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Gender Pay Gap Report 2023 -24

March 2025



Protecting the public from serious and organised crime

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. A workforce diverse in background, thought and experience is fundamental to the National Crime Agency's (NCA) ability to degrade the threat posed by serious and organised crime and arrive at creative solutions in doing so. The Agency is committed to ensuring that it fully represents the public it protects and enables all officers to be themselves and give their best. Our NCA strategy 2023-2028 describes doing so as mission critical. The gender pay gap is one indicator of whether we are making progress with that strategy. Within this report we will highlight our gender pay gap based upon reporting data 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

"There has been progress over the last year: more women in the NCA, in senior roles, and in spot rated / operational roles than ever before, and outperforming men in promotions. Despite that, the median gender pay gap has remained stubbornly at 8.7% (and the mean pay gap increased). We have more to do to get a gender balance in senior and operational roles, which we are working on. Changing the fact that we have a higher proportion of women near the bottom of pay ranges will be dependent on successfully implementing the NCA pay and contract reform proposals."

Graeme Biggar, Director General NCA.

2. NCA Gender Pay Gap

- 2.1. We are committed to improving the representation of women in the NCA, with a particular emphasis on increasing the number of female officers at senior grades and in operational roles. Historically this has been challenging for us, with law enforcement being a traditionally male environment. As a consequence, operational roles advertised externally can lead to the recruitment of more men than women. However, we have introduced changes to policies and practices to encourage a wider pool of talent to apply. For example, we now have a default position whereby all roles are advertised as suitable for flexible working – including part-time. Only where there is a well evidenced business case will exceptions be made.
- 2.2. Addressing these challenges has been important for the Agency, with our Officer Development Programme (ODP) seeing particular success in recruiting more female than male officers. We want to make sure we support female officers throughout their career, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to thrive and to contribute to their full potential. The development of our female talent is being progressed through bespoke initiatives such as the Female Senior Leadership Development Programme (FSLDP), as well as Civil Service Schemes i.e. Crossing Thresholds.

- 2.3. The mean gender pay gap for 2024 is 11.17%; this is an increase from our mean in 2023 which was 9.46%¹. The median gender pay gap has slightly decreased to 8.66%, compared to 8.68% in 2023.
- 2.4. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that the UK Gender Pay Gap (median) for 2024 is 7.0% for full-time workers (full-time worker is defined as those working over 30 hours per week). For all workers (full and part-time) the UK's median pay gap rises to 13.1% in favour of men. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) have reported their figures for 2024 as 8.0% (median) and 9.2% (mean). Headlines about gender pay gap tend to focus on the median figure, which doesn't include extremes and is therefore assessed to be the most representative measure. However, it is important to report both measures as each can help us understand the underlying causes of pay disparity. Where the mean is lower than the median, the data may be skewed by the presence of very low earners. Where the mean is higher than the median, as in the NCA, the data may be skewed by a group of very high earners.
- 2.5. As with most organisations, the gender pay gap is caused by a number of different factors. A factor in the pay gap relates to men on average being higher earners. This is supported by data on pay quartiles where the percentage of male officers in the upper quartiles is approx. two-thirds compared to female officers who represent one-third. This disproportionality is also replicated in middle and senior management grades where male officers make up 60% of the profile whilst women are 40%.
- 2.6. As a Civil Service department, we are subject to public sector pay policy and pay restrictions and comply fully with all requirements of the Civil Service Pay Guidance. Agency pay is also subject to recommendations made to the Government by our independent pay review body. The 2024/25 pay award was 5% building on a 7% pay award for 2023/24, resulting in a 12% pay increase over the last two years. Overall percentage uplifts tend to increase the gender pay gap, by exaggerating the embedded pay differences between men and women.
- 2.7. Progressive changes to pay-related policies have embedded which allows us to collate and review data, trends and patterns. As mentioned in previous reports, performance award payments are no longer pro-rated for part time officers. This year officers receiving an 'Exceeded' performance award each received a payment of £400. The split between male and female officers awarded 'Exceeded' is 50% respectively – the number of female officers awarded 'Exceeded' performance awards was higher than the proportion of the female workforce which is 46%.

¹ The gender pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between all men and women in a workforce. It is different to equal pay which is about 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.

In order to calculate the gender pay gap we use the mean and median:

- Mean: The difference between the average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men and women.
- Median: Is the difference between the midpoints in the ranges of hourly earnings of men and women.

- 2.8. Other mechanisms for reward and recognition are based on in-year (non-consolidated) honorarium payments to recognise the exceptional work done by our officers. We have also introduced a Reward Voucher Scheme designed to recognise, reward and thank our officers for short, one-off achievements or actions including the demonstration of behaviours that support our NCA values. These reward vouchers have been received very positively by the Agency, providing line managers or colleagues the opportunity to quickly reward good work by officers. They have led to the number of bonus payments vastly increasing in the Agency, which can be seen in some of the data provided in this report.
- 2.9. The bonus gap is the difference between the bonus pay (i.e. honorariums, reward vouchers and Exceeded performance award payments) paid to male officers and those paid to female officers. This year the mean bonus gap has risen to 5.61% whilst the median has maintained a pure parity (0.00%). The change in policy to shift honorarium payments to fixed-values - £500, £750 and £1,000 respectively - was implemented in March 2023. Our former approach was to award a percentage point to salary; this approach financially advantaged those in higher grades and/or higher salaries (which generally favoured male officers).
- 2.10 The data-set showed that more females than males received bonus awards however the average honorarium amounts are higher for male officers than female officers, which is the primary reason for the increase in the mean gender bonus gap to 5.61%. We will continue to monitor this trend during the next 12-months ahead of the next reporting period.

Table 1: Gender Pay Gap results

Gender Pay Gap		2024	2023
Mean Gender Pay Gap – Ordinary Pay		11.17%	9.46%
Median Gender Pay Gap – Ordinary Pay		8.66%	8.68%
Mean Gender Pay Gap – Bonus Pay in the 12 Months ending 31 March		5.61%	0.76%
Median Gender Pay Gap – Bonus Pay in the 12 Months ending 31 March		0.00%	0.00%
Proportion of male officers and female officers paid a bonus in the 12 months ending 31 March	Male	39.93%	15.86%
	Female	50.02%	18.32%

3. Explaining our workforce – challenges and opportunities

3.1. Overall the percentage of women in the Agency stands at 46%, the highest it has been since the NCA's creation in 2013. There has been a noticeable increase in female representation at senior management grades (grades 1 and 2). Representation at grade 5 and grade 4 is steady; this is an encouraging shift in the workforce dynamic. Table 3 below shows the distribution of female officers by grade.

Table 2: Proportion of all Male and Female NCA employees in each Quartile

Pay Quartiles	2024		2023	
	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %
First (lower) Quartile	62.00%	38.00%	60.60%	39.40%
Second Quartile	48.90%	51.10%	48.60%	51.40%
Third Quartile	38.70%	61.30%	38.50%	61.50%
Fourth (upper) Quartile	33.00%	67.00%	32.80%	67.20%

3.2. The number of female officers positioned in the upper pay quartiles has remained static – with no movement in the last 12-months. The number of female officers in the first pay quartile has increased by 1.4%, whilst the percentage of women at SCS has decreased by 3.73%, which has increased the mean gender pay gap. As more male officers are positioned at the higher end of the pay ranges the gender pay disparity persists, this is seen to be a root cause of our gender pay gap position – Table 2 refers.

Table 3: Percentage of women at each grade

NCA Grade Band	% of women in grade (2024)	% of women in grade (2023)
Senior Civil Servants	39.13%	42.86%
NCA Grade 1	32.14%	27.03%
NCA Grade 2	41.04%	37.06%
NCA Grade 3	39.79%	38.74%
NCA Grade 4	43.47%	41.29%
NCA Grade 5	51.39%	50.92%
NCA Grade 6	61.04%	63.72%

3.3. Our operational commands make up the majority of our workforce; Table 4 shows a gender comparison within these areas. For most of the commands the comparison is balanced, the challenge remains within our Investigations command where female officers continue to comprise 39% of the command.

Table 4: Gender comparison within operational commands

Command	Female	Male
NCA Intelligence	45.00%	55.00%
NCA Investigations	39.00%	61.00%
NCA National Economic Crime Centre	54.00%	46.00%
NCA Threat Leadership	47.00%	53.00%
Grand Total	46.00%	54.00%

3.4. The NCA currently operates dual pay structures. Within our operational commands we have implemented a spot rate (SR) pay framework - a skills-based pay progression system. Of itself, the spot rate system should act to remove unwarranted variations in pay between individuals carrying out the same work as they are on the same spot rate pay. The spot rate framework is designed to reflect skills and capabilities in certain roles rather than a salary point at which officers entered the Agency therefore an intake of new officers will lower the overall average in the short term as they will be primarily placed on SR1 - only when they demonstrate skills, knowledge and capabilities that assess them as 'competent' will they move to higher spot rates. These spot rate changes are primarily due to the gender makeup of officers at senior grades, with low numbers of female officers in senior operational roles. In addition, whilst there are limited officers at grades 5 and 4 receiving Expert spot rate pay those who do are overwhelmingly male. Analysis and Equality Impact Assessments have been conducted to ensure that our spot rate framework is fair, we have not seen any inherent differences in the time frames of male and female officers progressing to higher spot rates; this is a positive but is something we will continue to monitor.

Table 5: Gender pay gap within spot rate roles

Spot Rate Framework - Gender Pay Gap	2024	2023	2022
Mean	11.31%	8.87%	10.51%
Median	8.41%	7.56%	10.74%
Mean (Bonus pay)	13.71%	0.76%	12.79%
Median (Bonus pay)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

3.5. The Agency is progressing a case for pay and contract reform which aims to address issues with the current pay structures. One of the key drivers of pay reform is to reduce gender and other pay gaps.

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3.6. Many of the positive changes we have made at our lower grades are due to the NCA Officer Development Programme, a 24-month blended learning programme to develop the specialist skills and knowledge to become an NCA Investigator or Intelligence Officer. Currently 59% of officers on the ODP programme are female. As officers complete the programme their salary increases along our spot rate framework and up the pay quartiles.

Table 6: Spot Rate Framework by Gender

Pay Grade	Point	2024			2023			Differences		
		Female	Male	Grand Total	Female	Male	Grand Total	Female	Male	Grand Total
NCA Grade 1	G1-1	7	7	14	7	9	16	0	-2	-2
	G1-2	4	32	36	2	24	26	2	8	10
NCA Grade 1 Total		11	39	50	9	33	42	2	6	8
NCA Grade 2	G2-1	11	25	36	9	21	30	2	4	6
	G2-2	18	81	99	16	74	90	2	7	9
NCA Grade 2 Total		29	106	135	25	95	120	4	11	15
NCA Grade 3	G3-1	4	8	12	3	10	13	1	-2	-1
	G3-2	0	4	4	0	4	4	0	0	0
NCA Grade 3 Total		4	12	16	3	14	17	1	-2	-1
NCA Grade 4	G4-1	86	154	240	51	95	146	35	59	94
	G4-2	150	355	505	159	358	517	-9	-3	-12
	G4-3	1	14	15	0	11	11	1	3	4
NCA Grade 4 Total		237	523	760	210	464	674	27	59	86
NCA Grade 5	G5-1	128	96	224	89	70	159	39	26	65
	G5-2	194	202	396	294	263	557	-100	-61	-161
	G5-3	327	408	735	276	413	689	51	-5	46
	G5-4	2	25	27	3	28	31	-1	-3	-4
NCA Grade 5 Total		651	731	1382	662	774	1436	-11	-43	-54
Grand Total		932	1411	2343	909	1380	2289	23	31	54

3.7. Additionally, we need to factor in changes within recruitment, as mentioned earlier in the report; law enforcement can be a predominantly male job sector. Recruitment activity does tend to lead to increases in the gender pay gap for roles requiring significant experience and expertise rather than those at entry level. If we look at the gender pay gap within our recruitment activity, there is an overall 6.29% gap between male and female officers basic pay. Civil Service transfers tend to see a pay gap of 5.28%, whilst external hires from the Police and private sector are higher at 7.65%.

4. Talent Management

4.1. The Agency has a strong development and talent offer for our female officers with opportunities to develop through internal and Civil Service talent programmes, as well as female focused cross government opportunities like the Crossing Thresholds programme. This has enabled female officers who have either recently been promoted, or are working towards promotion, to develop their skillsets and talents. In 2023 the Agency launched its Female Senior Leadership Development Programme (FSLDP) which aims to support female managers (grades 1 & 2) progress to the Senior Civil Service (SCS). To date over 100 female officers have participated. The programme is being evaluated and the findings will be discussed at People Committee.

4.2. Overall substantive and temporary promotions are evenly split with a lean towards female officers in most grades - Table 7 refers. This is mirrored by temporary promotions where the split is 52% female/48% male.

Table 7: Percentage of officers permanently promoted into a higher grade during 2023-24

Percentage of Promoted Officers	Female	Male
NCA Deputy Director	75%	25%
NCA Grade 1	64%	36%
NCA Grade 2	43%	57%
NCA Grade 3	51%	49%
NCA Grade 4	48%	52%
NCA Grade 5	71%	29%
Total	51%	49%

5. Promoting gender-based inclusivity

5.1. In June 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) conducted an inspection into NCA vetting and anti-corruption, including prejudicial and improper behaviour. The inspectorate noted that there was generally a positive and inclusive culture within the NCA; where prejudicial and improper

behaviour was not tolerated, this was especially noticeable at our two HQ locations. However, they found evidence of behaviour below the standards expected at some satellite offices. Following the Inspection an integrated Confidential Reporting Tool has been made available; since December 2023 there has been a 20% increase in reporting (82 cases of potential conduct matters compared to 58 during the previous period). There is regular internal publication of misconduct statistics and panel outcomes.

- 5.2. The NCA Senior Leadership Team is committed to ensuring that the promotion of inclusivity is adopted throughout all our work locations and gender-based prejudice is appropriately challenged and addressed.
- 5.3. The NCA is an active supporter of the HeForShe National programme which creates a link between gender inequalities and gender-based violence with the work undertaken by the Agency. This programme will be a feature of future gender pay gap reporting.

6. Plans to further close the gap

- 6.1. Narrowing the gender pay gap requires intentional, consistent and sustained effort including a shift in cultural norms. The NCA is exploring both pay-related and non-pay related ways to reduce the pay gap; our ambition is that the actions we take will move the Agency towards gender parity in all grades and locations, and further strengthen our female talent pipeline in middle management and senior management grades.
- 6.2. The actions below are starting to make a positive impact:
 - Staff Networks & Champions - Continue to support staff groups including the Gender Equality Group (GEG) with Deputy Director/Director Sponsorship. The GEG are progressing a number of initiatives including the introduction of 'spot mentoring' for women in middle management and junior grades.
 - Recruitment - Ensure recruitment activities are aligned to best practice and encourage applications from female candidates as well as under-represented groups. For example, any new recruitment will have a starting position to advertise roles as suitable for full time, part time and flexible working. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This will facilitate a wider range of applicants thereby broadening representation, particularly in operational and senior management roles.
 - Policy Development - Support progressive policy development and ways of working which include flexible and hybrid working and support for female officers experiencing the menopause. The gender pay gap is higher for female officers over 35 years of age which may indicate that a lack of work/life balance and flexible working opportunities (due to caring responsibilities) could be a barrier for female officers gaining access to higher salary roles. We have recently updated our policy on baby loss to provide greater support to officers.

- Career Development - Continue to offer internal promotion opportunities ensuring a flexible approach to ways of working i.e. reduced hours/flexible locations.
- Addressing Under-Representation - Encouraging women to apply for operational roles, including highly specialist areas such as firearms officers. Concentrated efforts should focus on encouraging female officers to consider promotion opportunities within operational commands. This will include updating systems and practices to remove inherent and inappropriate barriers for example ensuring a progressive approach to flexible working.

6.3. Health & Wellbeing is a priority, we have just published a comprehensive guide of our employee value proposition outlining a range of both pay and non-pay related benefits. We also include an Employee Assistance Programme that supports officers with physical, mental and financial concerns.

6.4. We continue to support officer participation in our Allyship training programme and have recently introduced the 'Green Dot Campaign' which seeks volunteers to help enhance and promote an inclusive and respectful work environment. As of February 2025, we have 163 volunteers across all NCA locations and since the launch in March 2024, 25 workshops have been delivered across the Agency, addressing key issues pertaining to Bullying, Harassment, Victimisation & Discrimination (BHVD) including micromanagement, how to build trust, give feedback and a specific 'People Manager' workshop attended by over 175 of our managers to support their well-being, emotional intelligence and awareness of bullying and harassment. We want to do more to improve the outcomes and experiences of our female officers. Our actions are informed by workforce data, people survey results, and research by the Government Equalities Office, which is focused on eliminating the gender pay gap.

6.5. Targeted positive actions to reduce the gender pay gap include:

- A proposal for an extensive programme of pay & contract reform to address anomalies in our pay structures and to positively impact the gender pay gap. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on the reform proposals.
- Continue to promote talent development programmes and initiatives.
- Continue to actively seek to attract female officers into operational roles.
- Continue to enhance our non-pay benefits which include key worker housing schemes, buying & selling annual leave, salary advance for rental deposit and promoting flexible working options such as hybrid working in roles across the Agency.
- The launch of an NCA Job Share Hub and Toolkit in March 2025 to promote and facilitate the use of this flexible working option.
- Work closely with Talent and HR Data Management teams to improve the collection and analysis of data, including understanding the impact of development programmes in more detail.
- Ensure that the Allyship training programme is strongly supported as well as other learning opportunities.

7. Declaration

7.1. We confirm that data reported by the National Crime Agency is accurate and has been calculated according to the requirements and methodology set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

HR Director: Mandy Eddolls

Director General NCA: Graeme Biggar