

Beyond Compliance: What Gender Pay Gap Data Tells Organisations

While gender pay gap reporting has been in force for a number of years now, any Organisations that have increased their headcount to 50 or more Employees by June 2026 will be required to prepare and publish a gender pay gap report for the first time this year. Employers that have recently expanded their workforce should therefore assess their Employee numbers carefully to determine whether they are now within the scope of the reporting requirements.

Organisations should also be mindful that the reporting deadline switched to November in 2025, giving Employers only five months from the June snapshot date to collect data, complete the required calculations, prepare the accompanying narrative and obtain any necessary internal approvals before publication.

In addition, it is expected that in-scope Organisations will be required to publish their reports on a centralised Government reporting portal this year, making the information more readily accessible to Employees, prospective candidates, clients, competitors, media outlets and the wider public.

Organisations should also recognise that gender pay gap reporting is increasingly being viewed as part of a push towards broader pay transparency. With a phased transposition of the EU Pay Transparency Directive on the horizon, Organisations will face greater scrutiny of pay practices, pay structures and workforce data in the coming years. As a result, many Organisations are using their gender pay gap reporting processes to assess the quality of their pay data, strengthen internal governance and prepare for future transparency obligations.

Common Causes of Gender Pay Gaps

Gender pay gaps can arise for a variety of reasons and often reflect workforce demographics rather than individual pay decisions. Common contributing factors include:

- Lower representation of women in senior leadership and management positions.
- Occupational segregation, where men and women are concentrated in different roles or departments.
- Differences in representation within higher-paying technical or specialist functions.
- Career interruptions associated with caring responsibilities.
- Lower participation rates in bonus-eligible or revenue-generating positions.
- Historical recruitment and promotion patterns.

Understanding the factors driving an Organisation's gender pay gap is essential when preparing the narrative section of the report and identifying meaningful actions to address any imbalances.

Lessons Learned from Previous Reporting Cycles

As gender pay gap reporting has matured, several lessons have emerged for Employers.

First, Organisations that begin preparing well in advance of the June snapshot date typically experience fewer challenges with data collection and validation. Payroll and HR systems often contain the required information, but extracting and analysing it in the format prescribed by the legislation can take time.

Second, stakeholders increasingly expect transparency and context. Organisations that simply publish their metrics without providing meaningful explanation may miss an opportunity to communicate the factors influencing their results and the actions being taken to improve outcomes.

Finally, many Organisations have found that gender pay gap reporting can support broader workforce planning objectives. The reporting process often identifies trends that may otherwise have gone unnoticed, helping Employers make more informed decisions about talent management and workforce development.

Why Gender Pay Gap Reporting Matters to Stakeholders

Gender pay gap reports are also reviewed by a wide range of stakeholders, including current Employees, prospective candidates, clients, media, and investors.

For Employees, the report can provide reassurance that the Organisation is monitoring and addressing workforce equality issues.

For prospective candidates, particularly in competitive labour markets, published gender pay gap data may influence perceptions of an Organisation's culture, career opportunities, and commitment to inclusion.

Failure to engage with reporting obligations may also expose Organisations to reputational risk and increased scrutiny from the media and other stakeholders.

As a result, gender pay gap reporting should be viewed not simply as a legal obligation but also as an opportunity to demonstrate transparency, accountability, and commitment to continuous improvement.

Consequences of Non-Compliance and Looking Ahead

As gender pay gap reporting continues to mature, Organisations should recognise that compliance extends beyond simply publishing the required figures. Failure to comply with reporting obligations may expose Organisations to reputational risk, Employee relations issues and increased scrutiny from the media, stakeholders and the public.

The centralised reporting portal further increases transparency by making reports easily accessible and searchable. As a result, Organisations should expect greater visibility of their reported figures and greater stakeholder interest in both the accompanying narrative and the actions being taken to address any identified gaps.

Organisations should also view gender pay gap reporting in the context of wider developments in pay transparency regulation. The forthcoming transposition of the EU Pay Transparency Directive into Irish law will introduce a range of additional obligations designed to strengthen pay transparency including reporting on gender pay gaps by 'category of worker' performing the same work or work of equal value.

Organisations that establish robust processes for collecting, analysing and reporting workforce pay data today will therefore be better positioned to comply with future legal requirements and respond to increased stakeholder expectations.

Rather than viewing gender pay gap reporting as a standalone annual compliance exercise, Organisations should consider it part of a broader shift towards greater transparency, accountability and data-driven workforce governance. Investing in robust reporting processes now will allow forward-thinking Organisations to navigate the next phase of pay transparency regulation while demonstrating a genuine commitment to fairness and equality in the workplace.

How Adare Can Help

Gender Pay Gap Reports are more than a regulatory obligation, they are public-facing documents that reflect an Organisation's values and approach to gender equality.

Inaccurate or poorly framed reporting can expose your Organisation to:

- Negative media coverage
- Reputational damage
- Erosion of trust with customers, Employees, and stakeholders

Adare's GPG experts help you take control of the narrative by:

- Conducting a full compliance review of your pay data
- Identifying gaps and provide strategic insight
- Preparing your GPG report ensuring it reflects the challenges faced by your Organisation

This is your opportunity to demonstrate transparency, integrity, and a genuine commitment to closing the gender pay gap.

Let Adare ensure your Gender Pay Gap Report is clear, compliant, and contextualised.

Adare is a team of expert-led Employment Law, Industrial Relations and best practice Human Resource Management consultants. If your Organisation needs advice, support, or guidance about gender pay gap reporting, upcoming pay transparency compliance requirements or any HR issues, please contact Adare by calling 021 486 1420 or emailing info@adarehrm.ie to learn what services are available to support your business.