



Royal Conservatoire  
*of* Scotland

Gender Pay Gap Report  
2025/26

**Contents**

**Equal Pay Statement**

- 1.0 Background**
- 2.0 Process**
- 3.0 Scope of Review**
- 4.0 Findings**
- 5.0 Recommendations for Further Action**

**Appendix**  
**Appendix 1: Supporting Policies**

## EQUAL PAY STATEMENT

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (henceforth referred to as the Conservatoire) is committed to reducing the Gender Pay Gap. We recognise that the issue of unequal pay goes further than the definitions contained within the equal pay legislation, and this necessitates looking beyond equal pay for equal work, to related matters including occupational segregation, career development and flexible working.

We recognise the importance of, and are committed to the provision of a fair, objective, and transparent pay system which is free from gender or any other bias. In the interests of equity and fairness, and as good business practice we are committed to taking action to ensure that we provide equal pay for like work and work of equal value.

To put this commitment to providing equal pay into practice, we have:

- Adopted best practice in the Higher Education sector to demonstrate equality and transparency.
- Implemented a range of policies to underpin equality in employment (for example, the Reward and Recognition Policy, Professional Updating Process and Family Friendly Leave Policy).
- Implemented the Hay method of job evaluation for the grading of every post within the Conservatoire.
- Undertaken an annual review of our Gender Pay Gap to compare the pay of men and women doing like work and work of equal value to ensure that our pay system is free from bias.
- Taken and will continue to take, as a priority, positive steps to address the areas in which the review demonstrates that pay gaps exist.

The Director of Human Resources is committed to undertaking annual reviews to ensure parity and reward fairly the skills, experience and potential of all our staff.

It is noted that the HE Sector, aligned to the National Framework Agreement, has experienced and continues to experience significant challenges with pay compression as a result of both implementation of the Real Living Wage and consecutive Pay Awards with differentiated percentages applied to individual spine points. These have been weighted towards the lower end of the national pay scale, resulting in the erosion of spine points and the compression of grades.

The HE Sector is reviewing its approach to addressing the compression and erosion of spine points nationally, therefore this gender pay gap report and the actions arising from the findings will focus on measures that can be taken out-with the national review of the pay scale and framework agreement.

It should also be noted that due to different reporting periods for Gender Pay Gap, Equal Pay Review, our Equality Outcomes and our Mainstreaming Equality Report, data will show differences due to the points at which data is 'collected' for the purpose of each report.

## GENDER PAY GAP 2026

### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

It is unlawful for employers to pay men and women differently for the same jobs, jobs that have been rated the same under a job evaluation process, or jobs that are of equal value.

All public sector organisations, including Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), are required to undertake a Gender Pay Gap analysis to assess whether there are any discrepancies between the pay for men and women. The purpose of the analysis of an organisation's Gender Pay Gap is to identify and eliminate any gaps that cannot be satisfactorily explained on objective grounds other than gender. It includes the following essential elements:

- Comparing the pay of men and women and identifying any gender pay gaps, whether in basic pay or any additional payments
- Explaining any significant pay gaps

This review presents our findings as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

### **2.0 PROCESS**

The way in which the Conservatoire's gender pay gap review was structured followed UK Government Guidance [Gender pay gap reporting: guidance for employers - GOV.UK](#).

This included:

- Identifying employees and their gender
- Calculating ordinary pay
- Determining whether any bonus pay was applicable
- Determining weekly hours
- Calculating their hourly pay

### **3.0 SCOPE OF REVIEW**

Within the Conservatoire we have two (2) distinct staffing groups. Our Full Time/Pro-rata staff are employed under contracts which stipulate their weekly/monthly or annual hours (except for a small number of staff in this area who are employed on zero hours contracts). Our PT Teaching staff constitute a significant section of our workforce and are generally professionals currently in practice in their chosen field, who work peripatetically across a number of education organisations, or have a portfolio career, one aspect of which is teaching. For these members of our staff, a teaching role may represent a minor part of what they do, and they may work with our students (or indeed staff) for a small yet significant number of hours within a year. For the purposes of Gender Pay Gap reporting, our results encompass both groups of staff together within one data set.

It is important to note that due to the size of the institution, a small change in our staff composition can have a significant impact on the results of a review such as this.

The Conservatoire Senior Management Team (CSMT) are included in the report. We have used the approach detailed in the Statutory Guidance [Preparing your data - GOV.UK](#).

## Data Collection and Analysis

The data relating to gender which has been used to conduct this review is based on self-reporting by employees. All employees are asked to provide us with the relevant data when they start employment and are able to review and update this data at any point using the employee self-service element of our HR/Payroll system. The Conservatoire introduced a new HR/Payroll system in November 2024 and as part of this process we undertook a full review of all staffing data, making improvements where required. Some differences between the data in this and previous reports are as a result of this data cleansing exercise.

All pay gap information is reported on the basis of mean salary figures unless otherwise stated.

## 4.0 FINDINGS

This section contains information on the Gender Pay Gap for all staff within the Conservatoire (full-time/pro-rata staff and hourly paid staff).

### Gender Pay Gap

A **Gender pay gap** is the percentage difference between average hourly earnings for men and women, regardless of level of work. This is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. The gender pay gap information reported below is based on the earnings of both full-time/pro rata staff and hourly paid staff.

Gender	Headcount	Mean Hourly Rate (£)	Mean Pay Gap
Female	730	29.96	5.7%
Male	573	31.76	

The current gender pay gap is 5.7%, a small increase from 5.2% in 2024. This is attributable to a number of women appointed to vacancies within the reporting period to roles previously held by men. The previous post-holders had been in position for a number of years and had progressed through the incremental points of the salary scale to the top of the scale. The newly appointed members of staff have been appointed at earlier increments within the scale and therefore will progress to the top of the scale over time.

The table below shows the percentage of men and women in each pay quarter:

Gender	Pay Quarter 1	Pay Quarter 2	Pay Quarter 3	Pay Quarter 4
Women (%)	60.7	54.0	56.1	53.2
Men (%)	39.3	46.0	43.9	46.8

The Conservatoire is committed to aligning itself with the Real Living Wage Foundation rate for its Grade 1 roles. It is also committed to maintaining a baseline minimum differentiation between Grades 1, 2 and 3. This approach continues to positively impact our gender pay gap. In addition, the pay award

for 2025 was weighted in favour of those staff at the lower end of the salary scale. Staff on grades 2-5 received higher percentage increases than those on grades 6 and upwards, again having a positive impact on the overall gender pay gap.

According to the Office for National Statistics, the UK national gender pay gap has been reducing slowly over time and in April 2025, it stood at 12.8% for all employees, down from 13.1% in April 2024. Our current pay gap therefore is reasonably below the national average for 2025.

In April 2025, the median hourly earnings within the UK for employees were £20.27 for men and £18.87 for women – a difference of £1.40 per hour. The median hourly earnings within RCS for employees were £31.76 for men and £29.96 for women, with a difference of £1.80 per hour, or 5.67%.

As of March 2024, the mean gender pay gap in higher education was 11.9%, a reduction from 14.4% in 2023. The Conservatoire's current 5.67% pay gap suggests that, in addition to the pay awards, other measures taken by the Conservatoire to reduce the gender pay gap in the past two years are yielding dividend, despite the small increase this year.

These so far include providing career progression support and mentoring for women across the whole institution to help create a more equal distribution of men and women across all grade levels, job types and work patterns to reach our ambition of narrowing the gender pay gap to below 5%.

We will continue to engage with all heads of directorates, schools and programmes and staff members to generate additional measures that will help us to reduce the gender pay gap further.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

We will continue to ensure the language in job adverts does not suggest a preference for male or female applicants and ableism to reduce bias in recruitment and increase the diversity of our workforce. Other measures including using skill-based recruitment tasks and structured interviews. We have also undertaken trials of making interview questions (or some of the interview questions) available to candidates prior to interviews taking place. Anecdotal evidence shows that candidates are often able to present more confidently and fully and feel more able to engage with the process. This is particularly relevant for women who have taken periods of leave due to caring responsibilities and are returning to work or applying for new roles for the first time following a period away from work.

We will continue to strengthen our data gathering to better understand what people's experiences of applying and being recruited to the Conservatoire feels for them relating to their gender. We will also regularly review our policies, practices and rules to identify and rectify any areas that may have a disproportionately adverse effect on job applicants and/or employees' career development and promotion because of their protected characteristics. A key policy consideration will be the current approach of appointing new staff to the first point of a salary scale on commencement of a new role. Research shows that men are more likely to negotiate an uplifted starting salary than women, meaning that the gender pay gap can be affected not only by the gender of a new appointee but their confidence in negotiating a starting salary too, which compounds the gap further.

Additionally, we will review and improve our 'exit interviews' to help understand and address any factors impinging on retention of our staff. Findings of our staff survey shows that our female employees particularly value the availability of hybrid and flexible working opportunities within many of our roles, and this continues to be a significant factor in retention of women.

We are undertaking a review of both our Recruitment and Selection Training for managers involved in recruitment processes, and our Institutional Induction Programme.

We have put in place mandatory training for staff participating in the recruitment and promotion processes that will augment their diversity and cultural competency training. This includes embedding unconscious bias training, supporting a neurodivergent workforce and understanding the benefits of flexible working and reasonable adjustments to encourage individuals to consider the Conservatoire as a potential employer.

The review of our Institutional Induction Programme will centre on the Conservatoire's values and will encourage staff from their first day to understand, value and embody the values through their behaviours at work. Our values are creative courage; compassion; constructive challenge; curiosity; craft, rigour and talent; and community. These underpin our people centred vision and mission:

- **Our vision** is a community that nurtures, supports and celebrates inclusive art making from grass roots to world-leading performance and production.
- **Our mission** is for our education, engagement, and research in the arts to be the catalyst to shape the future of art forms, artists and society.

**5.3 Engaging and Consulting:** The Conservatoire will continue to consult with its staff, wider community, and protected characteristics interest groups to inform transparency and best practice approach to addressing the pay gap. We will continue to regularly consult with staff to understand their needs, concerns and aspirations to advance their career development and progression pathways, and to positively impact the pay gaps. This is mainly achieved through our institutional staff survey, which is now in its second year.

Our People and Culture Committee provides the leadership commitment to facilitate our engagement and consultation with the workforce. This group also provides a forum to address any issues relating to the structural barriers to recruitment, promotion, retention; anti-discrimination and racism; and dignity and wellbeing at work. We have also introduced a Staff Forum this year, which has a remit of:

- Exploration, development and operational improvement
- Communication and feedback
- Building a sense of community

These key areas have been found to represent significant contributing factors to the engagement and retention of women within our staff survey – both in terms of frustrations when ineffective, and motivating when seen as critical to the RCS by leadership.

We will continue to engage with Union Representatives and management teams to implement an awareness raising drive to explain the need for and benefits of self-disclosure of protected characteristics among staff and new hires.

We maintain a range of support and benefits as well as activities, groups and networks to help our staff connect across our organisation and to positively impact on their physical, mental and financial health, and professional development. Our employee assistance programme offers counselling support and we are introducing an additional service of Virtual GP, which enables staff to access GP medical support within a much shorter timeframe than currently available via NHS. This is of particular benefit to our female employees who generally tend to be primary care givers – as this service is also available to dependents. It supports our female staff to balance their caring responsibilities and workload and alleviate some of the stresses associated with challenging work-life balance.

**Appendix 1:****Supporting Policies**

The Conservatoire has a comprehensive range of policies and practices to support equality and diversity within the workplace, which aim to reduce barriers to progression and seek to promote equal pay.

All of our policies are/ will be available on request, including:

- Absence Management Policy
- Colleague Coaching Scheme
- Dignity at Work & Study Statement & Guidelines
- Disability in Employment Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement
- Family Friendly Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Guidelines
- Hybrid Working Guidelines
- Job Evaluation Policy
- Professional Update Scheme
- Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Right to Request Pro Rata Contract Policy and Procedure
- Reward & Recognition Policy
- Staff Development Policy
- Support for Further and Higher Qualifications Policy