

POSITION STATEMENT | ONWARD GENDER PAY GAP

Annual figures reveal that Onward has made progress in the last year on the gender pay gap and that for the first time a majority of the top 25% of earners are women. Figures also show that there is effectively no pay gap between who identify as white and other colleagues.

Although data of this nature is subject to annual fluctuations relating to recruitment, departure and special leave, the progress shown in these figures also reflects Action Plans in place to recruit, promote and retain a diverse range of talent. These Actions Plans will remain in place to help us maintain the high standard of pay parity within our organisation.

WHAT THE FIGURES SAY

Organisations with over 250 employees are required to publish data and narrative about their gender pay gap on an annual basis. Gender pay gap is the difference between the average earnings of men and women, expressed relative to men's earnings.

- The mean gender pay gap at Onward is 7.9% (20/21) compared to 18.6% in the previous year.
- The median gender pay gap at Onward is 5.1% (20/21) compared to 7.3% in the previous year

Onward is also broadly achieving gender balance amongst the most highly paid and senior roles in the organisation. Women are in the majority in the top quartile of earners, in the upper middle quartile of earners and amongst Heads of Service. 43% of the Executive Team are female, including the Chief Executive.

UNDERSTANDING THE FIGURES

Onward is committed to ensuring fair and transparent policies for recruitment, career progression and pay. These are some of the actions we have taken, or are ongoing:

- In 2019 we completed a comprehensive review of our pay framework to ensure that all roles and employees were paid fairly and at an appropriate level. This review included extensive consultation with colleagues.
- Onward has a strong record of supporting colleagues and we have invested almost £1m in 2020/21 in training and development opportunities. This included almost £150k on professional qualifications. 61% of colleagues pursuing professional qualifications or apprenticeships were women, whose qualifications include postgraduate studies and a doctorate.
- We offer colleagues places on our Leadership Programme, which includes training and mentoring to build management and leadership skills. The final module, Stepping Up, is designed to prepare people for the next step in their career progression.
- A Diversity and Inclusion Forum was established in 2020, which enables colleagues to scrutinise and challenge approaches taken across the business, including recruitment and development of colleagues. We pride ourselves in listening to colleagues and currently have an engagement score across the business of 79% measured through our annual colleague survey, which has a response rate of 84%.
- We know that flexibility is important to our staff, who often need to balance work with child care and other responsibilities in the home. We therefore have a suite of family friendly policies in place to support this, including hybrid working, flexible working and generous maternity/paternity and parental leave policies.

MOVING FORWARD

In response to the most recent data received on the gender pay gap, we will continue to reflect upon and seek to improve our recruitment and training practices in order to maintain pay parity.

For example:

- Ensuring that gender parity in the most senior roles in the business is maintained.
- Advertising and recruiting lower middle and lower quartile paid roles, in a way that encourages applications from men as well as from women.
- Advertising and recruiting for roles in parts of the business where men are in a strong majority, such as IT and Property, in a way that makes them equally attractive to female candidates.
- Reflecting on why the gender pay gap is notably wide in some parts of the business.
- Onward is part of the Insight Programme, which enables under-represented groups to work with Onward Board as part of a mentoring and development programme for 12 months to provide experience and exposure at Board level.

ETHNICITY COLLEAGUE PAY GAP

Although Onward is not required to release figures on the pay gap between colleagues who identify as white and other colleagues, we do collect this data and are happy to share it. The ethnicity pay gap at Onward is -1.8% on a mean average and 0.3% on a median average, illustrating effective pay parity. Comparable figures from last year are 8% and 0%, respectively. We are still doing work to develop our data in this respect.

Onward is working in partnership with peer housing associations to deliver a new leadership programme designed to prepare colleagues with diverse ethnic backgrounds to develop skills that will enable them to attain senior positions in the sector.



Bronwen Rapley
Chief Executive

CASE STUDY:

LAUREN DEARDEN, HEAD OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS



“ I joined Onward as Head of External Affairs & Communications last year. In my role, I am responsible for managing Onward’s Communications Team, which supports different areas of the business with their communications activity. Since joining Onward, I have been offered lots of training and development opportunities. It is great to see that the organisation encourages colleagues to develop their skills and prioritises professional and personal development. I’m looking forward to getting involved in more training opportunities and supporting my team in pursuing their own development goals. ”