

# Gender Pay Gap Report 2025



*Phil Smith*

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Bright Horizons UK Managing Director

**At Bright Horizons, we recognise that our people are the heart of our organisation.**

At Bright Horizons, we are proud to be a mission-led business, caring for children and serving the needs of working families for over 30 years. Our teams are guided by our HEART principles of Honesty, Excellence, Accountability, Respect and Teamwork, alongside our long-held commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging. Our approach to the Gender Pay Gap is shaped by these principles and informs how we review our data.

Our Gender Pay Gap Report provides insight into our workforce across pay quartiles and highlights how this has changed over time within our organisation. The 2025 figures provide a valuable opportunity to reflect on how our workforce is evolving and where our focus continues to make a difference.

This year's data shows encouraging movement across several pay quartiles. Female representation rose notably in the upper middle quartile, while male representation increased at entry level, pointing to greater balance within our mid-pay roles. These shifts align with our continued focus on creating inclusive career pathways, supporting talent progression, retention, and wellbeing, ensuring colleagues feel valued and supported throughout their time with us.

Set within the context of a predominantly female workforce, these principles matter, and the year-on-year progress seen in 2025 reflects steady, sustainable change. Guided by our long-term people strategy, we remain committed to building a workplace where opportunity, development and wellbeing continue to be accessible at every stage of the career journey.



## What is the Gender Pay Gap?

Having a gender pay gap does not mean that women and men are paid differently for the same role. That would be an equal pay issue. The gender pay gap is broader, comparing the average female pay with the average male pay across an entire organisation.

Most organisations in the UK, and elsewhere, have a gender pay gap. In many sectors, different roles attract different genders. If higher paid roles are more likely to be held by men and lower paid roles by women, a pay gap will appear when averages are compared.

Addressing the gender pay gap is therefore less about paying everyone the same, and more about ensuring people of all genders can access, progress within and thrive across a wide range of roles.

# We understand that gender is not binary.

While Gender Pay Gap reporting requires a comparison between men and women, we recognise that gender exists beyond a binary distinction. In our 2024 census of Bright Horizons UK colleagues, 6,097 colleagues took part (76% response rate), with 2% identifying as non-binary and some colleagues identifying as intersex.

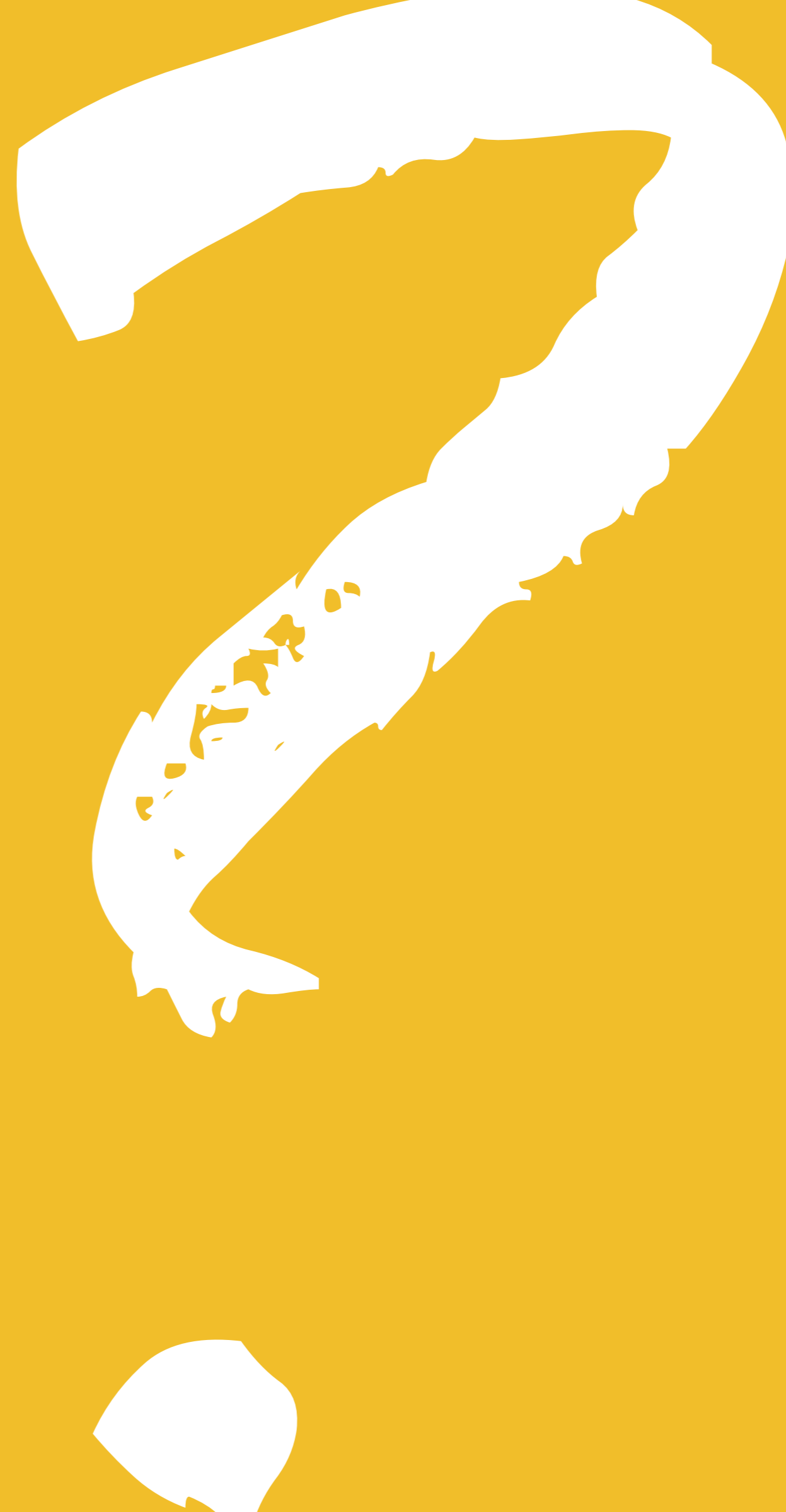


# What do our numbers mean?

Each year's Gender Pay Gap Report reflects a snapshot from the previous year. This report is based on data from 5 April 2025.

We are pleased that our 2025 median and mean gender pay gap figures are either lower than or consistent with last year's results. However, we recognise that there is a gender pay gap within Bright Horizons, with a median gap of 5.7%, and that there is more work to do to close it.

Bright Horizons remains a predominantly female workforce, reflecting both the childcare sector and our largest area of work. We continue to focus on equity, inclusion and progression across our workforce.



# Why do we have a Gender Pay Gap?

The majority of our colleagues are Early Years Practitioners working in our nurseries, where over 96% of nursery operations colleagues are female. These roles are traditionally not among the highest paid in the labour market, particularly for colleagues at the start of their careers.

Just under 5% of our overall colleague population is male. These colleagues are more likely to work in senior roles across nurseries, our Support Office and Work+Family (employer services) teams. Within our support and employer services functions, the gender profile is more mixed, with approximately 25% male colleagues. These roles often align with higher market salary expectations, including functions such as finance, legal, technology and business development.

As a result, our smaller male colleague population (4.9% across the whole workforce) has a higher average pay level than our larger female population. This position is likely to remain until more men enter front line childcare roles.

## Salary sacrifice, part-time work and bonuses.

Another factor relates to the benefits we offer to support work and family life, including salary sacrifice for nursery fees. For gender pay gap reporting, salary figures are based on gross pay before tax and after any salary sacrifice deductions, such as agreed reductions in pay made in exchange for benefits like pension contributions, childcare support, or other approved schemes.

Part time working also influences our figures. Nearly 49% of women in our workforce work part-time, compared to 20% of men. While part-time contracts reduce base salary on a pro-rata basis, this does not impact the colleague's hourly rate. Performance-related bonuses are calculated as a percentage of base salary and therefore may be lower in value for colleagues working part-time.

We have a range of bonus schemes with a range of bonus award values, this includes lower financial value, non-performance related schemes include a candidate referral bonus. This scheme is often claimed by nursery based colleagues, who are predominately female.

# What have we *done*?

Since the Gender Pay Gap Regulations were introduced, we have taken consistent action to ensure our systems are fair, inclusive and supportive of progression for colleagues of all genders.

## **Reducing bias in recruitment**

All colleagues involved in recruitment receive diversity and inclusion training designed to reduce bias. We avoid gender-coded language in job adverts wherever possible and ensure diverse representation across recruitment materials.

## **Employee experience and voice**

Our 'You're the Difference' value proposition recognises contribution, supports development and provides clarity around career pathways. Alongside this, our Be Heard colleague forum continues to play an important role in raising concerns, shaping solutions and informing policy development across the business.

## **Men in Early Years**

A contributing factor to the gender pay gap within childcare is the lower representation of men in front line Early Years roles. We continue to support our Men in Early Years strategy through targeted recruitment and an active Men in Early Years Community Group supported by colleagues and leaders.

## **Gender-inclusive family policies**

We have reviewed our family leave policies to ensure colleagues of all genders are supported and do not face career disadvantage when taking time away for family commitments. We continue to offer practical support such as back-up care, flexible working arrangements, information and events, promoted to all genders.

## **Wellbeing and professional investment**

Our wellbeing strategy supports physical, emotional and financial wellbeing, with access to Thrive, MyGym discounts, SmartHealth and trained Wellbeing Ambassadors. We are proud to be the first Early Years employer to join the Mindful Business Charter and to be members of the Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse. We continue to invest in Early Years Practitioners, ensuring all colleagues are paid above the National Living Wage regardless of age, and professionalising role titles to better reflect expertise and progression opportunities.

Formal assessment centres support fair selection, and the majority of participants have remained with the business, with many progressing into more senior roles. Our Professional Early Childhood Leaders (PECL) programme and coaching and mentoring pathways further support progression, underpinned by our Leadership Competency Framework.

## **Fair pay and transparency**

Our Remuneration Committee continues to develop and maintain a transparent pay architecture across nursery, support and employer services roles. This work supports consistency, recognises qualifications and responsibilities, and ensures pay decisions follow clear, formal procedures applied fairly across the organisation.

## **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB)**

Since launching our DEIB Council in 2022, we have embedded a dedicated DEIB function working alongside colleague-led representatives. Our ABC framework underpins this work: Authentic (sharing lived experiences), Brave (empowering voices and engaging with challenge) and Conscious (promoting inclusive language, perspectives and culture).

In 2024, we rolled out Inclusive Language training for leaders and colleagues, alongside guidance supporting trans and non-binary inclusion and menopause. We have also expanded our Community Groups, including Qmmunity (LGBTQIA+), Bright Voices (16–25) Community, Cultural Collective, Menopause Matters, Returning Parents and Men in Early Years, recognising the intersectional factors that can influence progression and pay.

## **Leadership development and progression**

We continue to invest in leadership development across all levels through our Leadership Development, Senior Leadership Development and Accelerated Development programmes. Formal assessment centres support fair selection, and the majority of participants have remained with the business, with many progressing into more senior roles. Our Professional Early Childhood Leaders (PECL) programme and coaching and mentoring pathways further support progression, underpinned by our Leadership Competency Framework.

# What will we *do*?

## We will continue to:

Attract more men into front line Early Years roles through outreach, mentoring and ambassador programmes

Strengthen our empowering culture through HEART values, recognition and community

Invest in Early Years as a profession through pay, benefits, curriculum and career clarity

Encourage gender-balanced use of flexible working and family support

Build inclusive leadership pathways and targeted development for under-represented groups

We remain committed to creating a workplace where everyone can develop, progress and make career choices that are right for them, while continuing to reduce our gender pay gap year on year.

# Our figures

The Gender Pay Gap Regulations require employers to report the number of men and women at different pay levels within their organisation. These levels are shown as four quartiles, each representing an equal quarter of the workforce ranked by hourly pay.

Our 2025 figures show that, as in previous years, a higher proportion of men are represented in more senior roles compared with women. When average salaries are compared across the organisation, this continues to influence the overall gender pay gap.

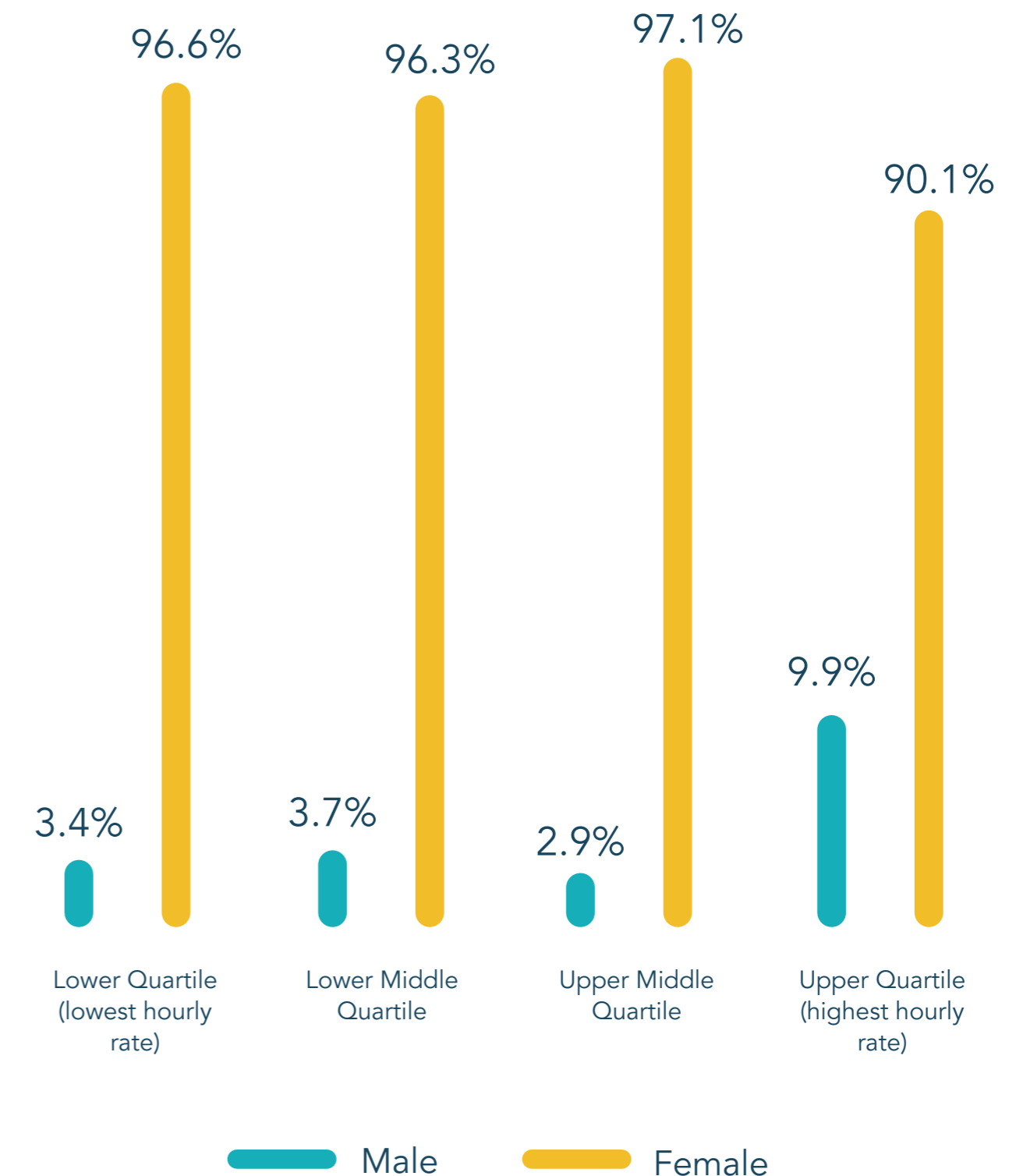
Comparing 2025 figures with 2024 highlights several shifts. In the lower quartile, male representation increased from 2.6% in 2024 to 3.4% in 2025, while female representation moved from 97.4% to 96.6%.

In the lower middle quartile, representation remained broadly stable year on year, shifting slightly from 3.8% male and 96.2% female to 3.7% male and 96.3% female in 2025.

In the upper middle quartile, male representation decreased from 5.1% in 2024 to 2.9% in 2025, while female representation increased from 95% to 97.1%. This reflects a shift towards higher female representation within these mid pay roles.

\* We confirm that Bright Horizons Family Solutions' gender pay gap calculations are accurate and meet the requirements of the regulations. All figures are representative of Bright Horizons UK

## 2025



Where a relatively small number of men are concentrated in more senior roles, this naturally results in a higher average pay level for men overall.

Employers are required to report both the average pay (mean) and the mid point (median) differences in pay and bonus outcomes between all men and all women, regardless of role, department or working pattern.

For 2025, we are pleased to report that our median gender pay gap has reduced again, falling from 7.3% in 2024 to 5.7% in 2025. The median compares the middle earning woman with the middle earning man and is often seen as a strong reflection of pay comparisons across organisations, as it is less affected by a small number of higher earners.

Our mean gender pay gap remained unchanged at 21.8% in 2025, maintaining the improvement achieved in 2024 when it reduced from 33.4% to 21.8%. The mean reflects overall average pay and can be influenced by a small number of higher salaries. This is particularly relevant in our context, where the population of male colleagues is relatively small and more likely to be represented in senior roles.

## Median pay gap

This is the difference in the mid-point rate of pay across all women and the mid-point rate of pay across all men within Bright Horizons.



## Mean pay gap

This is the difference between the average rate of pay across all women, and the average rate of pay across all men in Bright Horizons.



When comparing bonus payments across women and men, and against the previous year, the picture for 2025 is mixed.

Our median bonus gap reduced significantly, moving from 52.2% in 2024 to 32.9% in 2025. However, our mean bonus gap increased slightly from 50% in 2024 to 51.6% in 2025. This suggests that average bonus values for men remain higher and while these continue to influence the mean, the typical bonus received by women and men is now more closely aligned.

The mean bonus gap shows the difference in average bonus pay out, while the median gap reflects the middle bonus received when all bonus recipients are lined up by value. Because the population of male colleagues at Bright Horizons is relatively small, even modest changes in the number of men receiving management bonuses can have a noticeable impact on the percentages reported.

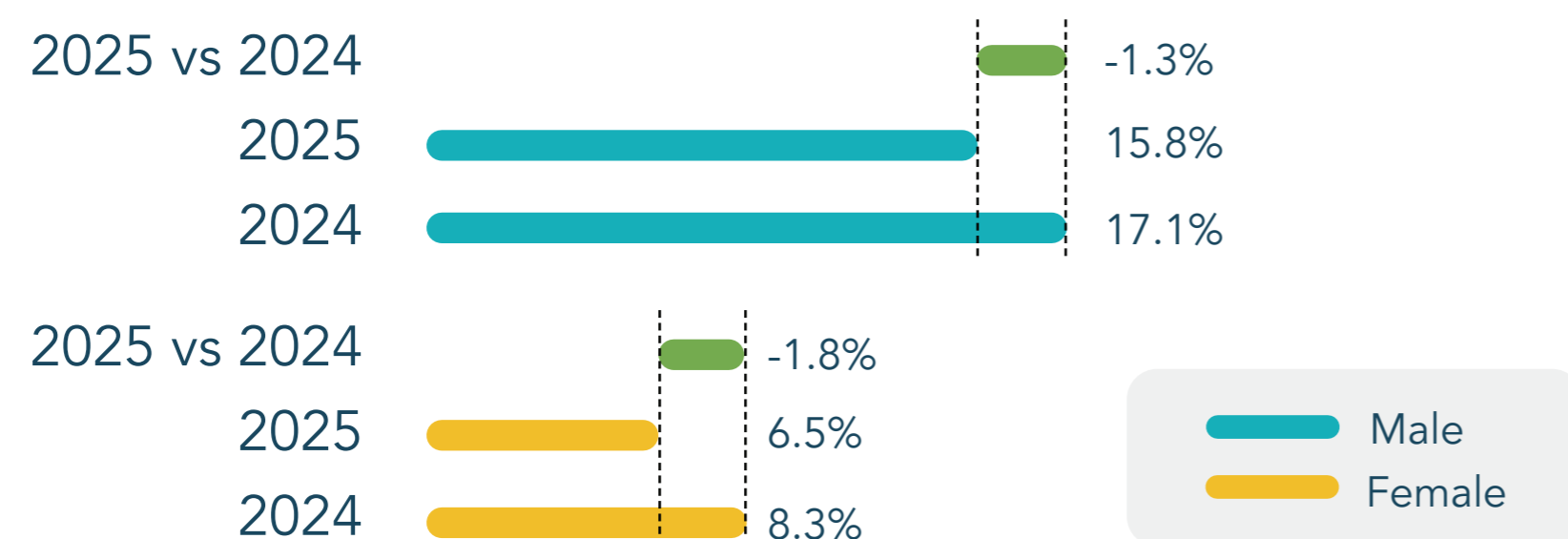
## Mean bonus gap

This is the difference in the average bonus value earned between men and women in the 12 months preceding 5th April 2025.



## Receiving bonus

This is the percentage of men and women who earned a bonus payment in the 12 months preceding 5th April 2025.



## Median bonus gap

This is the difference in the middle bonus value earned between men and women in the 12 months preceding 5th April 2025.




I confirm that Bright Horizons Family Solutions UK gender pay gap calculations are accurate and meet the requirements of the regulations. The calculations, data and assertions contained within this report have been made in line with the methodology contained in The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations.

*Phil Smith*

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