



coreTM

Gender
Pay Gap
Report
2024

Aidan Greene, Chief Executive Officer, is seated on a wooden bench. Behind him is a large screen displaying the 'core' logo. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt, dark trousers, glasses, and a watch. He is smiling and has his arms crossed.

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Aidan Greene
Chief Executive Officer

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As we release Core's 2024 Gender Pay Gap Report, now in its third year, we reflect on our progress and continued dedication to fostering a workplace where every individual feels supported, valued, and able to bring their whole selves to work. Reporting on the gender pay gap is a positive and essential requirement for all large businesses in Ireland, and it drives us to actively pursue meaningful change.

It's important to note that, although we are required to report using binary categories of 'male' and 'female,' we recognise that gender identity is broader and more diverse than this. We celebrate and respect the identities of all our colleagues and are committed to inclusivity across the spectrum of gender identity.

This year we are encouraged by the progress made in closing the gap in our upper quartile with a reduction of 2.4%. However, there remains work to do, particularly in addressing the imbalance across the company. This year, Core's mean gender pay gap stands at 13.86%, with a median gap of 6.8%. While we've made strides in the upper quartile, our efforts have created new challenges in the lower quartile, where an increase in female representation at entry level has impacted the mean pay gap.

This is largely due to the increased numbers of females recruited at entry level, combined with Core's overall employee numbers which have increased from last year with females now making up 60% of the overall numbers.

Core remains dedicated to equal pay for equal work, ensuring all individuals in similar roles receive fair compensation, regardless of gender. The imbalance in certain areas—specifically, a male-dominated upper quartile and a female-majority lower quartile—reflects structural and recruitment challenges that we will actively address in 2025 to close the gap further.

Over the last decade, we have introduced a wide range of benefits and initiatives, from family support and work-life balance programs to unconscious bias training. This year, we added a new mental health program, launched roundtable discussions, introduced new policies, and expanded our suite of support systems. These efforts are designed to help our colleagues feel supported throughout various life stages and encourage long-term career progression within Core. They also form a crucial foundation for our succession planning, helping us to build a more balanced leadership pipeline and achieve parity particularly in the upper quartile.

We recognise that closing the gender pay gap is an ongoing journey that will require time, dedication, and continued action. However, we remain steadfast in our commitment to make this an urgent priority for Core, as we work towards a more equitable future for all our colleagues.

What is the gender pay gap and how is it reported?

The Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021 requires organisations to report on their hourly gender pay gap across a range of metrics. In 2022, organisations with over 250 employees were asked to report on their Gender Pay Gap for the first time. 2023 is the second year of reporting.

What is the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap is the difference in the average hourly wage of men and women across a workforce. It compares the pay of all working men and women; not just those in similar jobs, or with similar competencies, qualifications or experience.

A gender pay gap does not indicate discrimination or an absence of equal pay for equal value work – it reports a gender representation gap. If more men occupy higher paid positions in a company, the gender pay gap is usually wider.

What must companies report on?

The mean pay gap, the median pay gap, mean bonus remuneration, median bonus remuneration, the mean and median differences for part-time employees, Benefit In Kind (BIK) differences and pay quartiles.

What is the mean pay gap?

The mean gender pay gap is the difference between women's mean hourly wage and men's mean hourly wage. The mean hourly wage is the average hourly wage for employees across the entire organisation.

What is the median pay gap?

The median gender pay gap is the difference between women's median hourly wage (the middle paid female employee) and men's median hourly wage (the middle paid male employee). The median hourly wage is calculated by ranking all employees – from the highest paid to the lowest paid – and taking the hourly wage of the employee in the middle.

What are the pay quartiles?

Pay quartiles are calculated by splitting all employees in an organisation into four even groups according to their level of pay. Looking at the proportion of men and women in each quartile gives an indication of the gender representation at different levels of the organisation.

2024 gender pay gap analysis

13.86%

Mean Gender Pay Gap

Hourly rate pay gap
€5.17

6.80%

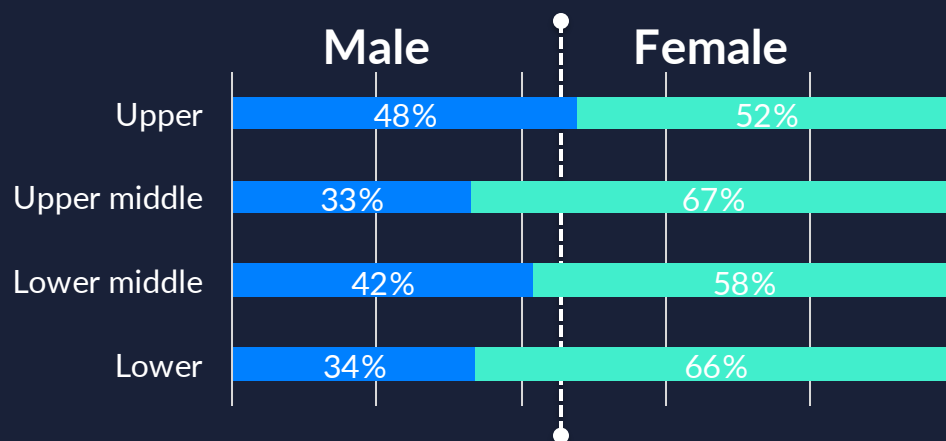
Median Gender Pay Gap

Hourly rate pay gap
€2.02

Total
357

Male
39%

Female
61%



The upper quartile is a key factor in driving the gap for the organisation.

Mean
M F



Median
M F



Core's gender pay gap analysis: Further details

Part-time workers' pay gap

There is no gender pay gap for part-time workers as we have no male workers on part-time contracts. We encourage our male colleagues to consider all of our flexible working contracts now and in the future.

Benefit in Kind

BIK is applicable to our bike to work scheme and health insurance. Both are optional benefits available to all employees from day one of employment. For the snapshot period, 65% of employees have availed of the company health insurance,. Of the 357 employees who could have availed of health insurance ,only 231 were active snap- shot period , 101 males and 130 females . In 2024 those active on the plan included 73% of Core's males employees and 60% of our females .

Bonuses

Other benefits of monetary value include Christmas One4All vouchers to the value of 300 euro and these have been paid at 100% to both male and female employees.

Timing of the analysis

The gender pay analysis is based on annualised base pay effective 1st of July 2023 - 30th June 2024. The report is an annualised gap analysis over a full 12-month period.

It is important to note that the gender pay analysis can be impacted by the timing, and hiring of new recruits, people exiting the business and promotion activity. In total 357 people were included in this year's figures.

All employees across Core are aligned to salary bands which provide for equal pay for equal work irrespective of gender.

Key areas and actions

At Core, gender representation remains at the forefront of our Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) strategy. This marks the third year of publishing our gender pay gap analysis, and we're encouraged by the progress it reflects in some areas. Transparent reporting is an essential part of our commitment to continuous improvement in this area.

This year the analysis shows the upper middle quartile has a 1.03% difference in favour of females. While the upper quartile has a 11.32% difference in favour of males, a 2.4% reduction from last year, which is a positive step forward.

If we remove our company shareholders, this reduces to 3.75%. While the overall Gap in favour of males across Core minus the shareholders stands at a mean of 7.44%, with a median of 2.8%.

Core has long operated with clear salary bands, offering transparent potential and expected earnings up to Board Director and Managing Director levels. While we are seeing reductions in key areas, we recognise that continued focus and action are necessary to further close the gap.

Our dedication to D&I has been acknowledged through multiple accolades this year. Core retained the prestigious Investors in Diversity Gold accreditation from the Irish Centre for Diversity (ICFD), was ranked as the 8th best large workplace by Great Place to Work Ireland, and was also recognised as a GPTW workplace for wellbeing and women. Through our partnership with AslAm, we have been recognised as an Autism Friendly Employer, and we're proud to be named a Menopause Friendly Workplace by the Menopause Hub Academy and GPTW. Outlined in the next page are some of the key actions Core will implement over the next five years to continue addressing and ultimately eliminate the gender pay gap.



Jill Downey
Chief Sustainability Officer

Key areas and actions

Our analysis of the gender pay gap within the organisation, reveals a number of key areas influencing the gender pay profile. These contributing factors are specific areas which Core is committed to addressing to reduce the gender pay gap.

Progressive Recruitment Strategy

Recruitment will remain a pivotal area for Core, reflecting our commitment to diversity and inclusion. Historically, senior roles within the advertising and communication industry, particularly pre-2000, were predominantly male-dominated. This legacy has impacted the representation in our upper quartile. To address this, Core has restructured our recruitment model to prioritise diversity and inclusion throughout our hiring practices, with a sharp focus on fair and transparent selection processes. While this approach has positively influenced our organizational culture, it has also introduced a noticeable gender disparity in the lower quartile. This year, we welcomed 88 new colleagues 63 females and 25 males, resulting in a workforce that is now 60% female and 40% male. At entry level 20 new colleagues joined Core, 14 were female and 6 were male.

Recruitment will continue to be a priority with a particular focus on balance at entry level in the coming year.

in our drive to eliminate bias, we introduced unconscious bias training for all hiring managers last year. Building on that, this year we extended compulsory training to all Core employees, deepening our understanding and commitment to inclusivity. We are expanding our focus beyond bias to include neurodiversity, ensuring a safe, supportive, and inclusive work environment for all.

Looking ahead to 2025, we will continue revising and updating our job descriptions with inclusive language to attract female candidates and other underrepresented groups. We are actively promoting our policies, supports, and benefits to both current employees and potential candidates, reinforcing our commitment to flexible working, career development opportunities, and gender equality initiatives.

Our ongoing development into 2025 will also include the adoption of blind recruitment practices. By removing identifiable information—such as gender, age, and name—from applications, we aim to foster a fairer recruitment process that values skills and qualifications alone.

Key areas and actions continued

● Colleague Supports and Initiatives

Core has introduced a range of progressive initiatives designed to support our colleagues at every stage of life. Over recent years, we have expanded family support options to include greater flexibility, extended leave, and resources such as maternity coaching and up to three months of paternity or co-parent leave. We have also implemented "life leave" and established comprehensive support for fertility treatments, as well as assistance for colleagues experiencing domestic violence.

Our commitment to holistic colleague well-being extends to areas of health that impact many employees personally. Last year, we introduced our Menopause Policy, alongside training for senior managers to foster an inclusive environment. Additionally, we developed support systems for employees affected by or caring for someone with long-term illnesses, such as cancer.

Mental health has been a particular focus this year with the launch of "HeadStart," a peer-to-peer mental health support program offering training, informational sessions, roundtable discussions, and safe spaces for employees to connect and support one another. This reflects our commitment to fostering a supportive workplace that prioritizes mental well-being.

In the coming year, we will place an even greater emphasis on women's and men's health, ensuring that all colleagues, particularly women, receive the support they need through every life stage and challenge. Working closely with our employee groups, we plan to address key areas in women's health, with a special focus on the "three M's" — Menopause, Menstruation, and Maternity — along with long-term health challenges.

We understand that to support women throughout all life stages is to build a workplace where women have the opportunity to stay, return, and progress to senior roles within our industry. This remains central to our vision for an inclusive and supportive work environment.

Key areas and actions continued

Succession Planning and Leadership Development

Succession planning remains a critical focus at Core as we work toward a future of equal representation. Significant progress has been made, yet we recognize there is more to do. In December 2022, we took an important step forward by establishing a 50/50 gender-representative board, throughout 2024 we have expanded our coaching and support for female employees. These efforts are designed to strengthen succession planning in the upper quartile, aiming for gender balance over time. This year, we have seen encouraging movement in the upper quartile, with a 2.4% reduction in the gap — a meaningful step forward that we are committed to building upon.

Our dedication to fostering gender balance at the senior level is already reflected in our Managing Director roles, with seven of our eleven MD positions held by women. Moving forward, we will continue to prioritize coaching, mentoring, and development opportunities to ensure that succession planning supports a greater gender balance in our succession planning.

Executive Management

There are a higher proportion of males in executive roles, as well as a greater number of male shareholders. Shareholder influence plays a significant role in Core's overall pay gap; when shareholders are excluded from the analysis, the overall mean pay gap reduces to 7.44%, with a median gap of 2.8%.

Building on our commitment to balanced leadership, Core has an establish gender-balanced executive team. Reflecting our dedication to equity at the highest levels and underscores our drive for gender balance across all leadership roles.

This year and into 2025, each Practice Leader has been and will continue be held to an annual target for achieving gender balance within their teams, ensuring consistent focus and sustained progress on gender parity.

Shareholder Structure and Legacy

Core is privately owned, with the majority of shares held by members of our senior executive team — a group that is predominantly male due to historical and legacy factors. All Core shareholders are represented within the upper quartile of this report, impacting the overall gender pay gap.

Our approach to addressing these legacy influences is to drive change through strategic succession planning, balanced leadership, and targeted support programs, with a vision of long-term transformation for a greater gender-equal workplace.

Commitment to Advancing Gender Equity

In 2025, our commitment to gender equity and inclusion remains resolute. We are dedicated to consistently challenging ourselves to bring about real, meaningful and measurable change. Core will continue to create initiatives that support, mentor, and invest in women as they advance in their careers with us. We will rigorously evaluate and enhance our recruitment processes, actively supporting women and ensuring they find pathways to thrive and grow within Core.

While we've made meaningful progress in recent years across areas such as life-stage support, education, inclusivity, recruitment, communication, and career development, we recognize there is more work to be done. Our journey is ongoing, and we remain committed to achieving a truly balanced workplace.

In 2025, we will sustain our efforts by introducing new policies, strengthening support structures, and launching additional training initiatives for all employees. Our focus on succession planning is more vital than ever, as we prioritize coaching and mentoring programs to prepare more women for leadership roles.

Core's dedication to diversity and inclusion will continue to shape our efforts in the coming year and beyond. We will engage with our employee groups, value their feedback, and strive to bring about positive, lasting changes. With our 50/50 gender-representative board and upcoming plans for a gender-balanced executive team, we're working towards a future where all levels of our organization reflect our commitment to equity.

For anyone interested in further details or with questions about this analysis, please feel free to reach out to me or any member of Core's HR team. I'd like to extend my gratitude to the teams involved in conducting this thorough analysis and compiling our report. Your insights and dedication are essential to our progress.

Catherine Fitzgibbon
Chief People Officer



About **Core**

Core is Ireland's largest marketing communications company, collaborating across multiple practices, providing services in sponsorship, strategy, performance, research, investment, media, creative, learning, and data.

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