



**Comhairle Contae  
Dhún na nGall**  
Donegal County Council



**DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**GENDER PAY GAP**  
**REPORT 2024**

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# 1. Introduction

The purpose and aim of Donegal County Council is to provide a strong, sustainable and inclusive society with a competitive and innovative economy and prosperous communities, fostering a culturally rich and excellent quality of life for our citizens.

I was honoured to accept the prestigious Local Authority of the Year Award at this year's Chambers Ireland's Excellence in Local Government Awards. This is a great reflection on the work of the Council and the ambitious approach that the Council has taken over the last number of years across a range of areas. This includes investments in economic and enterprise development, housing capital build, roads, greenways, active travel, urban and rural regeneration, climate action, social inclusion and community development and as well as an extensive cultural development programme. It also speaks to the innovation and creativity of our elected members and staff and to the collaborative approach that we take by working with a whole range of partners and stakeholders in delivering various projects and initiatives.

The issue of gender pay differences is an important one, not only to the workplace but to wider society and we are committed to promoting a culture of equality and opportunity where every employee feels valued and treated fairly.

Donegal County Council is an equal opportunity employer and we endeavour to remove all barriers to accessing employment through our recruitment processes and encourage career development through our Staff Education Scheme.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John G. McLaughlin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**John G McLaughlin,**  
**Chief Executive,**  
**Donegal County Council.**

# 2. About us

## Local Government in Ireland

There are 31 local authorities and 3 regional assemblies in Ireland. Local authorities are the closest and most accessible form of government to citizens. They have responsibility for the delivery of a wide range of services in their local area, with a focus on making cities, towns, villages and the countryside attractive places in which to live, work and invest.

Local authority services make a significant contribution to the physical, cultural, social and environmental development of communities and include housing, planning, infrastructure, environmental protection and the provision of amenities and recreation and community infrastructure.

Local authorities play a key role in promoting social inclusion and quality of life and supporting economic development and enterprise at a local level. Local authorities take the lead role in shaping the strategic vision of the county or city. They also work in partnership with other state, public and private bodies in the delivery of critical infrastructure and shared services.

Local authorities deliver a multitude of services and implement policy across a range of functional areas including:

- Arts and culture
- Climate action
- Community services
- Economic development
- Environment
- Housing
- Libraries
- Parks and open spaces
- Planning

- Roads and transport
- Tourism

Local authority employees come from a wide range of backgrounds with diverse skill sets, qualifications and experience. Roles in the sector include:

- Accountants
- Administrators
- Apprenticeships
- Archaeologists
- Architects
- Archivists
- Conservation officers
- Engineers
- Fire services
- General service and tradespeople
- Graduates
- Health and Safety
- Information technology
- Library services
- Planners
- Senior management roles
- Technicians

Working for Donegal County Council gives our employees the opportunity to gain experience at the heart of local government and to make a real difference for County Donegal. Everything we do in Donegal County Council is geared towards making County Donegal a great place to live and work and our employees play a vital role in that ambition.

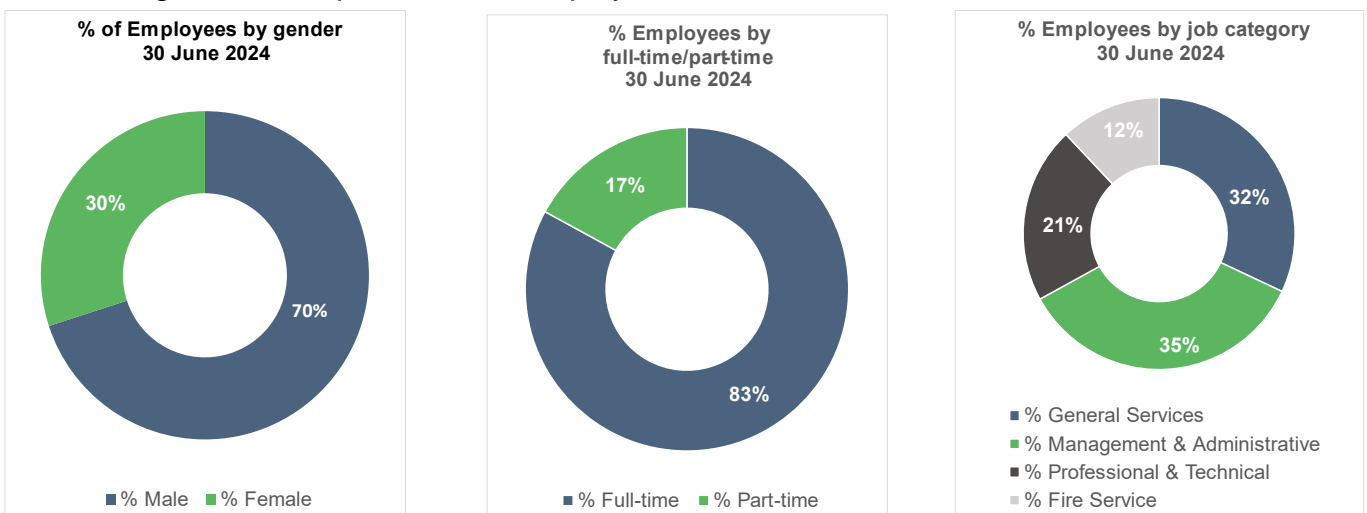
# Donegal County Council

Located in the northwest of Ireland, Donegal offers breath-taking scenery such as Sliabh League (Europe’s highest accessible sea cliffs), untouched coastline along the Wild Atlantic Way and Glenveagh National Park. Donegal also has a large Gaeltacht region where Irish is still the spoken language within the community.

Donegal is also spatially unique with the longest coastline in the State, sharing 93% of its land boundary with Northern Ireland and 7% with the Republic of Ireland. As such, Donegal’s natural functional area transcends its land boundary with Northern Ireland with substantial movement and interactions of citizens, goods and activities taking place across the region. Donegal County Council employs a workforce of approximately 1,214 employees. As an organisation, Donegal County Council seeks to enhance the county’s attraction as a place in which to invest, work, live, and takes the lead role in shaping the strategic vision of the county.

Donegal County Council provides a diverse range of services across a large geographic area. These services include the provision of physical and social infrastructure, housing, economic development and enterprise support, tourism development, community development, recreation and amenity services, emergency services and the enforcement of the planning and environmental regulatory framework.

Our employees work in a dynamic and progressive local authority which promotes training and development of our employees who are our most valuable resource.



# 3. Gender Pay Gap Reporting

## Gender pay gap reporting 2024

The Gender Pay Gap Information Act, 2021 requires organisations with over 150 employees to report on their Gender Pay Gap. 2024 is the third year that organisations will have to report on their Gender Pay Gap. Organisations are asked to select a 'snapshot' date in the month of June. The reporting period is the 12-month period immediately preceding and including the snapshot date, which for local authorities, is 30 June 2024.

Organisations have six months to prepare their calculations, before reporting six months later during December 2024. The information must be published on the employer's website or in some other way that is accessible to all its employees and to the public.

## Who is included?

All persons employed by the employer on the snapshot date, including employees not rostered to work on that date and employees on leave. The mean and median figures must also be given separately for part-time and temporary employees.

## What do we mean by the gender pay gap?

The Gender Pay Gap calculates the percentage difference between the average earnings of males and females irrespective of their role.

The Gender Pay Gap is not the same as equal pay. Employment Equality legislation provides for equal pay for like work. All male and female employees in the local government sector are paid equally for work that is the same or similar or for work of equal value, therefore this report does not examine equal pay. Rates of pay within the sector are agreed through national wage agreements negotiated regularly between

employers and staff representatives. Most employees are paid according to an incremental salary scale and the salary ranges for various roles are available on the local government jobs website at [www.localgovernmentjobs.ie](http://www.localgovernmentjobs.ie)

## Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap

The Gender Pay Gap calculates the percentage difference between the average earnings of males and females irrespective of their role, using the following measures:

MEAN GENDER PAY GAP
<p>This shows the % difference between the</p> <p>average hourly rate of pay for males and average hourly rate of pay for females</p> $\frac{(\text{average male hourly rate}) - (\text{average female hourly rate})}{\text{average male hourly rate}} \times 100$
MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP
<p>This shows the % difference between the</p> <p>median hourly rate of pay for males and median hourly rate of pay for females</p> $\frac{(\text{median of male hourly rates}) - (\text{median of female hourly rates})}{\text{median of male hourly rates}} \times 100$

The **mean** is the average. It is calculated by getting the difference between the average hourly rate of pay for males and the average hourly rate of pay for females (male hourly rate minus female hourly rate), expressed as a percentage of the male hourly rate. If this figure is negative, the average hourly rate of females is higher than the average hourly rate of males on the snapshot date. If this figure is positive, the



average hourly rate of males is higher than the average hourly rate of females on the snapshot date.

The **median** is the figure that falls in the middle of a range where the salary of all relevant employees is listed, from the lowest to the highest. This can provide a more accurate representation of the 'typical' differences in pay.

It is useful to look at both the mean and median figures, as each one can tell us something different about the underlying factors affecting the pay gap.

For example, a small number of higher paid employees can impact the mean figure and if this is the case, the median figure may be more representative of the difference between what a male and a female is paid.

If there is a significant difference between an organisation's mean and median pay gap, this may indicate that the data is impacted either by the presence of very low earners (making the mean lower than the median) or by a group of higher earners (making the mean higher than the median).

It is also important to remember that this report uses data on a snapshot date in June. Gender pay gaps can fluctuate from month to month and across quartile pay bands, depending on changes to headcount. However, headline figures will give a good indication of the differences between average earnings between males and females.

## Quartile Pay Bands

Dividing employees into four more-or-less equal groups (or quartiles) with pay graded from lowest to highest helps us to examine pay across different levels of the organisation.

Organisations must report on the percentage of employees who fall within the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile hourly pay bands.

In order to group employees into these Quartile Pay Bands, the organisation lists all employees from lowest to highest, based on their hourly rates. The employees are then divided into four equal groups or Quartiles based on this - lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper. The employer then shows the proportion of male and female employees in each quartile as a percentage e.g. percentage of male employees in the lower quartile and percentage of female employees in the lower quartile (and so on).

## Bonus and benefit-in-kind

Figures must also be provided for bonus payments or benefit-in-kind payments if these apply. Bonus payments do not apply within the local government sector.

Benefit in Kind may arise in certain circumstances, e.g. where some professional fees are paid by the employer.

## Factors that can have an impact on the gender pay gap

As mentioned, this report does not look at equal pay. Every employee, regardless of gender is paid equally for work that is the same or similar or for work of equal value. However, differences between what employees are paid can be impacted by a number of complex factors including:

- Occupational segregation – some job categories or occupations may have traditionally attracted more females than males or vice versa.

- Working patterns – full-time and part-time work. It may be that more females than males seek part-time work or career breaks and although this does not impact on their hourly rate of pay, it may impact on choices around career progression.
- Length of service – incremental pay increases may mean that new joiners are paid less than more experienced employees.
- Time of year – temporary or seasonal workers may be recruited for different roles which may attract a different rate of pay.
- Gender breakdown of senior roles at higher salaries – a small number of higher paid employees can affect the average figures.
- Gender breakdown of lower paid roles – a large number of lower paid employees can affect the average figures.

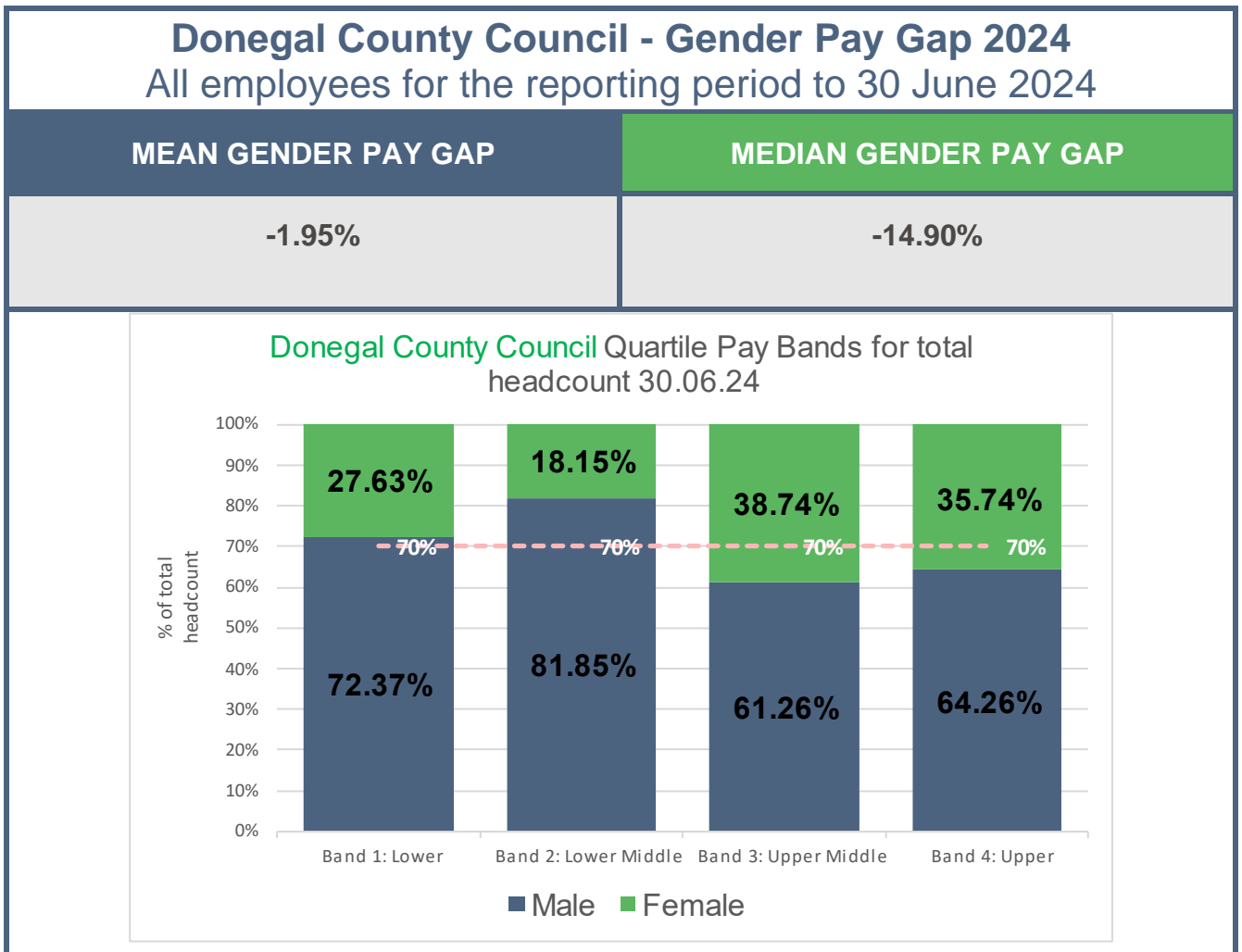
If an organisation reports a **positive gender pay gap**, it does not mean that females are paid less than males for doing the same job, but it does show that, on average, males occupy higher paid roles than females.

If an organisation reports a **negative gender pay gap**, it does not mean that males are paid less than females for doing the same job, but it does indicate that, on average, females occupy higher paid roles than males.

The larger the positive or negative pay gap is, the more marked the differences in hourly rates of pay will be and the more males or females proportionally working in either higher or lower paid roles within the organisation.

# 4. Our figures

## Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap and Pay Band Quartiles– all employees



**Note:** 70% / 30% is the gender breakdown of all employees on 30 June 2024. This is outlined in the Quartile Pay Band graph.

In the case of Donegal County Council, the **Mean Gender Pay Gap** shows that the mean rate of pay for females is 1.95% higher than the mean rate of pay for males.

The **Median Gender Pay Gap** shows that the median rate of pay for females is 14.90% higher than the median rate of pay for males.

Looking at the distribution of employees across the four **Quartile Pay Bands** helps us examine pay at different levels of the organisation.

These Quartile Pay Bands show the distribution of male and female employees by Pay Band across the organisation. (The organisation lists all employees from lowest to highest, based on their hourly rates, then divides this into four equal Pay Bands or Quartiles - lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper. The employer then shows the proportion of male and female employees in each quartile).

The split for the lower quartile shown is broadly in line with our workforce demographics, whilst the middle quartiles fluctuate from positive to negative.

The proportion of females in Band 3 and Band 4 reflects a higher proportion of females in senior roles in Donegal County Council.

There is a higher proportion of males in Band 2, reflecting that there are proportionately more males at lower grades that can affect the median pay gap.

## Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap – part-time employees

Donegal County Council - Gender Pay Gap 2024	
Part-time employees for the reporting period to 30 June 2024	
MEAN GENDER PAY GAP	MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP
-17.55%	-18.28%

Approximately 17% of all our employees on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 were working part-time. Of these, 71% were male and 29% were female.

Factors influencing the pattern of part-time employees across the organisation include a range of flexible work options for part-time work, which, while available to all employees, have a greater take-up within administrative and clerical job categories.

Another factor to consider is job categories where part-time work is an occupational feature of the role, including for example fire service personnel and caretakers for burial grounds.

## Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap – Temporary employees

Donegal County Council - Gender Pay Gap 2024	
Temporary employees for the reporting period to 30 June 2024	
MEAN GENDER PAY GAP	MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP
6.54%	9.66%

On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024, 11% of our employees were employed on temporary contracts. Of these 74% were male and 26% were female. These contracts include temporary/seasonal employees such as beach lifeguards and general operatives, as well as staff across the wide range of disciplines within the organisation.

## Benefit in kind

On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 no employees received a Benefit in Kind payment.

## Bonus payment

Bonus payments do not feature as part of pay in the local government sector.

# 5. How we are supporting Gender Equality

## Fair and transparent recruitment practices

- As an equal opportunities' employer, we work to promote a culture of equality and we strive to embrace genuine equality of opportunity through our recruitment and selection process which is transparent and open to all.
- We provide appropriate assistance and accommodation throughout our recruitment and selection process, including providing easily accessible interview facilities, agreeing an appropriately timed interview, and supplying or arranging appropriate equipment.
- All our Interview Boards are gender balanced and receive training, including unconscious bias training and newly introduced disability training as part of our participation in the WAM Programme.
- Recruitment websites highlight family friendly and flexible working options, and our job descriptions and job advertisements are gender neutral.
- Employees are paid according to an incremental salary scale, and we offer strong career progression opportunities which are open to all employees.
- We have recruited for a number of posts that ensure a socially inclusive and diverse workplace such as the Social Inclusion Officer, Access Officer and are currently in the process of employing an 'Arts and Cultural Diversity Officer'.
- We are currently working through the WAM programme to employ a graduate that will assist in ensuring that all of our recruitment policies and procedures are accessible for people with different forms of disability.

## Work life balance

- We offer a wide range of flexible working and leave options which are available to all employees, including carer's leave, career breaks, paid maternity and adoptive leave, paid paternity leave, parent's leave, parental leave, shorter working year schemes and work-sharing.

## Blended working

- The introduction of blended work provides flexible working conditions with options to combine office and home/hub working.

## **Learning and development**

- Donegal County Council is committed to providing ongoing learning and development supports to ensure that all employees have the opportunity to develop their full potential. A Staff Education Scheme is also available to all employees and this provides a further opportunity for professional and personal development.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

- We have a dedicated Staff Welfare office providing support to staff.
- The health and wellbeing of all employees is paramount and a healthy work-life balance is important to Donegal County Council. We offer a comprehensive employee occupational health and wellbeing programmes including an Employee Assistance Programme, health screening, health and nutrition advice and wellbeing webinars.
- We provide access to the Cycle to Work Scheme and the Tax Saver Scheme, to reduce commuting costs.

## **Dignity at Work**

- We promote and support a culture of dignity, respect and equality. We have a Dignity at Work Policy and provide ongoing training for line managers and staff regarding the implementation of the policy.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

- Donegal County Council is continually developing as an employer of choice to attract, develop and promote an inclusive and diverse employee population.
- Donegal County Council continues to design and provide responsive services and customer care that meet the needs of an increasingly diverse customer base.
- Donegal County Council progressively embeds the Public Sector Duty in its current management, policy development and service delivery processes.
- A Human Rights and Equality Framework has been incorporated into the Council's Corporate Plan.



## Public Sector Duty

- Donegal County Council progressively embeds the Public Sector Duty in its current management, policy development and service delivery processes.
- The Public Sector Duty is set out in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014. Section 42 requires a public body, in the performance of its functions, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services and protect human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.
- Public bodies are required to set out in a manner that is accessible to the public in its strategic plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to its functions and purpose and the existing or proposed policies, plans and actions to address those issues. Furthermore, public bodies are required to report annually on developments and achievements in that regard in its annual report in a manner that is accessible to the public.
- Donegal County Council acknowledges the commonality of purpose stated in both the “Duty” and Gender Pay Gap reporting requirements and the publication of this report serves to underline and support the three-step approach advocated by the IHREC i.e., Assess, Address and Report.

## Women in Leadership

- We strive to encourage females into more leadership roles and have a number of employees participating in tailored programmes such as Cooperation Irelands ‘Women in Leadership – Building Your Potential’ programme.

## Apprenticeships

- As part of our inclusive approach to recruitment, Donegal County Council offers a number of apprenticeship programmes and participates as part of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Innovation and Science’s Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021 – 2025 which aims to increase the number of apprenticeships within the Public Service. This includes new apprenticeship programmes linked to areas of work within local authorities, including IT and finance as well as more traditional apprenticeship areas.

## Data collection and evidence-based policy development

- We welcome the opportunity to report on our gender pay gap and have worked collaboratively across the sector to provide a standard and consistent approach to reporting. We will work with the LGMA and our colleagues in other local authorities to share learnings and best practice.

