



South Staffordshire Plc



Gender Pay Gap Report 2025/26

For the year ended 31 March 2025
South Staffordshire Plc

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About this report

South Staffordshire Plc is an integrated services group that operates two regulated water supply businesses and offers a range of complementary services and products through its non-regulated divisions: waste, water and infrastructure, compliance, service and software, and water consumption supply and logistics.

With nearly 3000 employees, embracing diversity and inclusion is one of our key commitments. We have taken significant steps in recent years to create a workplace that understands and celebrates our individual differences, and the value this brings to us as an organisation, our customers and the communities that we serve.

Last year, we published our first ever South Staffordshire Plc Gender Pay Report, incorporating not only our statutory reporting obligations for four of our subsidiary companies (South Staffordshire Water Plc, Hydrosave UK Limited, Onsite Central Limited and Integrated Water Services Limited) but also looking at the Group as a collective across the UK, comparing our internal gender pay gap results, not just to one another but to the national picture.

This year, we're proud to share the positive strides we've made in driving meaningful change for our people. This report not only includes our gender pay gap data at the snapshot date of 5 April 2025 but also highlights the broader actions we've taken in the last year to strengthen our commitment to diversity and inclusion.



Celebrating positive progress

Charley Maher, Group CEO

Over the last year, we have created meaningful and positive momentum in shaping our culture, strengthening engagement and advancing equality across South Staffordshire Plc.

By continually reassessing our ambitions and building on what we do well, we create an environment that respects, values and recognises our people. This is reflected in our gender pay gap results, demonstrating that our commitment to consistency and fairness has a material impact on the way in which we reward our people.

Whilst we have plenty to celebrate, gender pay gap reporting does not stand alone. It forms part of a broader, long term approach to culture, behaviours and practices that shape the employee experience across our Group.

A core element of our equality ethos is our People Promises, shaped by the feedback from our annual engagement survey. This ensures that we listen, learn and adapt based on what our people tell us matters most.

As part of our commitments this year, we set new expectations for our leaders to embed the People Promises into their day-to-day operations. This includes creating regular opportunities to gather feedback, address concerns and actively champion the wellbeing, engagement and development of their teams.

We also recognise the powerful role our employees play in championing inclusivity, valuing differences, promoting respectful behaviours and challenging practices that undermine inclusion.

Our diverse range of people networks continue to create safe spaces for connection, education and advocacy. Over the past year, we strengthened their visibility and impact through a dedicated intranet page and the launch of our Networks Newsletter, ensuring these communities are accessible to all.

Building upon the success of our Women's Network and Unity+, this year we have launched two new networks - Disability and Neurodiversity, and Working Parents and Carers Together. Combined, these four communities have reached hundreds of our employees to create awareness, challenge bias and role model inclusive behaviours, ensuring we create a better workplace that embraces difference.

We also continue to benefit from our strong relationship with the Women's Utilities Network, contributing to events, mentoring and knowledge sharing with other member organisations. Recognising the importance of external partnerships, I was delighted to sign the Armed Forces Covenant earlier this year on behalf of South Staffordshire Plc. This marks our first step toward becoming a Forces friendly employer, valuing the unique skills veterans bring, while acknowledging and addressing the challenges they may face in securing and sustaining employment.

Our ambition is to create environments where all people can thrive. For new starters, we introduced a refreshed onboarding experience, ensuring they feel a sense of belonging from day one and have the tools, knowledge and connections to succeed. We also launched our Behavioural Framework, providing a consistent foundation for growth by helping our people understand what great looks like and how to achieve it.

We have also invested in strengthening our leadership capability with a focus on the 'brilliant basics', and launching the new Manager Hub which provides practical tools, guidance and monthly updates to empower leaders to manage with confidence in their everyday interactions.

Each year, highlights for me include International Women's Day, Neurodiversity Celebration Week and LGBT+ History Month - and this year was no exception. It was a privilege to host a mix of leadership and frontline people, nominated by their leaders in recognition for their contribution over the last year, whilst gaining honest feedback to help shape the next phase of our transformative people plan.

We have delivered substantial progress over the past year, and our future focus will build on this momentum to create an environment where women and all people can truly thrive.



Diversity at South Staffordshire Plc

At South Staffordshire Plc, our people are the driving force behind everything we do. We're committed to creating a workplace where every individual feels valued, included and empowered to succeed. Inclusion isn't just something we embrace, it helps us shape a workplace where everyone can thrive whilst creating the environment for enhanced innovation, providing for a greater diversity of thought, and creating better outcomes for everyone.

To ensure we can build an inclusive environment where everyone feels represented and supported, we recognise the importance of understanding the demographics of our people across eight key areas: gender, marital status, religion, ethnic origin, nationality, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and disability status. Having this information enables us to:

Identify representation gaps: we can see where certain groups may be underrepresented and take targeted action to improve equity.

Shape inclusive policies and practices: accurate demographic data enables us to design policies that reflect the needs of all employees, ensuring fairness and accessibility.

Measure progress against D&I goals: data provides a baseline and ongoing metrics to track how well we to progressing our diversity and inclusion progress.

Enhance employee experience: understanding different characteristics helps us tailor support, benefits, and development opportunities to diverse needs.

This year, we have taken two important steps, by making this sensitive data capture part of our new starter onboarding process and inviting people to share their sensitive information as part of their secure HR record.

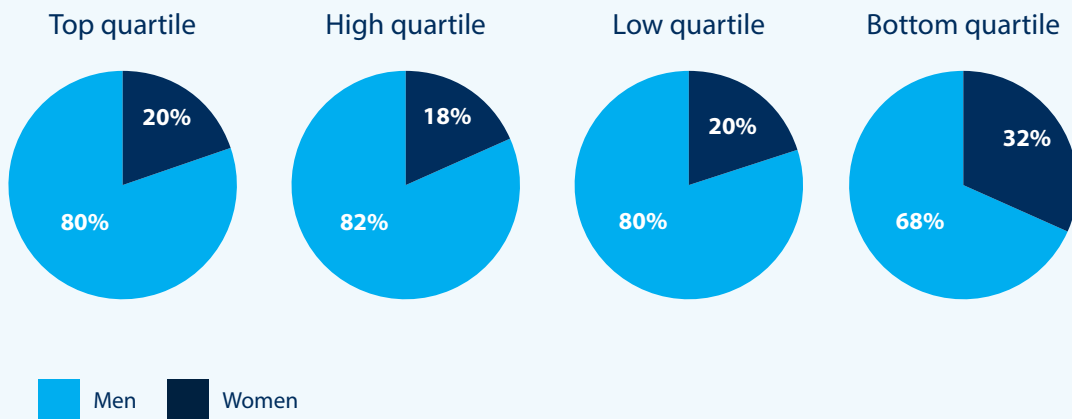
For every category, there is a 'Prefer not to say' option, to ensure that our people have the option to keep private any information they prefer not to disclose. We have also taken a conscious decision for this information to be unavailable to managers to ensure that decision-making is free of bias.

We are delighted that 57% of our people have, so far, chosen to share this sensitive data, noting that this is a relatively new approach for us. This has already enabled us to build a growing understanding of the diversity of our workforce and the breadth of cultures, views and experiences this brings. We aim to continue improving the quality and completeness of this data over time to further strengthen our collective understanding.

Our pay distribution

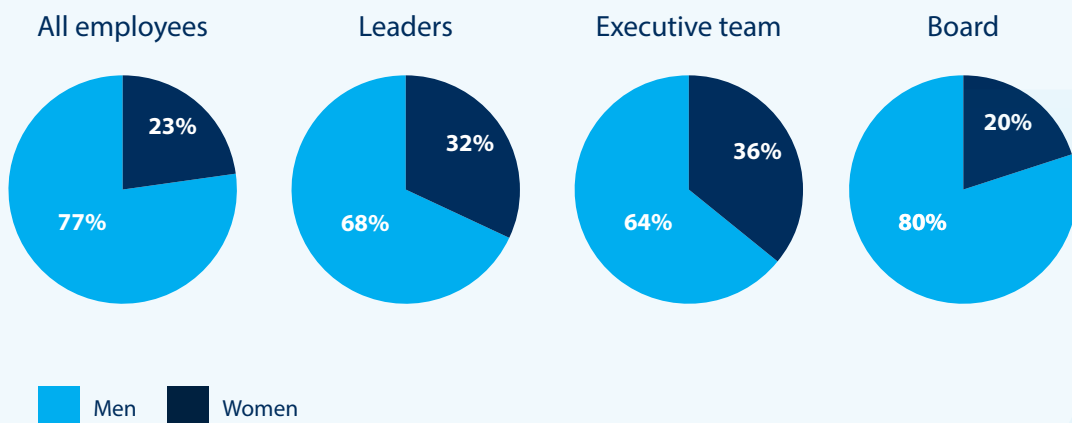
Pay quartiles divide all employees' pay into four equal-sized groups, from the lowest-paid to the highest-paid. It's a simple way to see how men and women are spread across the pay structure, which can highlight patterns in representation and inequality.

The percentage of women in each pay quartile has improved since last year, and is reflective of our overall gender split seen across South Staffordshire Plc.



Our gender distribution

In April 2025, our gender distribution saw modest improvements across all employees, leaders and our executive team when compared to 2024.



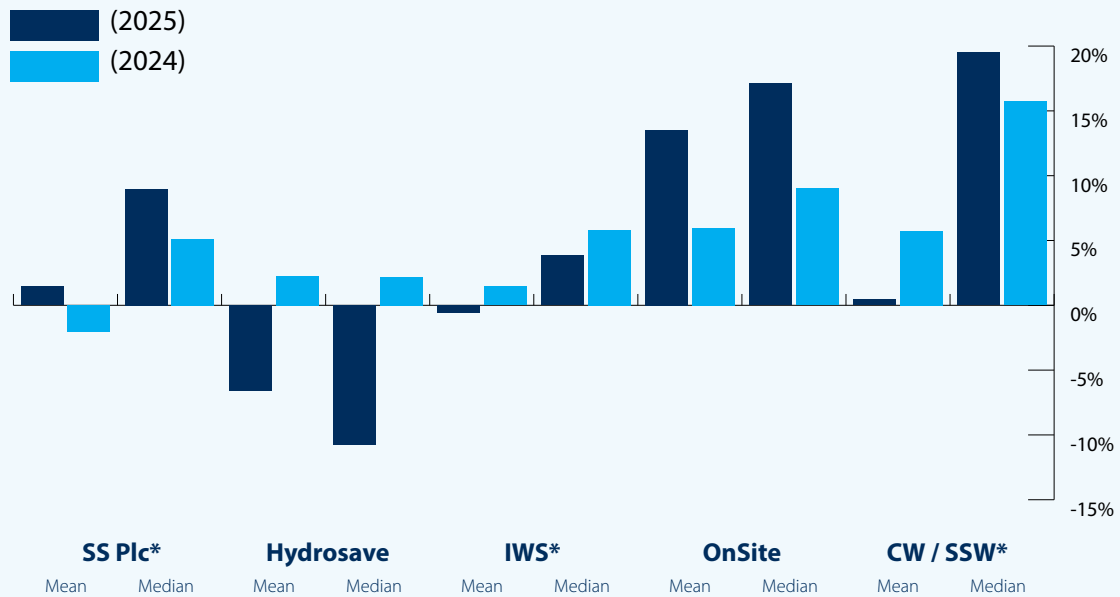


Our gender pay gap

Gender pay gap figures show the difference in average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) between men and women, expressed as a percentage of men's pay. This is not the same as equal pay, which compares the pay of men and women doing the same or similar work.

The **gender bonus gap** looks at the difference in bonus payments between men and women, again shown as a percentage of bonuses paid to men.

We report gender pay in two ways: the **mean gender pay gap**, which compares the overall average hourly pay and bonuses of all men and women in the organisation, and the **median gender pay gap**, which compares the midpoint of hourly pay and bonuses for men and women.



Our overall mean gender pay gap remains low at 1.46%, equivalent to a 28-pence average hourly difference between men and women. The median gap is 8.97%, which is higher than in 2024 indicating a widening at the midpoint of the workforce.

At an individual business level, Hydrosave and Integrated Water Services show more significant year-on-year movement in both mean and median gender pay gaps.

The OnSite business remains an area of focus. Operating in a heavily operational environment within a sector that has historically struggled to attract and retain women, both its mean and median gender pay gaps have widened over the past year. Improving gender representation through targeted attraction, development and progression initiatives remains a priority.

Within the Water business, the mean gender pay gap has narrowed year on year, while the median gap has widened, highlighting a mixed picture across average and midpoint pay outcomes and underlining the importance of continued focus on progression and representation at key points across the pay structure.

In the wider context, the Office for National Statistics^[1] reports a national mean gender pay gap of 13.4% and a median gap of 12.8%, meaning our current figures of 1.46% (mean) and 8.97% (median) compare favourably with the national picture.

^[1] 2025 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) from the Office for National Statistics
 *SS Plc is the abbreviation for South Staffordshire Plc
 *IWS is the abbreviation for Integrated Water Services
 *CW / SSW is the abbreviation for South Staffordshire Water

Gender bonus gap

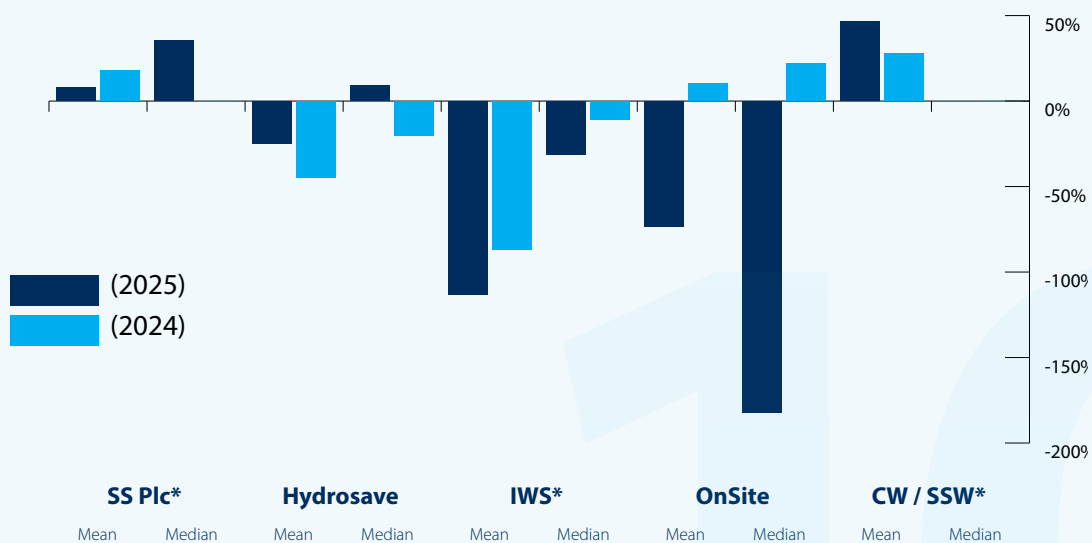
Our approach to reward ensures bonus payments are aligned to the achievement of key performance indicators for both managerial and operational bonuses. This ensures that bonuses are linked to tangible business performance and are awarded equitably.

Across the whole organisation, bonuses were paid to 51.2% of women and 48.37% of men which demonstrates an approach to bonus entitlement which is gender-neutral.

In 2025, we saw the mean gender bonus gap improve from 18.05% in 2024 to 7.83% in 2025. This period saw an increase in the number of women receiving bonuses, and the average female bonus increased by 23% compared to the previous year. Although the median gender bonus gap for South Staffordshire Plc has shifted in the opposite direction, this is because the median bonus for men comes from one of our businesses while the median for women comes from another. As our different businesses have varying bonus structures and financial performance, the median figures are not directly comparable.

Negative bonus gaps are seen in OnSite, Hydrosave and IWS, where the average bonus received by women was higher than men. This is mainly attributable to a higher proportion of women in these businesses being in roles that attract a managerial bonus, compared to a higher proportion of men in operational roles.

On the other hand, the higher levels of men in senior leadership positions in Cambridge and South Staffordshire Water in 2025 led to an increase in their mean gender bonus gap.



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Our communities

The experiences of our people are shaped by more than gender alone. Factors such as race, ethnicity, disability, age, socioeconomic background, and sexual orientation interact alongside gender to create different realities for different groups of women and men. This concept of intersectionality considers overlapping identities, ensuring that gender equality initiatives benefit those who face compounded barriers.

To create a culture that is genuinely inclusive and effective for everyone, we're on a mission to embed a number of networks across our Group that **empower our people to be their most authentic selves at work** and to educate people on topics impacting our diverse workforce.

Each network is sponsored by an executive leader and made up a committee of diverse and passionate people from across our Group, who act on behalf of our members to build community, raise awareness and shape culture, ensuring people across all roles and locations feel supported, empowered, and able to thrive at both at work and at home.



Women's Network

Caroline Cooper

Executive Sponsor and Strategy & Regulation Director, South Staffs and Cambridge Water

What have been the highlights for your network over the last 12 months?

For me it's the continuing evolution of our committee – I am lucky to have such an inspiring and passionate group of women, who are all dedicated to ensuring we deliver for our collective businesses. Seeing us grow in confidence and working together to achieve our goals over the last 12 months has made me really proud.

What challenges have you faced?

Making sure we prioritise and bring focus – not every event needs to be a huge face to face gathering. Learning that the small nudges and supportive messages are just as important has really helped with managing the challenge between our ambition and enthusiasm, and having the time and ability to deliver.

How do you think your network has made a difference for our people?

I'm proud to say this isn't something I think, it's something I know for sure – women reaching out unprompted to share how events we have organised have literally changed their working lives (and sometimes life at home). The menopause workshop was a highlight, with people sharing their own lived experiences which really made a connection to our members and allies.

What are your plans for the year ahead?

Gosh so many! We're very excited about future collaborations with our other networks – we have a full year of events planned, backed up with some strong objectives for us to deliver – which I have no doubt we will!





Parents and Carers Network

Andrew Lobley

Executive Sponsor and Managing Director, Asset Health

What have been the highlights for your network over the last 12 months?

As a brand-new network formed in the last six months, we're still at the start of our journey. The standout highlight has been establishing the committee and bringing together a passionate, diverse and inspiring group of volunteers committed to supporting working parents and carers.

What challenges have you faced?

Two main factors stand out: the team's existing workloads, which naturally limit the time available for new initiatives, and the need to balance our ambitions with what's realistically achievable at a sustainable pace.

How do you think your network has made a difference for our people?

With the committee only recently formed and membership newly opened, our biggest impact so far has been creating a sense of belonging for working parents and carers. We want them to feel recognised, valued and confident that the Group is committed to becoming the best employer it can be for them.

What are your plans for the year ahead?

A lot! We've agreed an outline plan centred around key moments such as Carers' Day and National Parenting Week. We're prioritising maternity and paternity support and will set up working groups for recently returned parents to understand how well our current processes serve them and where we can improve for the future.





Disability and Neurodiversity Network

Jack Lomas

Chair and Branch Manager, Omega Red

What have been the highlights for your network over the last 12 months?

We launched a series of employee-led webinars where committee members shared their lived experiences of health conditions such as IBD, Tourette's Syndrome, Dyslexia, Depression and Diabetes. Across five sessions in one week, we combined real-life storytelling with educational insight to challenge stigma and unconscious bias. These conversations helped humanise the conditions, encouraged open dialogue and created a safe space for people to learn, ask questions and build understanding. The series strengthened our commitment to inclusivity and deepened empathy across the Group.

What challenges have you faced?

I'd say the biggest challenge we've had is in relation to the committee members being from different regions (far and wide) so we have only recently managed to do an in-person meeting. Having met everyone, we all agreed the session was more productive than online meetings held over Teams.

How do you think your network has made a difference for our people?

We've helped foster a more inclusive, supportive and empowering environment where neurodivergent and disabled people can thrive. By raising awareness, breaking down barriers and championing accessibility, we've encouraged more open conversations - particularly around depression - which has shown people they're not alone in their experiences.

What are your plans for the year ahead?

We are starting a big piece of work looking at how we recruit and onboard neurodivergent and disabled employees across the Group. The aim is to improve our processes and ensure we have inclusivity and accessibility at the heart of our approach in this area. As part of the review, we will be reviewing our job adverts and interview process to focus on inclusive language and identify areas for improvement.



Unity+ Network

Phil Cliff

Chair and Group Transformation Director

As the new Chair of the Unity+ Network, I'm delighted to share the insights from our departing Chair, Lizi Bell, and reflect on the network's achievements over the past year.

What have been the highlights for your network over the last 12 months?

Two moments stand out: South Staffordshire Plc taking part in Birmingham Pride and sponsoring Walsall Pride - one of the few utilities companies represented - and our hugely successful Inclusivi-Tea bake sale and coffee morning during Pride Month, which raised over £1,500 for the LGBT Foundation across all Group companies.

What challenges have you faced?

Attracting new members has been difficult, as stigma and personal comfort levels can make engagement within the LGBTQ+ community challenging. Changing this is a core aim of Unity+.

How do you think your network has made a difference for our people?

Unity+ has helped us celebrate diversity more visibly and confidently, reinforcing our inclusive culture for our people and customers. Senior leaders have even cited our networks as a reason for joining the Group. We've also raised awareness of issues the LGBTQ+ community faces - many people have told us they simply weren't aware of some of these challenges.

What are your plans for the year ahead?

We will focus on growing our membership and deepening education around LGBTQ+ issues. We also want to collaborate more closely with other people networks to make the most of shared opportunities.



The Network Shelf



Hannah Cook

Network Shelf Advocate and Head of HR Shared Services and Projects

What have been the highlights for the Network Shelf?

One of the key highlights has been the successful launch of The Network Shelf as a groupwide, network-led book club, creating a shared space for learning, reflection and conversation across the business. The initiative has been powered by our People Networks, with quarterly fiction and nonfiction reads linked to themes such as inclusion, wellbeing and belonging.

The Network Shelf has also embraced accessibility and flexibility, allowing people to engage by reading, listening or watching content in a way that suits them, and by attending relaxed lunchtime discussions with no pressure to have completed the material.

Another highlight has been the strong cross-network collaboration, with different networks hosting sessions, recommending books and involving senior leaders and allies in discussions. The launch of a dedicated Group Intranet space has further increased visibility and made it easier for people to discover past and upcoming sessions.

What challenges have you faced?

As a voluntary, discussion-based initiative, one of the main challenges has been balancing engagement with busy workloads, particularly for people in operational or frontline roles. Scheduling sessions at times that work across different parts of the business has required careful co-ordination.

Another challenge has been maintaining momentum and variety while ensuring that book choices remain relevant, inclusive and aligned to the aims of each People Network. This relies on continued collaboration and forward planning across multiple network committees.

How do you think the Network Shelf has made a difference for our people?

The Network Shelf has helped to create safe, informal spaces for open conversation around topics such as gender, identity and inclusion, which can sometimes be difficult to explore in day-to-day work settings. By using books and shared stories as a starting point, it has enabled meaningful dialogue without putting individuals on the spot.

It has also strengthened connections across teams, roles and seniority levels, supporting allyship and helping people to better understand different lived experiences. This contributes to a more inclusive culture, where learning and empathy are actively encouraged rather than treated as a one-off activity.

What are your plans for the year ahead?

Over the next year, the focus will be on building consistency and reach, with a continued rotation of hosting responsibilities across the People Networks and a planned programme of quarterly reads and discussions.

There are also plans to broaden participation, encourage more senior leader involvement, and strengthen links between The Network Shelf and wider learning, wellbeing and inclusion activity across the organisation. The aim is for the Network Shelf to remain a sustainable, visible and valued part of how we support inclusion and cultural understanding at work.





Focus for the future

Sara McCann: Group HR Director

With much to celebrate in the last year, our future focus gives us clear and ambitious actions on how we engage, recruit and retain more women, whilst continuing to build a diverse and inclusive workplace for everyone.

A fundamental pillar of our growth as an inclusive organisation will be the continued success of our employee networks. In the year ahead, we plan to launch three new employee communities - Race and Cultural Heritage, Apprentices, and Armed Forces - each designed to create connections, visibility and meaningful change.

Our Women's Network continues to set the standard for creating inclusive spaces. In conjunctions with our Parents and Carers network, they have developed an engaging and interactive calendar of events planned to support our people, raise awareness and champion progressive workplace practices.

We will also expand our external partnerships, working with the Women's Work Lab, to provide placement opportunities for women returning to the workplace after extended breaks, often due to caring responsibilities or health reasons. The programme will focus on building confidence, recognising transferable skills and opening pathways back into meaningful work.

To strengthen our accountability as an employer committed to diversity, we will enhance our data capture and reporting processes. This will help us identify areas of underrepresentation and measure the impact of our efforts to improve workforce diversity.

We are in the early stages of piloting a job evaluation exercise, with plans to introduce this across the Group. This work will provide greater clarity, consistency and governance around pay structures and reward.

We also recognise that some areas of our business remain male-dominated, with women underrepresented in several roles. Addressing this will be a major focus for the future, ensuring we fully understand and challenge the barriers that prevent women from applying and progressing in particular roles and specialisms.

Finally, we know our talented and passionate leaders are critical to shaping a workplace that values and engages a diverse workforce. To support this, we are developing a suite of leadership development opportunities, from foundational to advanced, to equip leaders with the skills and confidence to create truly inclusive teams.

These future initiatives will help establish us as an employer that values diversity as a strength, embeds equality at the core of who we are, and cultivates a workplace where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

Declaration

We confirm that the information in this gender pay report is accurate and has been prepared in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

Charley Maher
Group CEO

Sara McCann
Group HR Director





South Staffordshire Plc