



Gender and Equality Pay Gap Report 2023-24

(Relevant date: 05.04.2024)

Introduction from Lisa Hopkins

At SeeAbility, we are committed to creating an inclusive, equitable, and diverse place to work, where our colleagues feel they belong and have the opportunity to thrive. As we publish our seventh Gender Pay Gap Report, I am proud to reflect on the progress we have made in addressing gender inequality while recognising the ongoing work required to achieve true equity across all levels of our charity.

Our 2023-2024 report reveals encouraging progress in reducing the gender pay gap. Our mean gender pay gap has significantly decreased to 4.8%, a notable improvement from 8.4% in 2023, and well below the sector average of 7.8%. This reflects the effectiveness of our targeted interventions and an unrelenting drive to improve inclusion practices for women. We remain focused on addressing this gap through continued investment in equity-driven strategies.

The social care sector has long faced challenges related to gender pay disparities, and SeeAbility is no exception. Women represent the majority of our workforce, particularly in lower and middle quartiles of pay distribution. We are committed to supporting women's career advancement by inclusive recruitment processes, expanding

our learning and development and driving internal promotions as our first-choice recruitment strategy.

Additionally, we have introduced several key interventions to support the wellbeing and career advancement of our colleagues. From enhanced fertility and parental leave provisions to menopause support networks, we are actively breaking down barriers that disproportionately impact women's careers. By addressing these issues head-on, we aim to create an environment where our colleagues feel supported at every stage of their professional and personal lives.

We are proud of the strides we have made, but we are not complacent. Closing the gender pay gap and achieving pay equity requires sustained action, ongoing reflection, and a culture that champions fairness at every level. As we move forward, we will continue to review our pay structures, refine our policies, and engage in meaningful conversations that drive lasting change. Our commitment to diversity, equity, and belonging is unwavering, and we will not stop until every person at SeeAbility has an equal opportunity to succeed.



I want to thank every colleague who has contributed to our progress so far. Your dedication, resilience, and passion for inclusion make SeeAbility a better place to work. Together, we will continue to build a future where fairness and opportunity are not just aspirations, but a reality for all.

Lisa Hopkins, CEO



About us

SeeAbility is a UK-based charity dedicated to enriching the lives of people with sight loss, learning disabilities and autism. With a workforce of approximately 1000 colleagues, including bank staff, we strive to create an inclusive environment that reflects our commitment to diversity equality and belonging. As part of our commitment to creating a fair, inclusive, and diverse place to work, SeeAbility is publishing its annual Gender Pay Gap Report.

This report marks our seventh year of gender pay gap reporting, providing an analysis as of the snapshot date of 5 April 2024. We believe that an equitable workplace is crucial for enabling all colleagues to thrive. We have made significant progress in addressing gender inequality within our charity, but there is still much to be done.

This report reflects our pay gap analysis for the period ending on the 5th of April 2024. It provides a breakdown of gender pay data, including comparisons with the UK national average, and includes information on how we are addressing the gender pay gap.

Pay gap reporting

Understanding the gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average earnings of men and women. This report examines both the mean and median gender pay gaps, as well as providing a detailed quartile band analysis to highlight how the pay gap varies across different pay ranges.

Gender pay gap in health and social care and eye care sectors

In the UK's health and social care sector, the gender pay gap has shown a slight improvement from 2023 to 2024. The mean pay gap decreased from 8.3% in 2023 to 7.8% in 2024, representing a 0.5 percentage point reduction.

However, the median pay gap increased from 9.1% in 2023 to 13.9% in 2024, a 4.8 percentage point rise. This indicates that while the average earnings disparity has lessened, the middle point of the earnings distribution has seen a widening gap.

These figures suggest that, despite some progress in reducing the average pay difference between men and women in the sector, challenges remain, particularly concerning the distribution of earnings.

Within the eye care sector, roles such as dispensing opticians and optometrists, which are often held by women, remained an observable gender pay gap in the 2023–2024 period. This gap can be attributed to a variety of factors, including the structure of part-time work, bank working and access to senior roles, and the distribution of bonuses or commissions. While the sector is making strides through initiatives aimed at promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, progress is ongoing.

As a charity we are taking steps to support and empower women in these roles, continuing to offer flexible working options, apprenticeships, and leadership development programs. Continued attention to these areas will continue to be essential in ensuring that everyone, regardless of gender, has an equal opportunity to thrive and succeed in the eye care sector.

Comparison to UK national average

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the UK average gender pay gap for all colleagues in 2023 was 8.3%. SeeAbility's mean and median gender pay gaps are below the national average, reflecting our ongoing efforts towards pay equity.

An overview of SeeAbility's results

- Mean gender pay gap: 4.8%
- Median gender pay gap: 4.8%
- Proportion of men and women in quartiles: We have broken down the workforce into quartiles, showing how men and women are distributed across different pay bands.



Median and mean explained

- **Mean:** The average hourly pay of men and women, calculated by dividing the total pay of each group by the number of colleagues in that group.
- **Median:** The middle value when all hourly pay rates are listed in order, with half of colleagues earning more and half earning less.
- **Quartile bands:** The workforce is divided into four equal quartiles based on hourly pay. The first quartile represents the lowest pay range, and the fourth quartile represents the highest.



$$\frac{\text{Sum of male hourly rates}}{\text{Total no. male employees}}$$



**Mean
(average)**



$$\frac{\text{Sum of female hourly rates}}{\text{Total no. female employees}}$$

The median pay rate is the middle number if you were to line all pay rates from smallest to largest.

Lowest paid

Median (midpoint)

Highest paid



SeeAbility 2023/2024 pay gap

Pay gap	SeeAbility 2023	Social care sector 2023	SeeAbility 2024	Social care sector 2024
Mean	8.40%	8.3%	4.8%	7.8%
Median	3.70%	9.1%	4.8%	13.9%

Source Gov.org

There has been a notable improvement, with the mean pay gap reducing to 4.8%. This marks a significant reduction of 3.6 percentage points from 2023 and places SeeAbility well below the social care sector’s 2024 mean pay gap of 7.8%. This progress reflects the success of our ongoing commitment to gender equality, particularly through leadership and management development programmes, where the majority of participants are women. These interventions are designed to support career progression, build confidence, and create clear pathways into senior roles, helping to address structural inequalities and ensure more balanced representation at every level of the charity.

Alongside these strategic efforts, operational changes have also influenced our pay gap figures. As a charity, we have experienced substantial growth in the number of people we support. This has required a proportionally greater increase in the recruitment of operational colleagues, who typically earn lower pay rates than those in central support teams. While this expansion has helped reduce the mean pay gap by balancing overall earnings distribution, it has also contributed to a slight increase in the median pay gap – now at 4.8% – by shifting the midpoint of salaries downward. Even so, our median gap remains significantly better than the sector average of 13.9%.

The table below summarises the gender pay rate - gap by mean and median for men and women:

Gender	Mean pay	Median pay
Males	£14.92	£12.88
Females	£14.22	£12.26

We can conclude that while the pay gap exists, it is narrowing, reflecting our ongoing commitment to pay equality.

Bonus pay gap

Whilst SeeAbility does not have an official bonus scheme, we do have recognition schemes in place. We have an annual Excellence Awards, Long Service Awards, Recruitment Referral scheme and limited one off recognition payments, which all fall under the reporting requirements.

Bonus pay gap	SeeAbility 2023	Social care sector 2023	SeeAbility 2024	Social care sector 2024
Mean	3.40%	3.50%	-6.40%	8.7%
Median	0.00%	25%	0.00%	0.00%

Mean bonus pay gap

The mean bonus pay gap compares the average bonus pay received by men and women:

- In 2023, SeeAbility had a mean bonus pay gap of 3.40%, slightly below the 3.50% average for the social care sector, indicating that women earned, on average, slightly less bonus pay than men.
- In 2024, SeeAbility’s mean bonus pay gap was -6.40%, meaning that, on average, women earned more in bonuses than men. This contrasts significantly with the social care sector, where the mean gap increased to 8.7%, showing that men earned more bonus pay than women.

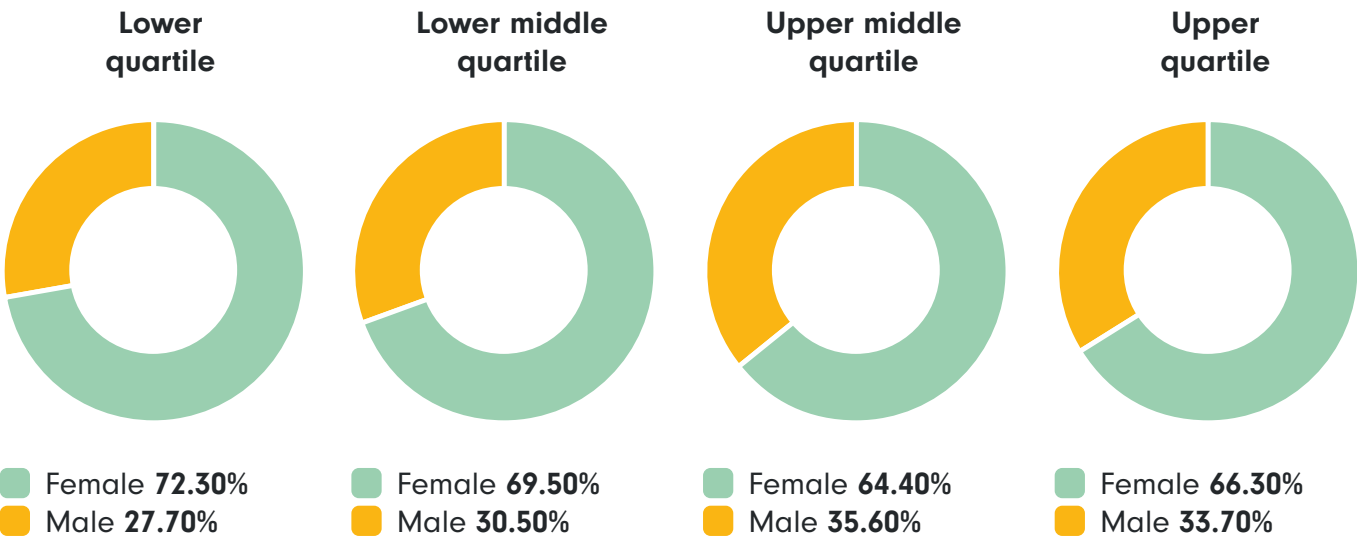
Median bonus pay gap

The median bonus pay gap reflects the difference in the middle value of bonuses received by men and women:

- In 2023, SeeAbility’s median bonus pay gap was 0.00%, indicating parity, where the middle bonus amounts for men and women were the same. However, the median gap for the social care sector was 25%, highlighting a substantial difference favouring men.
- In 2024, SeeAbility maintained its 0.00% median bonus pay gap, demonstrating ongoing equality in median bonus pay. The social care sector’s median gap also narrowed significantly to 0.00%, achieving parity in this measure.

Colleagues in each quartile

The distribution of men and women across different pay quartiles is an important factor in understanding the overall gender pay gap. This shows the proportion of males and females in each quartile pay and their differences.



This breakdown highlights that women make up a larger proportion in all quartiles, particularly in the lower and middle quartiles.

The gender pay gap at SeeAbility, as reflected by the mean and median, is relatively narrow compared to the UK national average. However, we recognise that the gender distribution in the upper quartile suggests there is still progress to be made, particularly in ensuring women are equally represented in higher pay bands.

Continued focus on equality diversity and belonging and our commitment to closing the pay gap

Inclusion Committee

Our Inclusion Committee is a passionate, tenacious and collaborative group comprising three key Inclusion Network Groups: the Disability Network Group, the Racial Awareness Network Group, and the Pride Network Group. The network groups meet quarterly. The Inclusion committee and network groups serves as a platform to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion across all aspects of our charity. Our aim is to foster an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to thrive, regardless of their background, abilities, or identity. By working together, we strive to identify and address barriers, promote inclusive practices, and celebrate the richness that diversity brings to our place of work and community.

Leadership focus

Annually, we host a Leadership Academy designed to enhance self-awareness, confidence, and leadership effectiveness, tailored for mid-level or aspiring managers at SeeAbility. This programme supports an



empowering coaching leadership style, fostering personal and team accountability, navigating change, and promoting inclusivity. Notably, in 2024, 80% of the programme's participants were women. From the 2023 cohort, 75% of the female participants have since been promoted or assumed increased responsibilities, showcasing the tangible impact of our interventions on women's career progression.

Internal mentoring

In addition to the Leadership Academy, we introduced internal mentoring opportunities to support colleagues in their journey towards leadership roles. In 2023, women comprised 67% of our internal mentors and 80% of our mentees, demonstrating our commitment to empowering women through mentorship. In 2025, we plan to further expand and enhance this initiative to facilitate even more women's advancement into leadership positions.

Career progression

Looking ahead, we are continuing to focus on leadership development programmes tailored to enable women to excel in leadership roles. These programmes will address essential skills such as understanding and owning personal impact, as well as honing influencing and stakeholder management abilities. By prioritising equity and inclusivity in our leadership development interventions, we are cultivating an environment where women can thrive and lead throughout our charity.

Apprenticeships and qualification schemes

In line with our commitment to women's equity and advancement, we are prioritising opportunities for further education and professional development. We offer a range of qualifications, from level 2 Health and Social Care certifications to level 5 nursing degrees and leadership qualifications. We actively encourage all colleagues, especially women, to pursue qualifications that align with their career aspirations. Notably, 100% of those who have completed level 2-5 qualifications funded via the apprenticeship levy in the last year have been women. Additionally, 85% of those currently enrolled in apprenticeships are women.



We are proud to have women represented across all levels of our charity, including members of our leadership team, who are actively pursuing educational opportunities to advance their careers.

By providing accessible pathways for women to enhance their skills and knowledge, we are not only investing in their personal and professional growth but also creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce where women can thrive and contribute meaningfully to our mission and vision.

Inclusion training

We have taken active steps to cultivate a culture of belonging and inclusion by providing inclusion training for all middle managers who are predominantly female. This training aimed to equip our leaders with the knowledge and tools necessary to promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity within their teams and across the charity.

Further, we are expanding our efforts to ensure that all colleagues at every level of the charity have access to comprehensive inclusion training. By rolling out this training programme throughout the charity, we are empowering all colleagues to contribute to a workplace culture that celebrates diversity, fosters belonging, and embraces the unique perspectives and experiences of every individual.



Enhanced fertility and parental leave provision

As part of a wider benefits and appreciation review, we have introduced a paid fertility leave allowance and enhanced our maternity, adoption and paternity leave provision. By embracing and supporting these life events for all genders, these interventions help to break down workplace barriers for women, open up equal opportunities for career growth, and create a more inclusive workplace where the financial and professional responsibilities of parenting are shared more fairly.

Menopause, fertility and domestic abuse

Last year we launched new family friendly policies to support all colleagues to balance work and family commitments where they choose to do so. These include enhanced maternity, paternity and shared parental leave, as well as a new provision for colleagues going through fertility treatments. We've also improved our wellbeing support for colleagues with the additional of a trained Wellbeing Coach with lived experience of domestic abuse.

Statistics indicate that by openly discussing menopause, raising awareness, and providing appropriate support, we can mitigate its impact in the workplace.

Currently, menopause is often a hidden issue, leading to significant consequences for both colleagues and employers. Symptoms such as loss of confidence and stress contribute to 14% of menopausal women reducing their working hours, and 8% do not apply for promotions. This can intensify the gender pay gap, which widens with age.

We foster an environment where colleagues feel confident to speak up and by offering necessary support and adjustments, we can help them continue to thrive at work. Being a menopause-friendly employer is crucial.

- **75%** of women experience menopause symptoms, with **25%** experiencing severe symptoms.
- **70%** report stress as a result of menopause.
- **46%** do not disclose their symptoms due to fear of negative perceptions.
- The average age to reach menopause is **51**.
- **18%** of the average workforce is menopausal.
- **1 in 4** consider leaving work due to their symptoms.
- **1 in 10** leave their role due to their symptoms.

*Reference CIPD

Within SeeAbility, 16% of our total workforce is within the menopause age group of 45 - 55, and almost a quarter is within our female population - with more undocumented numbers going through perimenopause and post-menopause.

To support these colleagues, we have appointed a Menopause Lead Coach and four additional coaches with lived experience.

They have been very active with hints, tips, and general information posting this on our internal Facebook pages and updates on our Wellbeing, Health, and Belonging library. In addition, menopause cafes, and webinars, have been

organised to foster open discussions and share valuable information about menopause. These interventions have created safe spaces where women can share their experiences, both the highs and lows, of their menopause journey. We have found this has given invaluable support and understanding, empowering them to navigate the transitional phases of perimenopause, menopause, and post-menopause. Women of all ages attend these cafes.

Summary

While SeeAbility has made significant progress in reducing the gender pay gap, we are committed to continuing our efforts to close the gap further and improve diversity across the charity. The ongoing monitoring of pay data, along with the implementation of targeted actions, will help us achieve our goals for a more inclusive and equitable place to work.



Live. Love. Thrive. Belong.



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Registered Charity Number 255913

SeeAbility is the operating name of The Royal School for the Blind
Patron: HRH The Duchess of Gloucester GCVO

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