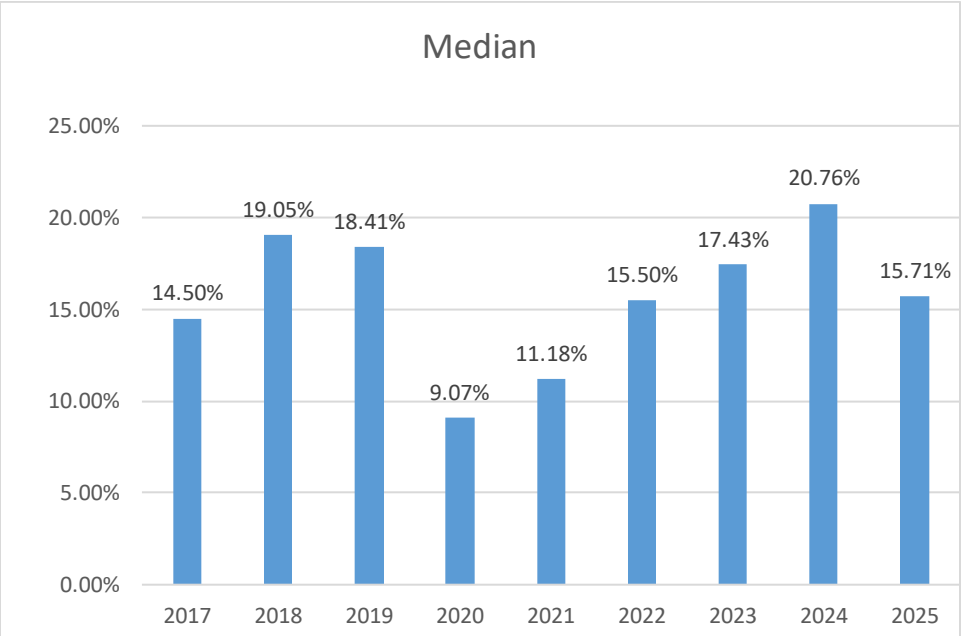
The ACAS Guidance explains the difference between gender pay and equal pay:

> *"Equal pay deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. It is unlawful to pay people unequally because they are a man or a woman. The gender pay gap shows the differences in the average pay between men and women."*

OHCAT gender pay reporting

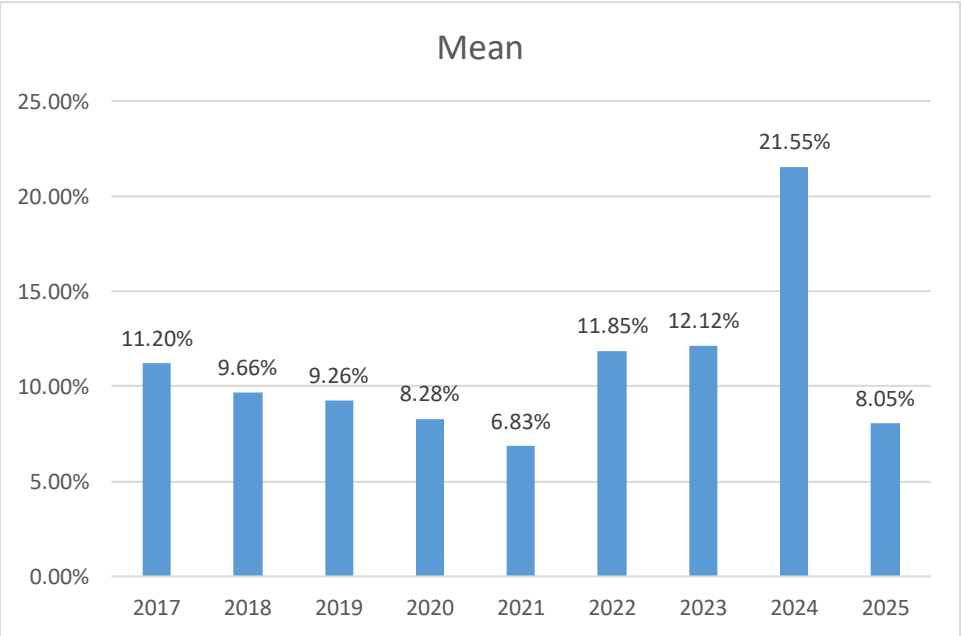
Gender pay gap as a Median average – 15.71%

The gaps in pay between men and women on both a median basis (pay per hour based on the person 'in the middle' of the distribution of pay)



Gender pay gap as a Mean average – 8.05%

The gaps in pay between men and women on a mean basis (average hourly salary)



Bonus

OHCAT did not pay bonuses to staff until 2021. A staff referral scheme was put in place organisationally in 2022 which is open to all staff.

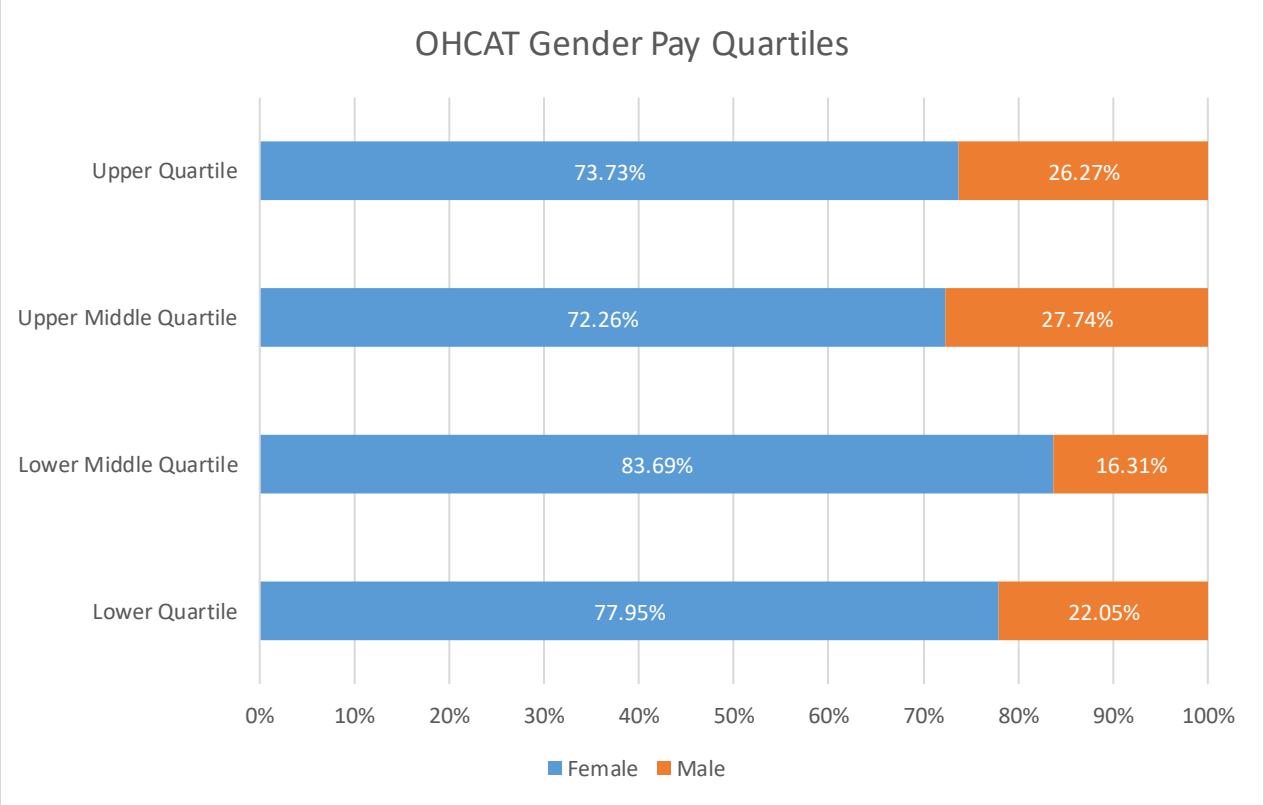
In this reporting period a very small number of staff were in receipt of a bonus. Bonus pay recipients as a percentage of the data set were 0.69% men and 1.57% women.

Gender pay gap as a Median average – 0%
Gender pay gap as a Mean average – 0%

Gender pay gap by Quartiles

Orchard Hill College Academy Trust is 23% male and 77% female.

	Female	*Male*
Upper Quartile	73.73%	26.27%
Upper Middle Quartile	72.26%	27.74%
Lower Middle Quartile	83.69%	16.31%
Lower Quartile	77.95%	22.05%



Understanding our Gender pay gap

OHCAT continues to recognise the existence of a gender pay gap when comparing the mean and median earnings of male and female employees. We are pleased to report a reduction in the gap since last year, indicating progress in our long-term strategic actions.

As a predominantly female organisation, with women making up **76.81%** of our workforce, our pay distribution reflects the demographic profile of the specialist education sector, where teaching assistants and learning support roles are more commonly held by women. These roles sit primarily within the lower quartiles, contributing significantly to the overall gender pay gap.

Our Executive Leadership Team (ESLT) remains broadly gender-balanced, with four female and two male members at the time of reporting. Leadership across the Trust's 14 Academies is also well-distributed, though pay can vary according to school group size and London weighting, which may contribute to fluctuations in the upper quartile profile.

We remain confident that we have no issues with equal pay. Employees performing the same or equivalent roles are paid equally under nationally agreed pay scales and job evaluation schemes. The gap is instead linked to workforce structure, representation patterns and sector-specific recruitment trends rather than pay inequity.

The actions we are taking focus on strengthening career pathways, supporting progression into leadership, and creating more opportunities for colleagues in lower-paid roles to advance within OHCAT.

Action Plan: Our Commitment to Closing the Gap

OHCAT remains committed to reducing the gender pay gap over time and embedding equity and opportunity throughout the organisation. Our People Strategy continues to drive this work, supported by data insights from annual and pulse surveys. Over the coming year we will strengthen our focus in the following areas:

1. Strengthening Pathways into Leadership (Upper Quartile Progression)

- Our Leadership Development programme has been launched and is currently being piloted. Our new Leadership Development Programme, designed to identify aspiring leaders and provide structured development, coaching and cross-Trust shadowing opportunities will be embedded.
- Continue building succession pipelines for middle and senior leadership roles, with targeted development conversations as part of our annual appraisal process.
- Expand cross-Academy networks and communities of practice to support visibility, skills sharing, and progression for women into senior roles.

2. Improving Career Development Opportunities in the Lower Quartiles

- Continue to roll out the successful Teaching Assistant career progression framework already established within Orchard Hill College across all OHCAT Academies.
- Increase the availability of accredited qualifications, apprenticeships and professional development to support colleagues' movement into higher-graded roles.
- Promote new career pathways into specialist roles (therapy support, pastoral, behaviour support) where internal progression is achievable with targeted training.

3. Using Data to Inform Decision-Making

- Continue analysing gender data across recruitment, progression, turnover, training access and job satisfaction to identify barriers and opportunities.
- Use insights from staff surveys to refine our People Strategy and ensure that policies and processes are supporting equitable progression.

4. Widening Access to Training and Professional Accreditation

- Continue offering apprenticeships, teacher training routes and the Diploma in Education & Training (DET), enabling unqualified staff to develop into qualified teachers.
- Promote opportunities proactively to ensure women in lower pay quartiles are aware of, and are supported in accessing, advancement routes.

5. Maintaining Transparency and Accountability

- Continue publishing our Gender Pay Gap report annually and provide updates within staff forums to ensure transparency.
- Align gender pay actions with broader equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) objectives and monitor progress regularly at Executive level.

Through these focused interventions, we aim to reduce the structural factors influencing our pay gap and ensure that all colleagues, regardless of gender, can thrive, develop and progress within OHCAT.

Declaration

I confirm that the information and data reported are accurate and in line with the UK government's Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

Michelle Brennan
HR Director

March 2026