



Gender Pay Gap Report 2025

DN COLLEGES GROUP



Reminder of legislative requirements

Gender pay gap legislation (The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017) requires employers in the United Kingdom with 250 employees or more to calculate and publish on an annual basis gender pay gap data.

The reference point for this data for DN Colleges Group (DNCG) and Optime Support Ltd (OSL) is 31st March 2025.

DNCG includes Doncaster College, North Lindsey College, University Campus North Lincolnshire (UCNL), University Campus Doncaster (UCDon) and Humber Energy Skills Training Academy. The specific information we are required to publish needs to include:

- Mean and median gender pay gap (based on an hourly rate of pay on 31st March 2025).
- Mean and median bonus gender pay gap (considers bonus pay received in the 12 months leading up to 31st March 2025).
- Proportion of men and women receiving a bonus payment.
- Proportion of men and women in each quartile pay band (looking at the proportion in 4 pay bands when we divide our workforce into four equal parts).

The gender pay gap is expressed as a percentage of male earnings (e.g. women earn x% less than men).



Gender Pay Gap Report 2025

DN Colleges Group (DNCG) which also includes our subsidiary company Optime Support Ltd (OSL), is committed to equality for all and this includes our work to continually improve gender related barriers to equality.

Creating an inclusive culture of collaboration, innovation and creativity to enable our employees to fulfil their potential, forms part of our key strategic priorities where individual differences are valued, and everyone is treated equitably and fairly. Building a fair, inclusive workplace takes commitment and action.

Continuing to use the Barratt Values Assessment strategically again this year maintains our commitment to understanding the values of all our employees, alongside ensuring the gender pay gap continues to be one of the most important inclusion metrics we track and report on across the Group.

The causes of the gender pay gap remain complex, social pressures and norms influence gender roles and often shape the types of occupations and career paths which people follow and therefore their levels of pay. Women are also more likely than men to work part-time and to take time out for family reasons. Generally, the pay gap widens with age, primarily because women are more likely than men to take time out of the labour market to care for children, which may slow career development.

We continue to share our data to set a benchmark against which we can hold ourselves to account and track our future progress. We do not pay people differently on the basis of their gender. The pay gaps unfortunately continue to exist,

because different groups are represented unequally at different levels across the Group.

With the introduction of the Strategic Plan for 2023-2028 and the numerous projects that have commenced on the back of the plan in the last year, real positive changes have started to take place across all areas.

We remain fully committed to ensuring our workforce reflects the communities in which we represent through our identified actions and wider inclusion efforts.



Gender Pay gap v Equal Pay

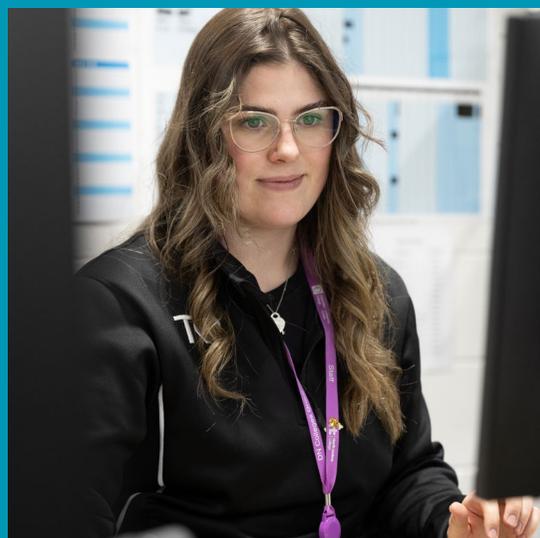
A gender pay gap is a measure of the difference between the average earnings of men and women (irrespective of roles or seniority). Equal pay is our legal obligation as an employer to give men and women equal pay for equal work. Our gender pay gap is not a result of equal pay issues, as we have a gender-neutral approach to pay across all levels of the organisation, supported by our sector led, job evaluation tool. We regularly monitor this to make sure we meet this legal and moral obligation.

The mean and median explained

The mean pay gap is the difference in the arithmetic average hourly pay for women compared to men.

The median represents the middle point of a population. If you lined up all our women and all our men in order of the hourly rate at which they are paid, the median pay gap is the difference between the hourly rate for the 'middle woman' compared to that of the 'middle man'.

The **mean** and **median** are important metrics and need to be looked at together. However, the mean can be skewed by fewer individuals earning more in the upper ranges.



Gender Pay Gap at a glance

Headline gender pay figures for DNCG & OSL

The tables below show our overall median and mean gender pay and bonus pay gap data, based on hourly rates of pay as at the snapshot date of 31st March 2025 and bonuses paid in the year to 31st March 2025. The figures in brackets on the different tables refer to the 2024 comparison data.

GENDER PAY GAP	DNCG	OSL
Mean	11.97% (12.35%)	9.59% (11.63%)
Median	8.43% (8.47%)	9.89% (9.70%)

BONUS PAY GAP	DNCG	OSL
Mean	-5.05% (-9.98%)	40.20% (64.59%)
Median	12.48% (-17.72%)	50.02% (89.33%)

% EMPLOYEE RECEIVING A BONUS	DNCG	OSL
Male	0.98% (1.02%)	0.87% (1.23%)
Female	1.26% (1.09%)	2.82% (3.40%)

DNCG mean gender pay gap shows a decrease in the gender pay gap (-0.38%) compared to the previous year.

OSL mean gender pay gap has also continued to decrease significantly (-2.04%).

In April 2024, the national gender pay gap stood at *7.0% (median) and 13.1% (mean). In comparison, the Education sector reported a slightly higher median gap of 7.32% with a significantly lower mean gap of 7.31%.

At DNCG, we are making progress in narrowing the gender pay gap, with a mean gap of 11.97%, that is lower than the national average of 13.1%. While our median gap of 8.43% remains above both national and sector benchmarks, this highlights a key area of focus, which we continue working toward greater pay equity across all levels of the organisation.

There has been encouraging progress in closing the OSL gender pay gap, with a mean gap of 9.59%, which is 3.51 percentage points lower than the national average. This reflects a strong step forward in promoting pay equity. While the figure remains slightly above the Education sector benchmark, it highlights OSL's commitment to continuous improvement and alignment with sector standards

Data also available from the Office for National Statistics** (ONS) in 2024 shows that the Yorkshire and Humber gender pay gap was 9.3% (median) and 14.7% (mean), which again compares favourably for DNCG and OSL in relation to the regional figures.

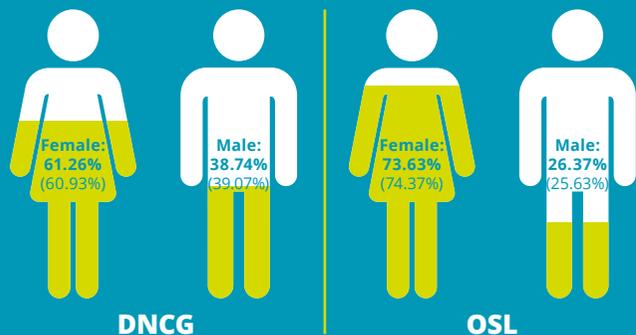
DNCG bonus data applies to only 9 staff (6 female and 3 male) who were part of a bonus scheme. More women received a bonus but this equates to only 1.26% of the total number of women employed by the Group during the reference period compared to 0.98% of men.

OSL bonus data applies to only 10 staff (9 female and 1 male) who were part of a scheme which offered the potential for a performance related bonus payment. More women received a bonus but this equates to only 2.82% of the total number of women employed by the OSL during the reference period compared to 0.87% of men.

*The mean average is based on the total gender pay including the small number of staff on high salaries. Whereas, the median is the middle value.

**Latest available figures from the ONS Gender Pay Gap Dataset (released 5 February 2024). April 2025 figures yet to be published.

Proportion of male and female staff



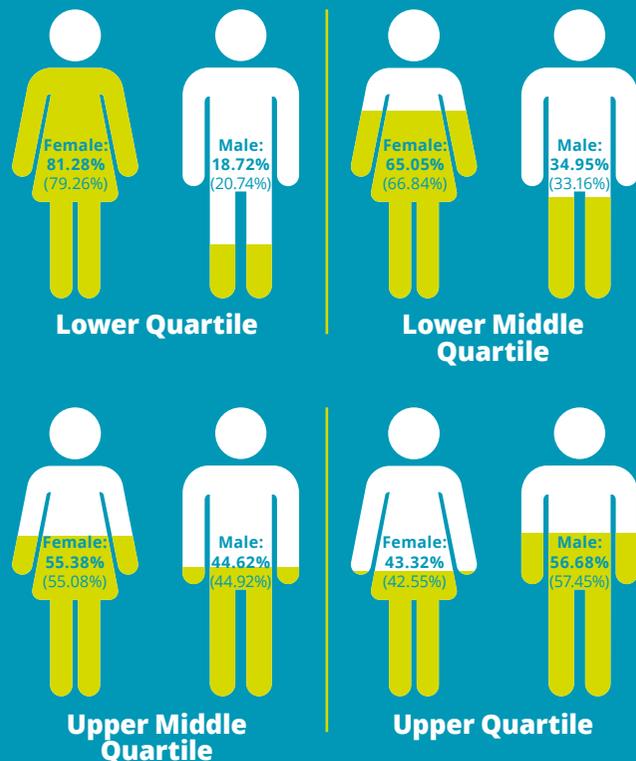
DNGC has an overall staff profile of 61.26% female (0.33% up on 2024) which continues to exceed both local profiles for North Lincolnshire & Doncaster (census 2021) which sits at 50.68% and 50.42% female respectively.

Male representation has slightly decreased from 39.07% to 38.74% (a drop of 0.33 percentage points).

The gender split remains broadly similar, with a small shift towards a higher proportion of female staff.

OSL has an overall staff profile of 73.63% female (-0.74% on 2024).

DNGC Proportion of males and females by pay quartile



DNGC continues to have a much higher representation of women in the lower quartiles. These quartiles include many support roles such as Learning Support & Resource Assistants, Food Technicians and Early Years Practitioners which have traditionally attracted more women and is similarly reflected across other colleges in the sector.

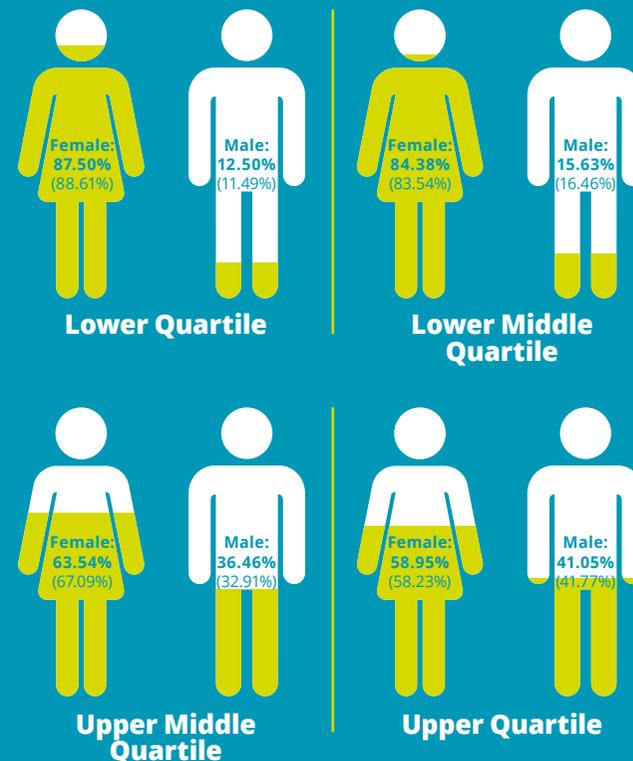
In the Lower Quartile male representation dropped by 2.02 percentage points, while female representation rose by the same amount.

The Lower Middle Quartile male representation increased by 1.79 percentage points and female representation decreased by 1.79 percentage points.

The lower and upper middle quartiles are much closer in alignment to the DNGC overall staff profile. However, significantly more males are represented in the upper quartile (56.68%) by 13.36 percentage points.

Over the past two years, the salary range for upper quartile roles has increased, partly due to female staff leaving the Senior Leadership Team and being succeeded by male appointees in higher-paid positions, highlighting a shift in gender representation at senior levels.

OSL Proportion of males and females by pay quartile



OSL has a high percentage of women in all quartiles which is reflective of the overall staff profile being 73.63% female.

The lower and lower middle quartiles are predominantly represented by female staff (87.50% and 84.38%) and include substantial numbers of colleagues employed in support roles such as Cleaners, Catering Assistants, Teaching Assistants, Learning Support & Resource Assistants.

However, the Lower Quartile saw a slight increase in male representation (+1.01%), with a corresponding decrease in female representation.

The Upper Middle Quartile shows the most significant shift, with a notable increase in male representation and a corresponding decrease in female representation.

The male:female ratio moves closer across the upper middle and upper quartiles, however, is still heavily populated by female staff, which is in line with the overall staff profile.

The Upper Quartile remains relatively stable, with only minor shifts in gender representation.

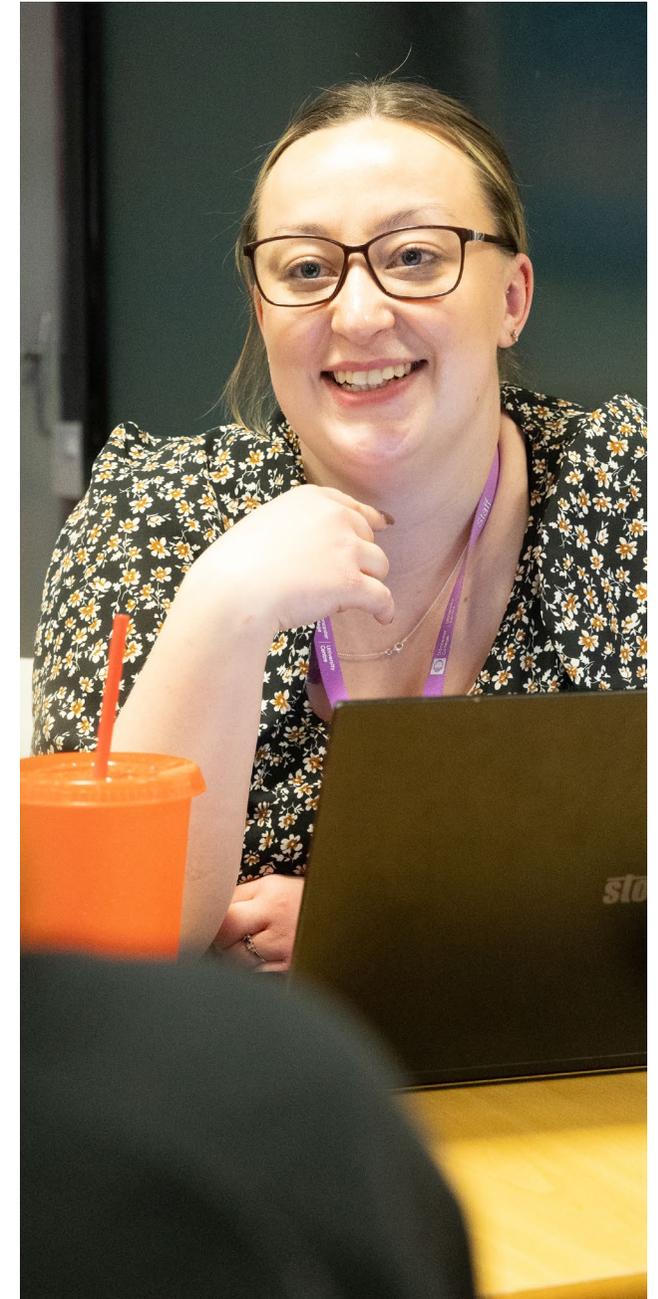
What has been done to address the gender pay gap?

- Following the alignment of pay conditions in 2022, the reduction in the gender pay gap reflects a sustained institutional commitment to job equality and equitable remuneration.
- Leadership Development has progressed to support middle leaders/team leaders and develop key management skills. The Operations Excellence Management Programme in 2024-25 concluded in June and 66.67% of delegates were female line-managers, supporting upskilling and career progression.
- 1:1 Coaching for leaders and managers is growing, 87.5% of those currently engaging are female leaders in middle- management roles. This bespoke opportunity supports the leadership development and career progression into more senior roles within the organisation.
- Organisation Development Team continue to develop strategic interventions to support the desired values identified in the Barrett Values Survey and the Employee Pulse Survey, developing a culture of continuous improvement, employee engagement, leading by example and balance home/work.
- Enhanced the Safer Recruitment & Selection Policy and process, which includes inclusive recruitment and selection panels.
- We continue to use structured interviews for recruitment and promotion opportunities, ensuring we measure all candidates against a pre-specified set of questions and performance indicators.
- For many of our roles we ask candidates to perform tasks they would be expected to perform in the role they are applying for, to assess their suitability for the role and to limit bias.
- We continue to ensure Equality, Diversity & Inclusion CPD remains a mandatory part of new staff inductions, forms part of on-going essential staff training and the Operations Excellence Management Programme.
- In response to new workplace sexual harassment legislation, a dedicated role was introduced to lead the development of a Preventing Sexual Harassment Policy. This work is supported by CPD resources and a new reporting mechanism. While these measures are in place for all staff, societal norms mean women are disproportionately affected. We reviewed and updated all our employment policies within the year to ensure compliance with new legislation specifically in relation to support carers and flexible work.
- Whilst, these policies are in place to support employees with caring responsibilities, consistent with societal norms, these are predominantly accessed by women.





- A Foster Friendly Policy was launched to support employees with fostering responsibilities, and in line with societal norms, it has predominantly been accessed by female staff.
- The DNCG management toolkit and Menopause Support action plan are now widely adopted by managers to better support colleagues. These measures help engage and retain top female talent by ensuring that menopause is not a barrier to a successful career, with reasonable adjustments implemented promptly, effectively, and reviewed regularly in agreement with each individual.
- My Money Matters have been engaged for those with a local government pension scheme, providing an opportunity to increase their pension contribution and investment opportunities via salary sacrifice. Of those who have engaged with My Money Matters and chosen to contribute extra, 50% are female investors.
- Engagement with our Private GP service via Vivup and Health Hero continues to grow. The service is available to colleagues and their dependants and is particularly valued by parents and carers. GPs also offer same day prescriptions, providing timely support for working families.



What are we going to do next?

- To strengthen DNCG's position as an employer and provider of choice, the HR and Recruitment team will continue to review and modernise our transactional practices. This will help improve fairness, reduce bias, and make recruitment, progression and retention more accessible.
- Review current HR system and seek to deploy a better, improved long term integrated HR and Payroll system paying particular attention to the ability of the system to provide meaningful management information so that areas of interest can be regularly reviewed and where necessary appropriate interventions developed.
- To review the staff diversity profile to ensure that it reflects the local demographic in terms of sex.
- Greater analysis and review our detailed workforce information data on a regular basis, reviewing gender equality pay data, internal and external recruitment data and other emerging issues. In addition, we shall consider what further actions can be taken to address gender imbalances in the relevant quartile bands and establish appropriate intervention strategies, evaluation and monitoring mechanisms.
- Organisation Development Team will continue to develop strategic interventions to support the desired values identified in the Barrett Values Survey and the Employee Pulse Survey throughout the duration of the 2023-28 Strategic Plan for DN Colleges Group.
- The Operational Excellence Management Programme will run again, we hope to build on the 66.67% female attendance and support confidence in promotion, management skills and networking across the organisation.
- Ensure HR are supporting female colleagues with HR Advisors taking the lead on maternity meeting, to give holistic support exploring the flexible work options on returning to the workplace.
- Continue to offer 1:1 coaching to support female colleagues new to management roles or seeking promotion as an existing leader.
- Introduce 1:1 coaching to support female colleagues returning to the workplace after a period of maternity leave.
- Build on the success of our menopause support to develop awareness and line-management resources to effectively support women's health more widely- increasing development, engagement and retention of top female talent at all stages of their career.
- Ensure unconscious bias CPD continues to be available for staff representing all areas of DNCG.





- Continue to review, develop and promote our non-financial benefits and socially inclusive family friendly policies.
- Review the outcomes of the Further Education Workforce Data findings shared by the DFE on an annual basis.
- Review and refresh the CPD training offer in relation to EDI, Safer Recruitment and Unconscious Bias and Working with colleagues who are Neurodiverse.
- Introduce special interest staff led forums and staff networks to address gender imbalances.

This ongoing improvement work is central to addressing the underlying causes of the gender pay gap. It supports transparent decision-making, opens up equitable career pathways, and ensures that the staff feel valued and supported. Together, these actions will help attract, retain and progress more women across all levels of the organisation.

Progress against our actions will be monitored by the Director of HR and Associate Director EDI, and progress reported to the Chief Operating Officer (People & Information), Senior Leadership Team and to the College Board of Governors annually.



Statutory disclosures

DN Colleges Group (DNCG) & Optime Support Ltd (OSL) are two legal entities with at least 250 employees. Under the regulations we are required to report our gender pay gap data for each of these entities, as set out below:

GENDER PAY GAP	DNCG	OSL
Mean	11.97% ↓	9.59% ↓
Median	8.43% ↓	9.89% ↑

BONUS PAY GAP	DNCG	OSL
Mean	-5.05% ↑	40.20% ↓
Median	12.48% ↑	50.02% ↓

% EMPLOYEE RECEIVING A BONUS	DNCG	OSL
Male	0.98% ↓	0.87% ↓
Female	1.26% ↑	2.82% ↓

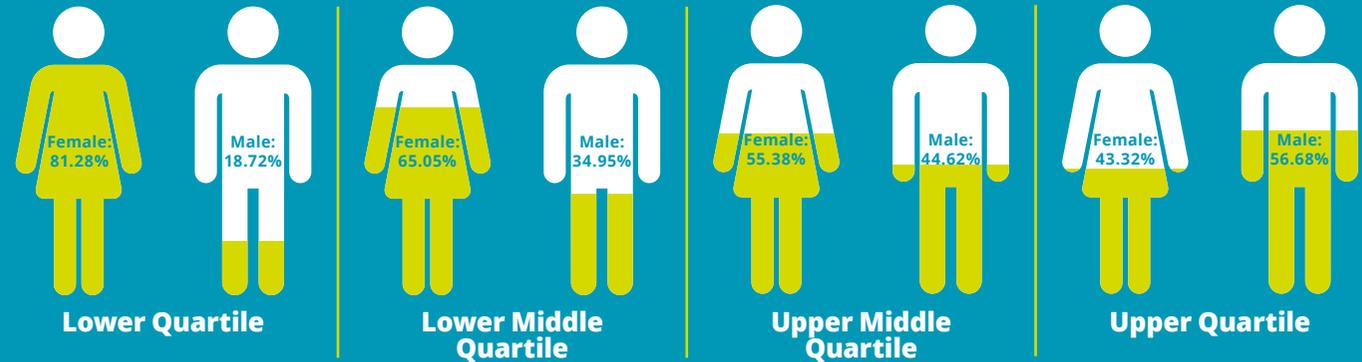
Declaration

We confirm that the DN Colleges Group & Optime Support Ltd's gender pay gap calculations are accurate and meet the requirements of the Regulations.

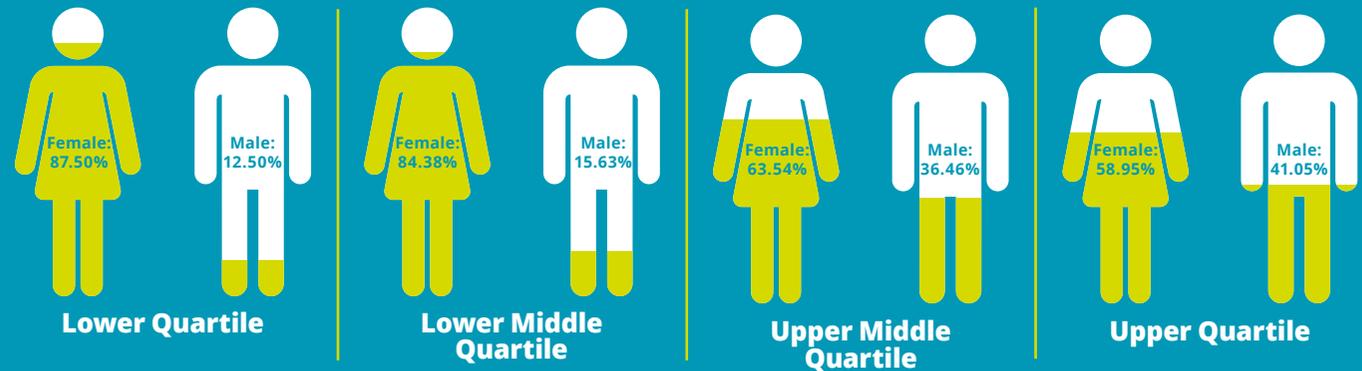
John Rees
Principal & Chief
Executive Officer

Rachel Maguire
Chief Operating Officer
- People & Information

DNCG Proportion of males and females by pay quartile



OSL Proportion of males and females by pay quartile



Year on year comparisons

DN Colleges Group

GENDER BREAKDOWN	MALE	FEMALE
March 2025	38.74% (289) ↓	61.26% (457) ↑
March 2024	39.07% (293) ↑	60.93% (457) ↓
March 2023	37.90% (310) ↑	62.10% (508) ↓
March 2022	35.66% (312) ↓	64.34% (563) ↑
March 2021	36.64% (325) ↓	63.36% (562) ↑
March 2020	36.80% (333) ↑	63.20% (572) ↓

GENDER PAY GAP	MARCH 2025	MARCH 2024	MARCH 2023	MARCH 2022	MARCH 2021	MARCH 2020
Mean	11.97% ↓	12.35% ↑	11.21% ↑	11.19% ↓	11.83% ↑	10.12% ↑
Median	8.43% ↓	8.47% ↓	14.10% ↑	14.02% ↑	13.91% ↓	16.23% ↓

BONUS PAY GAP	MARCH 2025	MARCH 2024	MARCH 2023	MARCH 2022	MARCH 2021	MARCH 2020
Mean	-5.05% ↑	-9.98% ↓	8.95% ↑	5.91% ↑	0% ✓	61.05% ↑
Median	12.48% ↑	-17.72% ↓	0.00% ✓	0% ✓	0% ✓	73.18% ↑

% EMPLOYEE RECEIVING A BONUS	MARCH 2025	MARCH 2024	MARCH 2023	MARCH 2022	MARCH 2021	MARCH 2020
Male	0.98% ↓	1.02% ↓	78.39% ↓	89.10% ↑	1.23% ↑	0.60% ↓
Female	1.26% ↑	1.09% ↓	85.83% ↓	91.65% ↑	0.53% ↓	1.05% ↓

PROPORTION OF MALES AND FEMALES IN EACH QUARTILE BAND	LOWER QUARTILE		LOWER MIDDLE QUARTILE		UPPER MIDDLE QUARTILE		UPPER QUARTILE	
	% Male	% Female	% Male	% Female	% Male	% Female	% Male	% Female
March 2025	18.72% (35) ↓	81.28% (152) ↑	34.95%(65) ↑	65.05% (121) ↓	44.62% (83) ↓	55.38% (103) ↑	56.68% (106) ↓	43.32% (81) ↑
March 2024	20.74% (39) ↓	79.26% (149) ↑	33.16% (62) ↑	66.84% (125) ↓	44.92% (84) ↑	55.08% (103) ↓	57.45% (108) ↑	42.55% (80) ↓
March 2023	23.90% (49) ↑	76.10% (156) ↓	31.86% (65) ↑	68.14% (139) ↓	43.63% (89) ↑	56.37% (115) ↓	52.20% (107) ↑	47.80% (98) ↓
March 2022	23.29% (51) ↑	76.41% (168) ↓	31.51% (69) ↓	68.49% (150) ↑	43.12% (94) ↓	56.88% (124) ↑	44.75% (98) ↑	55.25% (121) ↓
March 2021	22.52% (50) ↓	77.48% (172) ↑	33.78% (75) ↑	66.22% (147) ↓	46.61% (103) ↓	53.39% (118) ↑	43.69% (97) ↑	56.31% (125) ↓
March 2020	24.23% (55) ↑	75.77% (172) ↓	30.09% (68) ↑	69.91% (158) ↓	49.56% (112) ↑	50.44% (114) ↓	43.36% (98) ↑	56.64% (128) ↓

Year on year comparisons

Optime Support Ltd

GENDER BREAKDOWN	MALE	FEMALE
March 2025	26.37% (101) ↑	73.63% (282) ↓
March 2024	25.63% (81) ↓	74.37% (235) ↑
March 2023	28.52% (79) ↓	71.48% (198) ↑
March 2022	36.47% (97) ↓	63.53% (169) ↑
March 2021	37.61% (88) ↑	62.39% (146) ↓
March 2020	36.50% (96) -	63.50% (167) -

GENDER PAY GAP	MARCH 2025	MARCH 2024	MARCH 2023	MARCH 2022	MARCH 2021	MARCH 2020
Mean	9.59% ↓	11.63% ↓	15.64% ↓	23.88% ↓	27.04% ↑	22.47% -
Median	9.89% ↑	9.70% ↓	19.39% ↓	36.03% ↑	29.83% ↑	24.68% -

BONUS PAY GAP	MARCH 2025	MARCH 2024	MARCH 2023	MARCH 2022	MARCH 2021	MARCH 2020
Mean	40.20% ↓	64.59% ↑	12.64% ↑	5.91% ↑	0% ✓	0% -
Median	50.02% ↓	89.33% ↑	23.44% ↑	18.92% ↑	0% ✓	0% -

% EMPLOYEE RECEIVING A BONUS	MARCH 2025	MARCH 2024	MARCH 2023	MARCH 2022	MARCH 2021	MARCH 2020
Male	0.87% ↓	1.23% ↓	65.82% ↓	76.29% ↑	0% =	0% -
Female	2.82% ↓	3.40% ↓	65.66% ↓	79.29% ↑	0.68% ↑	0.6% -

PROPORTION OF MALES AND FEMALES IN EACH QUARTILE BAND	LOWER QUARTILE		LOWER MIDDLE QUARTILE		UPPER MIDDLE QUARTILE		UPPER QUARTILE	
	% Male	% Female	% Male	% Female	% Male	% Female	% Male	% Female
March 2025	12.50% (12) ↑	87.50% (84) ↓	15.63% (15) ↓	84.38% (81) ↑	36.46% (35) ↑	63.54% (61) ↓	41.05% (39) ↓	58.95% (56) ↑
March 2024	11.39% (9) ↓	88.61% (70) ↑	16.46% (13) ↓	83.54% (66) ↑	32.91% (26) ↑	67.09% (53) ↓	41.77% (33) ↓	58.23% (46) ↑
March 2023	13.04% (9) ↓	86.96% (60) ↑	17.39% (12) ↓	82.61% (57) ↑	30.43% (21) ↑	69.57% (48) ↓	52.86% (37) ↓	47.14% (33) ↑
March 2022	17.91% (12) ↓	82.09% (55) ↑	28.79% (19) ↑	71.21% (47) ↓	22.73% (15) ↓	77.27% (51) ↑	76.12% (51) ↑	23.88% (16) ↓
March 2021	18.97% (11) ↓	81.03% (47) ↑	22.03% (13) ↓	77.97% (46) ↑	35.59% (21) ↑	64.41% (38) ↓	74.14% (43) ↑	25.86% (15) ↓
March 2020	23.08% (15) -	76.92% (50) -	24.24% (16) -	75.76% (50) -	33.33% (22) -	66.67% (44) -	65.15% (43) -	34.85% (23) -

Empowering women and embedding an inclusive culture

Mev Akram
English Lecturer



“I am currently an English lecturer at DN Colleges Group, teaching across GCSE and Functional Skills English programmes for 16–19-year-olds and adults. My teaching journey began in my early twenties, working with apprentices in the land-based sector who needed to pass English and Maths. Since then, I’ve moved into general further education, supporting learners from all vocational backgrounds. My love for literature led me to an English degree, followed by a PGCE, and I’ve never looked back since stepping into education.

One of the things I’m most proud of is the diversity of students I’ve worked with. From Entry Level English, where helping someone write their first sentence is a huge achievement, to supporting learners striving for a Grade 4 in GCSE English, every success feels meaningful. Seeing students grow in confidence and ability, regardless of their starting point, is what motivates me each day.

Throughout my career, I’ve benefited from the encouragement of colleagues and the collaborative culture at DN Colleges Group. Supportive line managers and informal mentoring from more experienced staff have helped me develop my teaching practice and navigate new challenges. Opportunities for professional development, such as training sessions and access to external opportunities, have also played a key role in my progression.

Like many, I’ve faced challenges — from adapting to new curricula and ways of teaching, to supporting students with complex needs. I’ve learned that resilience, flexibility, and a willingness to seek advice are essential. Building strong relationships with students and my colleagues has helped me overcome obstacles and find creative solutions.

To me, inclusion means creating a space where every learner and staff member feels valued and heard. It’s about recognising individual strengths, celebrating differences, and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to succeed. I believe that when we strive to build an inclusive environment, we empower people to reach their full potential.

My advice to others is to embrace every opportunity for growth, seek out support when you need it, and never underestimate the impact you can have on someone’s life. Every small step forward matters — for our students, for ourselves, and for the wider community.”

Raluca Ifrim
Programme Lead CMDA



“My career at DN Colleges Group began as a Team Leader within the Academic Services team, a role I took on while simultaneously studying for my PGCE. Balancing work and study was challenging, but it laid a strong foundation for my transition into teaching. A year into my role, I moved into a teaching position, an exciting shift that marked the beginning of a deeply fulfilling chapter in my professional life.

As a new teacher, I was fortunate to receive extensive support from colleagues, mentors and curriculum lead. This nurturing environment gave me the confidence to grow quickly and take on more responsibility. That support was instrumental in my progression to Programme Leader for Business degrees and the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA). Leading these programmes has allowed me to combine my passion for education with my interest in leadership and organisational development.

Key milestones in my journey include being part of the team that successfully launched and developed the new CMDA programme, building strong relationships with employers, and supporting apprentices as they apply their learning in real-world contexts. Each cohort brings new energy and perspectives, and seeing learners evolve into confident professionals is one of the most rewarding aspects of my role.

Of course, the path hasn’t always been smooth. Transitioning from a support role into teaching, and then into leadership, came with its own set of challenges, particularly around confidence and adapting to new expectations. I navigated these by staying open to feedback, seeking out development opportunities, and leaning on the supportive culture within DNCG.

Inclusion, to me, means ensuring that every individual feels seen, heard, and valued. It’s about creating a workplace where diversity is celebrated and where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. I strive to embed inclusive practices in my teaching and programme leader role, recognising that our differences make us stronger.

To others in the organisation, I’d say: don’t be afraid to take the leap. Whether you’re starting out or considering a new direction, trust in your potential and lean into the support around you. Growth often begins at the edge of your comfort zone and the journey is worth it.”

Empowering women and embedding an inclusive culture

Sarah Palma

Director of FE Construction and Engineering, DN Colleges Group



“I began my journey with DN Colleges Group over 30 years ago as a part-time hairdressing tutor. At the time, I never imagined the path my career would take—but through hard work, passion, and the support of incredible colleagues, I’ve grown into the role I hold today as Director of FE Construction and Engineering.

Over the years, I progressed to Curriculum Lead for Apprenticeships in Hairdressing, and after having three children, I returned to take on the role of Curriculum Lead for FE in Hair and Beauty. Each step brought new opportunities to shape curriculum and support learners in meaningful ways.

Three years ago, I made a significant career shift and applied for the role of Associate Director of Engineering. It was a leap into a completely different field, and with it came the challenge of navigating a new curriculum and adapting to a very different team mindset. These challenges were met with equal measures of reward, as I discovered new strengths and built strong relationships across departments.

Twenty months ago, I was proud to be appointed Director of Engineering, and just 13 months later, I expanded my leadership to include Construction. The transition from Hair and Beauty to Engineering and Construction was not without its hurdles, but it has been one of the most enriching experiences of my career.

Throughout this journey, I’ve been fortunate to receive support from many colleagues, with special thanks to Julie Kaye, whose guidance and encouragement have been invaluable. I’ve also benefited from a range of professional development opportunities—both internal and external—that have helped me grow as a leader and educator.

To me, inclusion means creating an environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute—regardless of their background, role, or experience. In a business context, inclusion is about fostering a culture where diverse perspectives are not only welcomed but actively sought out, ensuring that everyone has equal access to opportunities and support.

My advice to others is simple: **never be afraid to try.** Whether you’re stepping into a new role, exploring a different field, or facing unfamiliar challenges, growth begins when you step outside your comfort zone. With the right support and mindset, every challenge can become a stepping stone to something greater.”

Ewa Matuszyk

Senior Administrator (Curriculum Support)



“My professional journey began just over three years ago when I joined DN Colleges Group shortly after graduating from university. As a Senior Curriculum Administrator, I support tutors across a wide range of departments while also assisting students with their enquiries. This role is both rewarding and meaningful, as I am contributing to the college’s success.

Throughout my time at DN Colleges group, I’ve had the opportunity to work in several departments, including Adult Skills, Exams, and Higher Education (UCNL). This experience has helped me to build a broader understanding of how the college works, and how important collaboration is between different teams.

One of my proudest moments was stepping into the Adult Skills department when a colleague left. This was very challenging, as I had to quickly learn everything from scratch, to ensure that the department continues to run smoothly. I have used my skills and IT knowledge to introduce new processes, trackers and spreadsheets which made the work clearer and more efficient. I also trained a new team member, which gave me a sense of achievement and confidence.

Living with a chronic disability and being a wheelchair user has shaped not only how I work, but also how I see inclusion. Every day comes with its own challenges, however I’ve learned to approach these with a can-do mindset, positivity, and determination. My disability doesn’t define what I can or can’t do. Instead, it motivates me to prove that anything is possible with the right attitude and support. I have received a great help from the Health and Safety team, which ensured that my office is fully accessible, and equipped so that I can perform my role effectively and comfortably.

Following the above, it also shows why inclusion means so much to me. In my opinion, it’s about creating a workplace where everyone feels seen, valued, and supported, despite their background or circumstances. I’ve found that compassion and understanding from others, especially from my team leader Jacquie Traves, make a real difference. Her empathy and kindness inspire me every day.

To continue growing at DN Colleges, I took the initiative to complete a Team Leader course, which was available through the college. It not only has helped me to develop a vast variety of skills including leadership and teamwork, but also boosted my confidence, and feel ready to progress further in my career.

My advice to others is simple: **keep a positive attitude and believe in yourself.** Everything is possible if you put your mind to it. I always try to be committed to everything I do. What motivates me most is knowing that my work makes tutors’ jobs easier and helps our students at DN Colleges to succeed.”