

GENDER PAY GAP REPORT

2026



**EDUCATION
FOR
INDUSTRY
GROUP**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EFI Group is committed to creating a fair and equitable workplace where all employees are rewarded based on their skills, contribution and experience. We are required by law to report our gender pay gap annually, and we do so as part of our broader commitment to transparency and continuous improvement.

This report presents our 2026 gender pay gap data (snapshot date April 2026) and compares it with our 2024-25 results and against external benchmarks, including the UK national average and the further and higher education sectors.

A gender pay gap is different from equal pay. It measures the difference in average earnings across the organisation rather than differences in pay for the same role. Our gender pay gap is driven primarily by the distribution of men and women across pay bands rather than any inequality in pay for equal work. Women make up over 80% of our workforce, however men remain proportionally more represented within some senior and higher-paid roles. We are actively working to address this.

No bonuses were paid during the reporting period and therefore bonus pay gap reporting is not applicable.



WORKFORCE OVERVIEW

	2025 TOTAL	2025 % FEMALE	2026 TOTAL	2026 % FEMALE
TOTAL HEADCOUNT	290	79.7%	306	80.7%
WOMEN	231	N/A	247	N/A
MEN	59	N/A	59	N/A

Our headcount has grown by 16 employees (5.5%) year on year, with the proportion of women remaining stable at approximately 81%. Men remain at 59 employees in both years, meaning all growth is in the female workforce. This structural factor continues to shape our pay gap figures.

The national average gender split within the FE sector is 61% female and 39% male. Our notably higher representation of female staff reflects the industries we recruit from. Specialist beauty, fashion and vocational provision naturally creates a very different workforce profile to the wider FE sector, and direct sector comparisons should therefore be treated with some caution. Importantly, the organisation is not male-dominated overall, which changes how the data in this report should be interpreted. A workforce that is over 80% female will tend to produce pay gap figures that behave differently to those of a more evenly balanced organisation. Read in that context, our overall position is not materially outside sector norms, and several of our headline measures sit at or below national and sector benchmarks.



KEY DATA

MEAN & MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP TRENDS AT EFI GROUP 2024/25 & 2026

METRIC	2024-25 MEAN	2026 MEAN	2024-25 MEDIAN	2026 MEDIAN
OVERALL GAP (incl. CEO)	19.22%	18.86%	5.92%	18.68%
OVERALL GAP (excl. CEO)	13.31%	13.68%	5.92%	17.57%

QUARTILE	2024-25 MEAN	2026 MEAN	2024-25 MEDIAN	2026 MEDIAN
TOP QUARTILE (HIGHEST EARNERS)	16%	10.6%	5.92%	11.6%
UPPER MIDDLE QUARTILE	-0.5%	4.2%	-4.1%	7.2%
LOWER MIDDLE QUARTILE	-1%	-2.5%	-3.7%	-2.6%
BOTTOM QUARTILE (LOWEST EARNERS)	-3%	-3%	2%	-0.8%

KEY OBSERVATIONS

METRIC	ANALYSIS/NOTES
<p>While the overall mean pay gap has marginally improved, the median pay gap has increased significantly year on year, from 5.92% to 18.68% (incl. CEO). As the more stable and representative of the two measures, this is the headline issue within this year's report and requires focused organisational attention. (incl. CEO)</p>	<p>The increase in the median gap appears to reflect changes in the distribution of male employees across the upper pay quartiles. We employ the same number of men as last year, but more now sit in the top two quartiles than the bottom two. This is compounded by a widening gap between women and men aged 28 to 35, where the mean gap has doubled from 7.7% to 15.8%.</p>
<p>The overall mean pay gap (incl. CEO) has reduced from 19.22% to 18.86%. A minimal reduction.</p>	<p>The mean gap continues to be influenced by a small number of senior leadership positions, alongside an increase in men in senior leadership posts. The position has been held steady by the creation of Associate Director and additional Director posts.</p>
<p>The part-time mean gap has improved (10.1% → 6.4%), though the part-time median has increased (4.0% → 13.7%).</p>	<p>Part-time staff fall primarily within teaching, and the disparity within the FE lecturer band has a significant impact on the median for part-time staff. Part of this disparity appears linked to qualification levels and subject specialisms within part-time teaching roles, with a higher proportion of male lecturers holding qualified teacher status.</p>
<p>Higher Education lecturers has seen a dramatic shift both with a positive gender gap in both Mean and Median.</p>	<p>Compared against HE benchmarking, this represents a clear and positive improvement against the national average (14.8% mean / 12.3% median). This improvement appears to reflect a combination of new entrants joining at earlier career stages alongside sustained investment in qualifications and professional development for existing female staff. All staff who have received a funded PGCE in the last two years have been women.</p>
<p>Further Education lecturers decrease significantly, particular seen with the median. gap (excl. CEO)</p>	<p>Across both groups we have only 7 male FE lecturers. 57% of the male lecturers are qualified, compared with only 33% of female lecturers. This points towards a structural progression and qualification issue rather than a pay-setting issue, which is an important distinction.</p>

BENCHMARKING

	ONS	HE	FE
MEAN	10.9%	14.8%	12.1%
MEDIAN	12%	12.3%	17%

The benchmarking data shows a mixed but explainable position. Excluding the small number of senior leadership roles, EFI's mean pay gap is broadly in line with sector norms, and in the case of HE lecturers now compares favourably against the national average. The median gap, however, is now above benchmark, and this is the area that requires focused attention. The role-level data below reinforces this reading: at most grades women earn at parity with or above their male counterparts, with the gap concentrated in specific teaching populations rather than across pay-setting generally.



PAY GAP BY ROLE

ROLE	MEAN PAY GAP 2025	MEAN PAY GAP 2026	MEDIAN PAY GAP 2025	MEDIAN PAY GAP 2026
ASSISTANT	-2.8%	-1%	0%	-1%
COORDINATOR	-6%	-6%	-5%	-2.4%
MANAGER	-6.5%	-3.5%	1.2%	-2.4%
HEAD OF	-4%	-5%	-9%	-9%
DIRECTOR	-11%	-8.5%	-1%	-8%
LECTURERS FE	-6%	-7%	0%	11%
LECTURERS HE	19.7%	-1%	-1.4%	-13.8%



ACTIONS

TRANSPARENT PAY FRAMEWORKS

Update and publicise the pay bands and all pay progression routes ensuring these processes criteria remain consistent.

- **Transparent and published pay bands with progression routes.** Where progression through a band is linked to time in role, performance, or both. This removes the opacity that often results in women progressing more slowly than men in practice.
- **They equalise the starting point.** If new starters enter at the same spine point regardless of who negotiates harder, the compounding effect of salary negotiation gaps is eliminated from day one.
- **Publishing pay bands.** The transparency acts as an equalising effect, people who might otherwise accept lower pay because they assume it's normal can see exactly what the range is and where they sit within it

QUALIFICATIONS & LEADERSHIP PATHWAYS

Invest in career pathways enhanced training programmes and funded qualifications.

- **Create the promotion opportunities.** Research consistently shows women are more likely to self-exclude from promotion opportunities, often applying only when they meet all stated criteria versus men who apply when they meet some. Structured development programmes, particularly ones that actively identify and nominate participants bring women into progression pathways who otherwise wouldn't have put themselves forward. This also clearly evidences skills so they do not need to be self-promoted.
- **Reflect the demographic.** Within the allocation of places on internal schemes ensure the percentage of women and global majority heritage staff are reflected in the uptake.
- **Apply this to the funded Level 5 Teacher training and PGCE's.**
- **Develop Targeted Training for Women in IT and Technical Roles.** The pay gap within managerial positions, particularly in IT, can be reduced by targeting recruitment and development initiatives for women in these areas. Providing training, apprenticeships, and clear career pathways into IT and other male-dominated sectors will help level the playing field.
- **Build a pathway.** Create training pathways and linked training programmes. This will support women in making easy clear steps to progression.

WORKFORCE MONITORING & GOVERNANCE

More frequent data review and assessment

- **Data Reviews.** Create and analyse gender pay gap data every 6 months to review and impact change faster.
- **Present mid-point reports to ELT.**

FLEXIBLE & INCLUSIVE WORKING PRACTICES

- **Plan for hybrid working within teams.** Business cases to ensure we can offer hybrid working within the student facing teams.
- **Protect part-time progression.** Ensure part-time staff have equal access to development, qualification funding and promotion, with progression assessed on contribution rather than hours worked. Given that part-time roles sit disproportionately within our lower teaching pay bands, this directly addresses one of the drivers behind the part-time median gap.
- **Support family and caring transitions.** Provide clear, supportive arrangements around maternity, paternity, shared parental and carer's leave, including structured return-to-work conversations. Smoothing these transitions helps retain women at the career stage where our data shows the gap widening most, between the ages of 28 and 35.
- **Build an inclusive culture.** Promote inclusive recruitment, manager training and visible role models so that flexible and part-time working is normalised at all levels, including in senior and leadership roles, rather than being seen as a barrier to advancement.

CONCLUSION

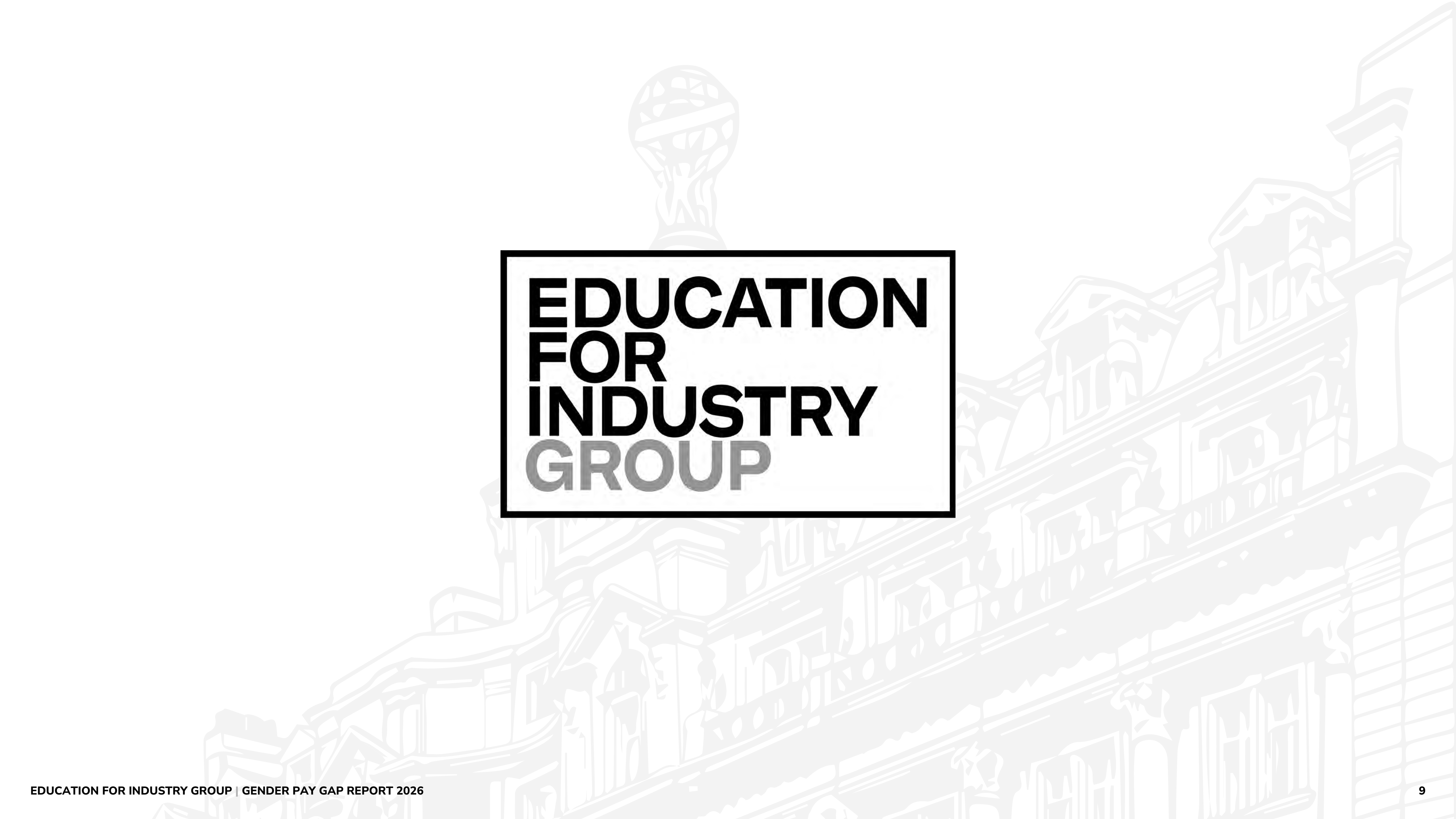
This report reflects both encouraging progress and areas where focused action remains necessary. A number of genuine improvements are evident: the overall mean pay gap has reduced year on year, our HE lecturer cohort has shifted to a positive gender pay gap in both mean and median measures, comparing favourably against the national HE sector average, and our part-time mean gap has narrowed from 10.1% to 6.4%.

The representation of women across the organisation remains strong at over 80%, and the creation of Associate Director and additional Director posts has helped to maintain the mean gap despite increased male representation in senior leadership. At role level, the data for Coordinators, Heads of Department and Directors continues to show women earning at parity or above their male counterparts, which is a meaningful indicator of equitable pay-setting within those grades.

However, the most significant concern this year is the sharp increase in the median pay gap, which has risen from 5.92% to 18.68% (including the CEO). As the more stable and representative of the two measures, this requires direct attention. The increase is driven by a shift in where men sit across the pay quartiles, with more men now occupying the top two quartiles than the bottom two, which is compounded by a widening mean gap between women and men aged 28 to 35, which has doubled from 7.7% to 15.8%. The disparity within the FE lecturer band, particularly the gap in qualification levels between male and female part-time lecturers, is also contributing to a worsening part-time median gap. These are structural issues that will not resolve without intervention.

Overall, the position is best understood as a workforce composition and progression issue rather than an equal pay issue. Where gaps exist, they are driven by how men and women are distributed across roles, quartiles and qualification levels, not by men and women being paid differently for the same work. The actions set out in this report, transparent published pay bands, structured internal development programmes, more frequent data monitoring, and equitable access to funded qualifications, are directly targeted at the drivers identified in this year's data. The EFI Group remains committed to reducing its gender pay gap year on year and to ensuring that the composition of our senior workforce more accurately reflects the diversity of our organisation as a whole.





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