

Gender Pay Gap 2024

2024	Combined Gap	Full Time Gap	Part Time Gap
All Employees	+3.2%	-17.4%	+18.9%
Non-Teaching Employees	+8.4%	-9.6%	+18.9%
Teaching Employees	+5.0%	+4.8%	+10.9%
SJC* Employees	+9.5%	-8.5%	+19.5%

*Scottish Joint Council (HC01 to HC15)

Note: A positive figure denotes a gap to the advantage of male employees. A negative figure denotes a gap to the advantage of female employees.

Average Hourly Rates 2024	Combined Gap		Full Time Gap		Part Time Gap	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
All Employees	£20.71	£20.04	£21.19	£24.88	£18.70	£17.18
Non-Teaching Employees	£17.27	£15.82	£17.77	£19.47	£15.04	£14.41
Teaching Employees	£31.65	£30.08	£32.43	£30.88	£28.77	£28.90
SJC* Employees	£17.13	£15.50	£17.61	£19.12	£14.96	£14.18

* Scottish Joint Council (HC01 to HC15)

Note: A positive figure denotes a gap to the advantage of male employees. A negative figure denotes a gap to the advantage of female employees.

1. Context

- 1.1** The main provisions of the Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010. The Act brings together the previous strands of equality and discrimination legislation and aims to simplify and strengthen the law.
- 1.2** The Act also introduces a general duty on public bodies to give due regard in all their work for the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Specific duties introduced in Scotland in 2012 by Regulations require the Council to publish information on the Council's equal pay gap.

- 1.3** Guidance on meeting the requirements of the various duties is provided by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and supported by Close the Gap. Close the Gap is an organisation funded by the Scottish Government, working in partnership with the EHRC and the Scottish Trades Union Congress to guide and assist employers. All pay gap calculations are based on their guidance.
- 1.4** An organisation's gender pay gap is the difference between the average male and female pay rates.
- It is calculated by dividing the average female hourly pay rate by the average male hourly pay rate.
 - The full-time gender pay gap is the gap between the average hourly pay rate of female employees who work full time and male employees who work full time.
 - The part time gender pay gap is the gap between the average hourly pay rate of female employees who work part time and male employees who work full time.
- 1.5** The Council is required to publish the gender pay gap between male and female employees. It is also required to publish this data separately on employees in Education (Teaching employees). The EHRC and Close the Gap also strongly advise publishing separate full time and part time gender pay gaps.

It is considered that any pay gap of 5% or more is considered significant and in need of further analysis.

2. Gender Pay Gap

2.1 Background:

The 2023 Gender Pay Gap analysis identified the following equal Pay Gaps:

2023	Combined Gap	Full Time Gap	Part Time Gap
All Employees	+4.5%	-15.8%	+20.8%
Non-Teaching Employees	+9.3%	-9.3%	+20.6%
Teaching Employees	+4.9%	+4.3%	+11.2%
SJC* Employees	+10.6%	-8.2%	+21.5%

Scottish Joint Council (HC01 to HC15)

Note: A positive figure denotes a gap to the advantage of male employees. A negative figure denotes a gap to the advantage of female employees.

2.2 Analysis of this data suggested that:

- i. The Teacher pay and grading structure is robust and supports equal pay.
- ii. The Scottish Local Government Living Wage (SLGLW) has risen over recent years, which created compression in the lower grades within the Council's Pay & Grading Structure. The Council has now undertaken a pay modelling exercise to address this issue.
- iii. Significant workforce gender segregation in SJC Job Families (Business Support, Personal Care, Technical and Practical), Craft and Teaching posts correspond with significant part time pay gaps.
- iv. Lower availability of part time working in SJC grades HC6 and above corresponds with a significant SJC part time pay gap.
- v. Lower availability of part time working in promoted teaching grades corresponds with a Teaching part time pay gap.

2.3 Previous reports found that the following issues could contribute and impact the pay gaps.

- i. Vertical gender segregation (disproportionately low number of women in senior posts) in Teaching posts and in SJC Business Support and Management posts.

- ii. Horizontal gender segregation in teaching posts (disproportionately low number of women Head Teachers in Secondary Schools).
- iii. Lower uptake of part time working opportunities in senior teaching posts and in SJC posts graded HC06 and above.
- iv. Horizontal gender segregation (males in Community Works and females in Catering, Cleaning and Caring posts) within Technical & Practical posts.

2.4 A number of actions continue to be taken to address gender segregation. Examples of activity to address gender segregation are:

- i. Female role models in male dominated job groups are encouraged within the structure.
- ii. Where service delivery allows, we have various policies in place to support employees achieve a work life balance. These include family friendly staff policies, flexible working opportunities and hybrid working. We have also introduced a Carer Positive policy to support employees with the demands of caring for dependants.
- iii. Job Descriptions and Person Specifications continue to be monitored and reviewed to ensure that they contain no bias, e.g. Age or Gender
- iv. Services have reviewed workplace facilities to ensure that both genders are adequately provided for.
- v. Significant areas of gender segregation are monitored and reviewed to identify and address any barriers to employment.
- vi. Strategic workforce planning should help address and further promote flexible working arrangements that support women to progress their careers.
- vii. The Council currently holds development level accreditation for Equally Safe at Work (ESAW) and plans to work towards achievement of bronze level from October 2025. Evidence required includes a section on gender-disaggregated data gathering, aligned to the Equality & Human Rights Commission recommendations.
- viii. Accreditation as a Living Wage Employer since 2019 and committed to [fair work initiatives](#).

2.5 These actions demonstrate a general improvement in the Highland Council’s gender equal pay gaps since 2023, notably the combined gap for all employees has reduced from 4.5% to 3.2%.

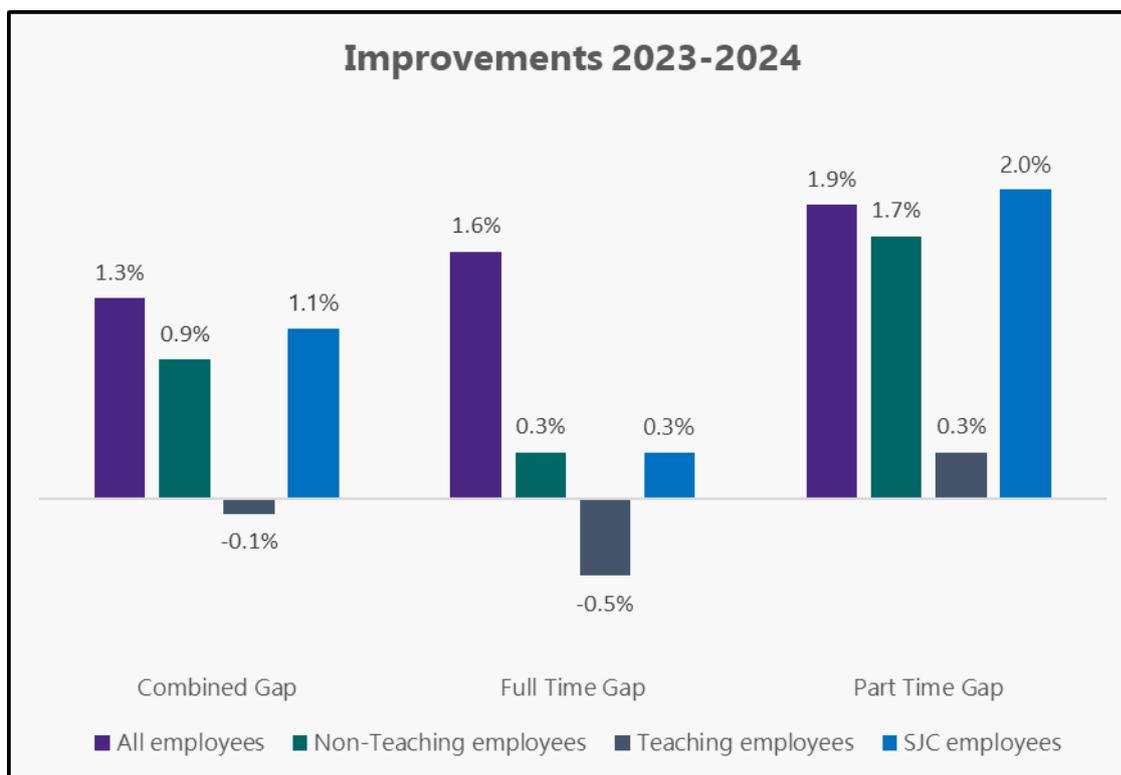
The 2024 gaps are as follows:

2024	Combined Gap	Full Time Gap	Part Time Gap
All Employees	+3.2%	-17.4%	+18.9%
Non-Teaching Employees	+8.4%	-9.6%	+18.9%
Teaching Employees	+5.0%	+4.8%	+10.9%
SJC* Employees	+9.5%	-8.5%	+19.5%

*Scottish Joint Council (HC01 to HC15)

Note: A positive figure denotes a gap to the advantage of male employees. A negative figure denotes a gap to the advantage of female employees.

2.6 Improvements in these pay gaps over the period 2023-2024 are as follows:

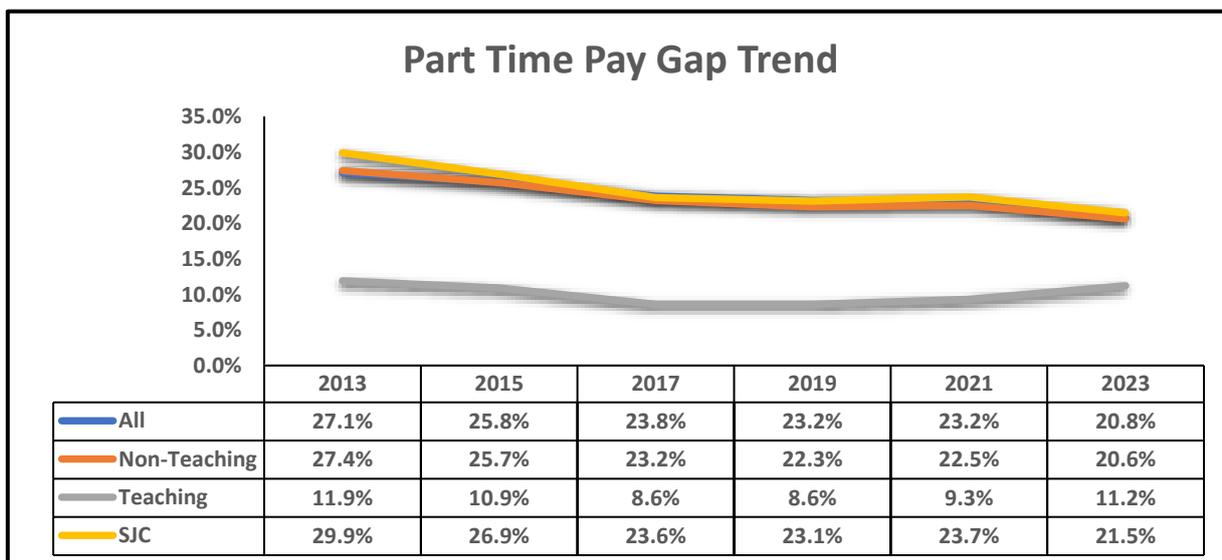
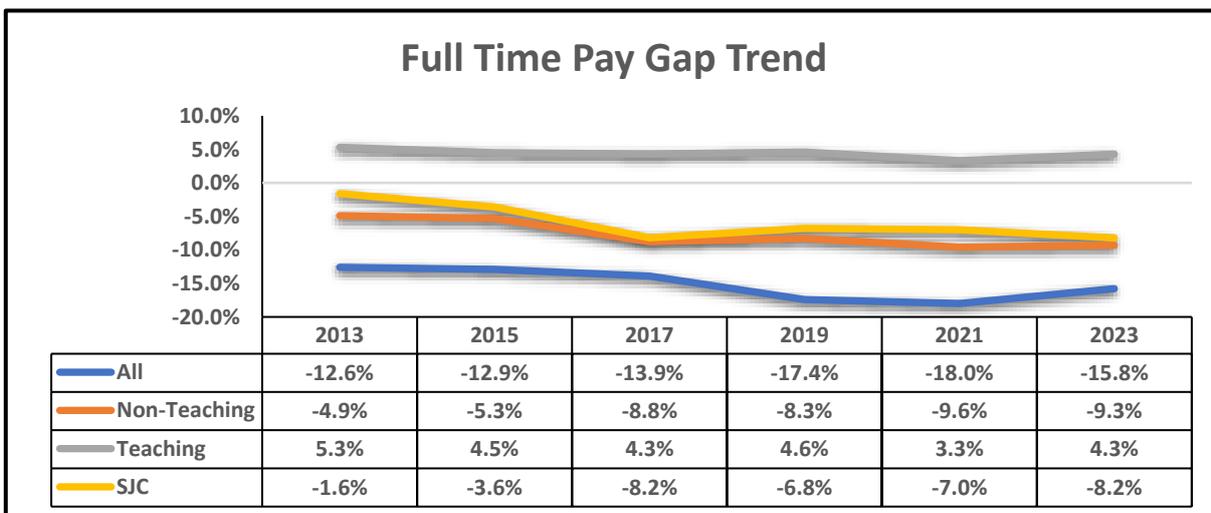
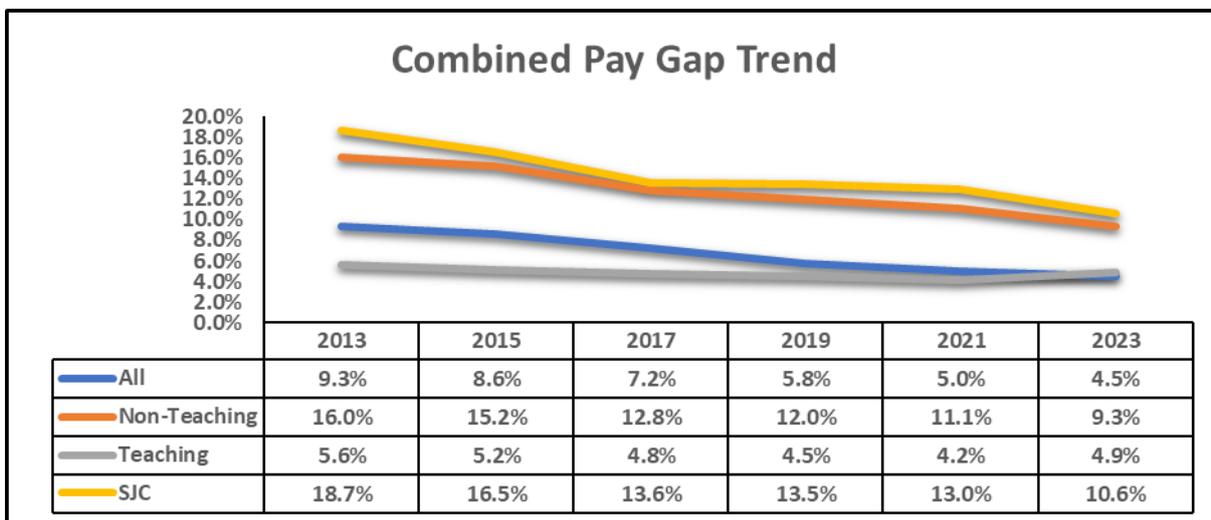


These pay gaps demonstrate that pay gaps have improved across all groups in 2024.

The exception to this is for teaching employees where there has been a minor shift to the advantage of male employees in the combined and full-time gaps.

This may be attributed to that fact that SJC pay awards in recent years have been differentiated by grade (flat rates applied to lower grades and percentage uplifts applied to higher grades), whereas teachers' pay awards were based on percentage uplifts only.

2.7 Trends in the Council's gender pay gaps since they were first recorded in 2013 are set out below.



2.8 The Council's pay gaps are interesting in that the full time pay gaps generally benefit women. The part time pay gaps for all employees are more in line with what would be expected given the composition of our workforce. This marked difference between the full time and part time gaps suggests that one of the underlying reasons for the combined gap is the greater availability of part time and term time work in the lower pay grades.

2.9 Median Pay Gap

The median pay gap is calculated and based on all employees

2024 Median Pay Gap	Female	Male	Gap
Combined Gap	£15.78	£17.23	+8.4%
Full Time Gap	£24.49	£17.69	-38.4%
Part Time Gap	£14.25	£15.15	+5.9%

Highland Council do not pay bonus to staff. Allowances are based on hourly rates already analysed in the hourly pay gaps.

The proportion of men and women in each pay quartile is as follows:

Quartile	Male	Female
Q1	25.2%	74.8%
Q2	31.2%	68.8%
Q3	23.5%	76.5%
Q4	23.0%	77.0%

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 When reviewing our pay gap trends over the years, we can see significant improvements since the first Equal Pay Report in 2013.

As expected, the Councils pay gaps have continued to improve in 2024. One of the factors contributing to the improved pay gap is the pay modelling exercise we undertook, alongside the other actions including national pay awards as outlined in section 2.4. When reviewing our pay gap trends over the years, we can also see significant improvements since the first Equal Pay Report in 2013.

It is now necessary to maintain this momentum. This will be particularly important going forward as the gaps could be impacted by the current cost of living crisis and the continued evolving workforce composition.

A review of strategic workforce planning is ongoing with recommended actions driving change in how the organisation designs and develops roles to meet future service requirements in line with the Future Operating Model. The initiatives being implemented include:

- Industry Partnership Engagement – incorporates the 3 work packages below – these are designed to understand what industry and employers (inc. Third Sector) need to fill their vacancies, which will inform pathways development from schools and employability for adults, to help create a ‘supply chain’ of employees whilst creating employment opportunities for people in Highland: -
 - Industry Sector Skills Boards – conduit to inform pathways planning, job brokerage to connect employers with potential staff, grow work-related learning opportunities and apprenticeships
 - Highland Employer Charter – accreditation for employers who positively support and develop their staff, commitment to provide work-related learning opportunities and apprenticeships, where possible be fair work employers, commit to buy local, hire local to support Community Wealth Building
 - Work.Life.Highland Brand – partner project with Highland Employability partnership, front door/website, social media and events to link with employability services in Highland
- Council Future Workforce – build pathways into the Council, sharing practice with other employers/organisations, reviewing and improving workforce planning and succession planning toolkits and a neurodiversity toolkit, this links with work flagged for next steps and an Action Learning Set supporting this project through Management Connections activity.

- Employability – Universal and Tailored Support – create an all ages all stages connected and flexible employability service, from 3 years old to retirement, using what we learn through industry partnership (above) to inform careers standards and 16+ activity in schools (universal careers/employability activity) and how we develop tailored support required both in school and post-school. The adult (post-school 16+) part of this work is linked to No-one Left Behind funding, which supports those who are work ready and parents in low paid employment, supporting the Scot.Govt agenda to help children out of poverty.
- Digital School – providing access to Highers through digital learning, removing geographical barriers, and providing digital skills development for future work and further or higher education

All this work is designed to improve life chances and raise people out of poverty, whilst contributing to improving Highland's economy.

Hybrid and Remote ways of working have evolved and increased thus providing opportunities for flexibility for staff to be located across the Highlands with the potential to effect gender segregation within roles.

Ongoing monitoring of our pay structure, policies and recruitment processes should continue to have a positive impact on future gender pay gap reporting.