



Irish Rugby Football Union

Gender Pay Gap Report 2025



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INTRODUCTION

As Chief Executive of the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU), I am pleased to present our third Gender Pay Gap Report, covering the period from July 2024 to June 2025. This report represents another step forward in our ongoing commitment to building a more inclusive, equitable, and representative Irish Rugby community.

At the IRFU, we define success not only by what happens on the pitch but by the strength of our culture and the inclusivity we cultivate off it. Across every level of the game, our people bring passion, expertise, and teamwork to everything they do, and it is through their dedication that Irish Rugby continues to grow and thrive.

Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Action Plan 2024–2028 continues to guide our progress. It sets out clear objectives to create welcoming environments, promote fairness, and challenge discrimination throughout our organisation and the wider game. These ambitions are rooted in our guiding principles- Inspire, Connect, Thrive, which reflect our belief in rugby as a source of belonging, enjoyment, and opportunity for all.

In January 2025, we were delighted to welcome Lynne Cantwell as our new Head of Women's Strategy. Lynne's appointment marks an exciting new chapter in the evolution of women's rugby in Ireland. With her exceptional experience and deep understanding of the game, she will play a leading role in shaping a long-term vision that drives growth, sustainability, and visibility for women and girls at every level. Her leadership will be instrumental in embedding equity into the fabric of our sport, ensuring that women's rugby not only continues to thrive but also inspires future generations to see themselves in the game.

We are proud to have been recognised as a Great Place to Work for seven consecutive years, a reflection of the strong culture and supportive workplace our people have helped to build. Our partnership with the Irish Centre for Diversity remains an important part of this journey, and the Bronze and Silver accreditations we have achieved underscore our commitment to continuous improvement.

While we continue to uphold equal pay for all staff, the gender pay gap, defined as the difference in average hourly pay between male and female full-pay relevant employees, remains a key area of focus. We are committed not only to tracking this data but to taking meaningful steps to close the gap. Increasing female representation at every level, from grassroots to leadership, is central to this effort and fundamental to our long-term success.

Meaningful change takes time, but each year brings tangible progress. As we look ahead, our focus remains on creating a culture where every individual feels valued, respected, and included. Diversity is not simply a target; it is the foundation of innovation, strength, and success. Our people — the heartbeat of the IRFU — will continue to drive that progress forward.

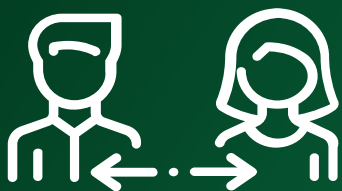


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Potts".

Kevin Potts,
Chief Executive



GENDER PAY GAP VERSUS EQUAL PAY



Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap is the difference in the average hourly pay of women compared to men, such that it captures whether women are represented evenly across an organisation. For example, if there is a greater proportion of males than females in senior level positions, the gender pay gap is typically greater.

Where a percentage difference is shown, a positive value means a percentage difference in favour of males and a negative value means a percentage difference in favour of females.

versus



Equal Pay

Equal pay refers to the pay difference between men and women who carry out the same job or perform work of equal value.

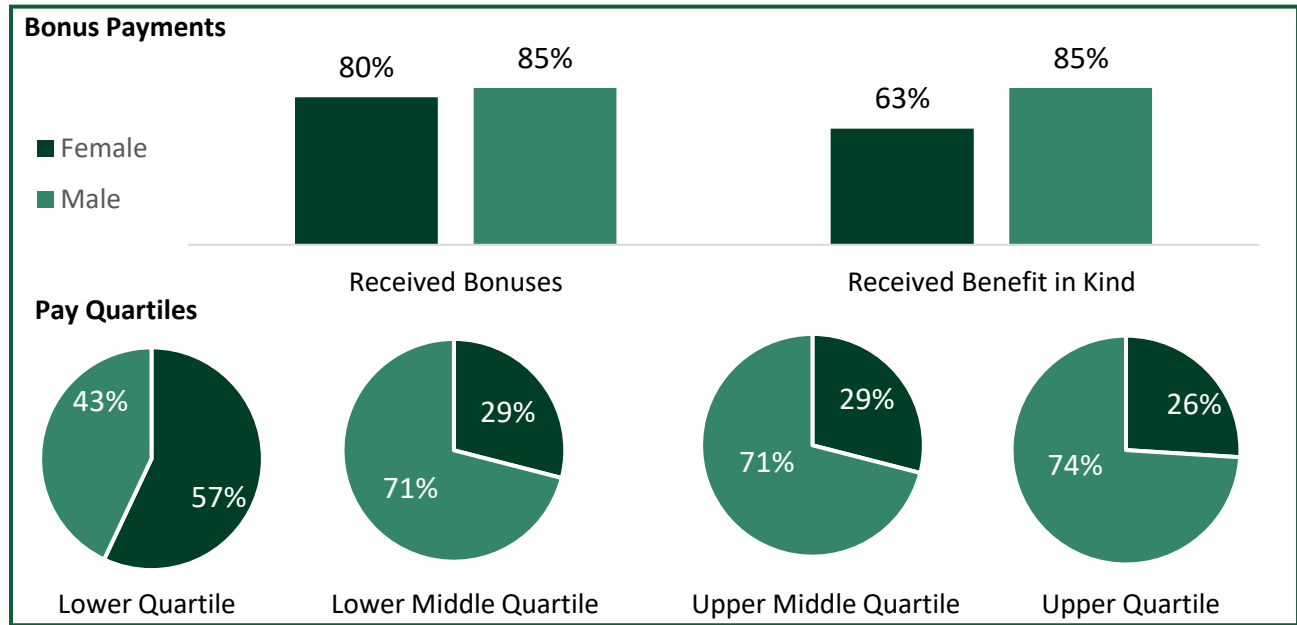
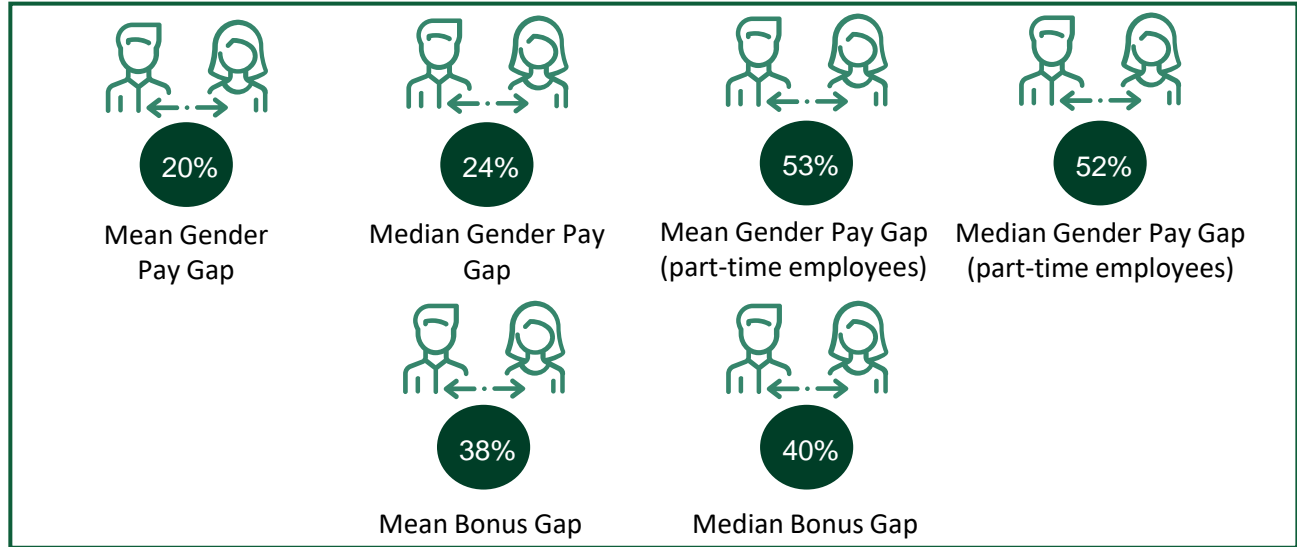
2025 DATA AT A GLANCE

The gender pay gap data we have provided below excludes specific positions as performance related payments would significantly impact the data and misrepresent the typical position across the organisation.

Gender Pay Gap Terms Explained

- “Mean” refers to the average.
- “Median” is the value in the middle of a data set.
- “Benefit in Kind” refers to any non-cash benefit of monetary value.
- “Bonus” is a sum of money added to a person's wages as a reward for good performance.

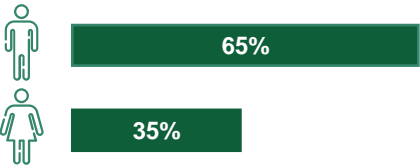
The organisational headcount equates to a total of 230 employees (65% male and 35% female) and covers the mandatory reporting period of July 2024 to June 2025.



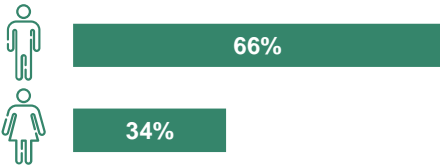
YEAR ON YEAR COMPARISON

Headcount Breakdown

2025



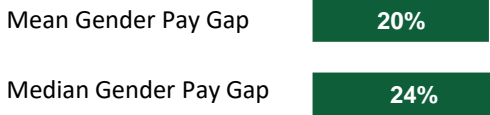
2024



Women currently make up 35% of the IRFU’s workforce, with men representing 65%. While this reflects the wider reality of operating in a traditionally male-dominated industry, the IRFU is committed to closing this gap over time. A range of initiatives focused on continued investment in the women's game and more broadly in equity, diversity and inclusion, particularly in areas and levels where women remain underrepresented. These efforts form part of the IRFU’s ongoing commitment to building a more balanced and equitable workforce for the future.

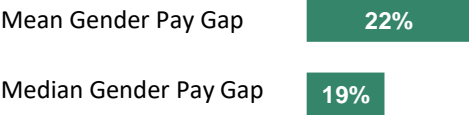
Hourly Pay

2025



Hourly Pay

2024

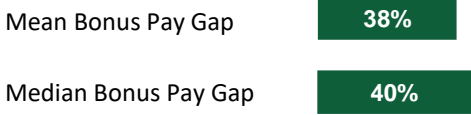


The IRFU’s reported hourly gender pay gap for 2025 shows a mean gap of 20% and a median gap of 24%. Compared to 2024, this represents a reduction in the mean gap alongside a shift in the median gap. These outcomes primarily reflect the distribution of men and women across different pay quartiles, with women more highly represented in the lower quartiles and men still holding a greater share of senior and higher-paid roles. At the same time, there are positive signs of movement, with female representation among the highest earners increasing in 2025.

It is important to note that the gender pay gap does not reflect unequal pay for equal work. Colleagues in comparable roles receive equitable pay regardless of gender. Instead, the gap reflects the current workforce composition, with a higher proportion of men in senior and higher-paid roles. Looking ahead, the IRFU remains focused on broadening female representation across all levels, with a particular emphasis on strengthening the pipeline of women into senior positions.

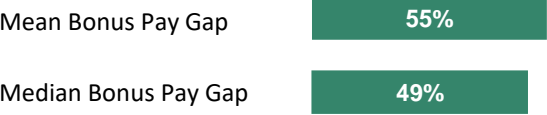
Bonus Pay

2025



Bonus Pay

2024



The IRFU’s gender bonus gap is shaped by similar factors to the hourly pay gap, with differences reflecting the current distribution of men and women across senior leadership roles. A higher proportion of men hold positions with greater variable reward potential, which influences the overall figures. However, across the wider organisation, bonus outcomes are broadly balanced, reflecting equitable pay practices and a consistent approach to reward.

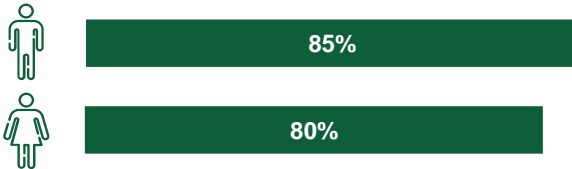


YEAR ON YEAR COMPARISON

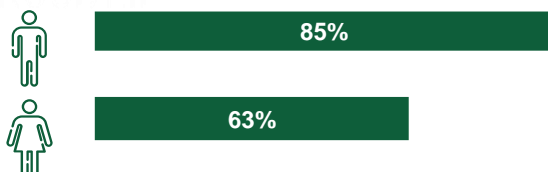
Gender Pay Gap Bonus

2025

% of males and females receiving a bonus



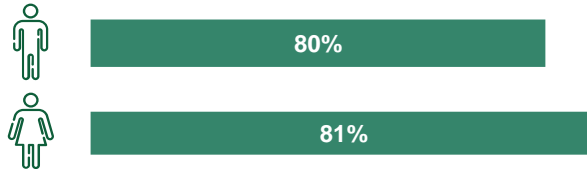
% of males and females receiving a benefit-in-kind



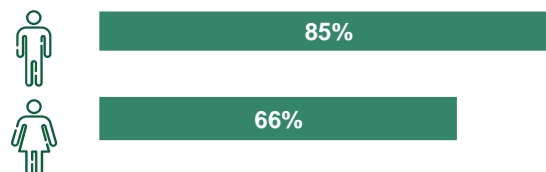
Gender Pay Gap Bonus

2024

% of males and females receiving a bonus

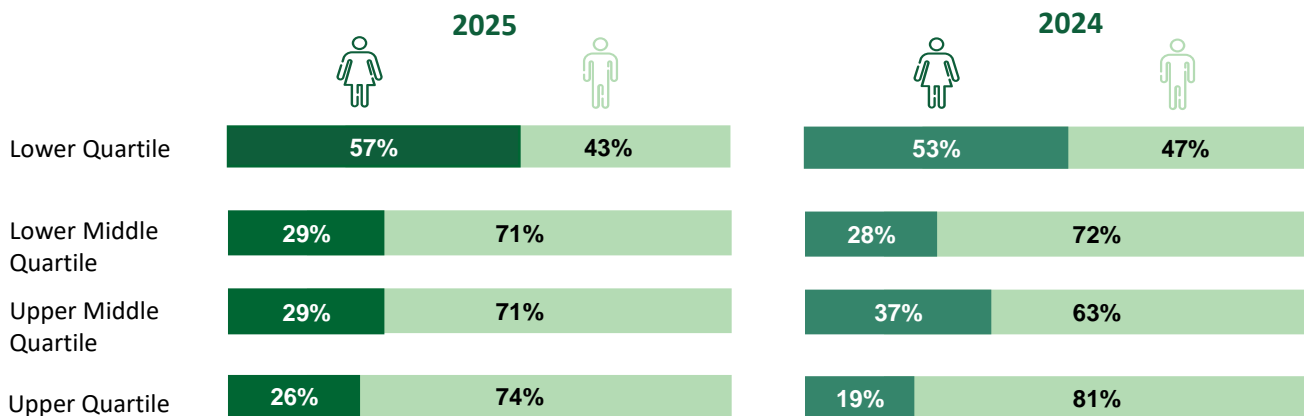


% of males and females receiving a benefit-in-kind



The distribution of benefit-in-kind (BIK) within the IRFU currently favours male employees, with 85% of men receiving BIK compared to 63% of women. This reflects the same structural factors influencing both the hourly pay and bonus gaps, additionally, some roles with benefits-in-kind (BIK) allowances, which are optional, may be less frequently taken up by women, who may prefer alternative compensation structures. The IRFU remains committed to addressing these imbalances over time by continuing to broaden female representation across all levels of the organisation.

Gender Distribution



The IRFU's gender distribution across pay quartiles highlights the structural factors influencing the overall pay gap. Representation is relatively even in the lower quartile, while the other three quartiles remain more heavily weighted towards men, particularly at the upper levels where higher-paid and senior roles are concentrated. These patterns are consistent with operating in a male-dominated industry but also demonstrate the importance of continuing to strengthen pathways for women into mid- and senior-level positions. The IRFU is actively focused on building this pipeline to ensure that future progression reflects a more balanced distribution across all levels.

2025 Action Plan – Progress

01		Continued Investment in Diversity
02		Promote Awareness of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
03		Employee Engagement
04		Continued Investment in the Women's Game
05		Continued Investment in Education and Training
06		Creating Positive, Welcoming and Inclusive Rugby Environments

The IRFU has continued to make strong progress against its commitments to advance equity, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) across the organisation and the wider game. Building on this foundation, the IRFU is embedding initiatives that address the structural drivers of gender pay gaps across the organisation, while fostering a more inclusive and representative culture.

In 2025, the organisation has focused on six priority areas:

Continued Investment in Diversity

The IRFU is working with the Irish Centre for Diversity on an ongoing basis to achieve a 'Gold' award in 2026. To support this, the IRFU are undertaking regular policy reviews and audits to ensure alignment with best practice, alongside sustained support for the IRFU Women's Network.

Promoting Awareness of ED&I

The promotion of ED&I had been enhanced significantly through Learning and Development initiatives, recognition of key milestones shared with staff via newsletters and town halls, and continued engagement with other rugby unions to exchange best practice and shape future actions. The IRFU also promotes its ED&I journey externally, including on social media. There has been further expansion of the IRFU's Women's Game Network which will continue into 2026.

Employee Engagement

The IRFU continues to build on feedback from staff, running engagement initiatives, and ensuring colleagues' voices remain central to shaping future plans. The EDI staff group have met five times over the last year focusing on the progress and development of the EDI Action plan and the staff representative group meets regularly over the course of the last year covering diverse topics driven by the employees.

Continued Investment in the Women's Game

Ongoing consultations with local clubs are helping to identify and understand the challenges facing women and girls in rugby. These insights are guiding the development and continued efforts to promote inclusive and well-equipped club environments that support participation and retention. There has been ongoing development of the strategic plan for the women's game and initiatives building momentum and raising awareness in the lead-up to Rugby World Cup 2025.

Continued Investment in Education and Training

The IRFU has continued its commitment to developing a wide range of inclusivity and diversity training for volunteers and committees across clubs and provinces, new e-learning modules with partners such as International Gay Rugby, Sporting Pride, the Irish Centre for Diversity, and the Immigrant Council of Ireland, as well as ongoing support for Spirit ED&I projects such as Pride festivals, Show Racism the Red Card, and expanded disability inclusion initiatives. The IRFU Leadership programme has a focused female accelerator element to support progression of females in the game.

Creating Positive, Welcoming and Inclusive Rugby Environments

Supported by the implementation of ED&I Action Plans across the whole game and guidance to clubs on leadership and governance to strengthen equity and representation, the IRFU is consistently enhancing the culture within club environments.

Looking further ahead, the IRFU's Strategy to 2028 reinforces these commitments by setting clear long-term goals for ED&I. Together, these actions demonstrate the IRFU's determination not only to address gender pay gap figures, but also to actively shape a fairer, more inclusive workplace and sporting environment. They set a clear direction for progress year on year, ensuring consistent focus, measurable impact, and alignment with the IRFU's broader People & Culture and Rugby strategies.

2026 ACTION PLAN

The IRFU recognises that its staff come from diverse backgrounds, with varying experiences and needs. We are committed to ensuring diversity & inclusion is embedded into our day-to-day working practices. The IRFU actively promotes fairness, respect, equality, diversity inclusion and engagement and is committed to continuous improvement.

1

Continued Investment in Diversity

The IRFU, in order to maintain and continue our investment in diversity, will:

- Build on the successful achievement of the Investors in Diversity Silver Award in 2023 by targeting the achievement of the Irish Centre for Diversity Gold Award in 2026
- Annually review our policies in order to ensure that we fully align with current best practice and legislation. While the IRFU is only obliged to update our policies every two years, we are dedicated to showing continued investment and commitment to maintaining positive working practices;
- Continue to champion the Women's Network within the IRFU, which will continue to support and empower female employees to advance and navigate their careers
- Invest in neurodiversity awareness, we aim to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all individuals

2

Promote Awareness of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The IRFU will continue to increase awareness of Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity through learning and development, clear processes and the sharing and monitoring of diversity targets that will embed a positive culture of EDI throughout all of the IRFU including:

- Continuing the rollout of relevant E-learning modules and other learning initiatives that will include topics such as diversity and unconscious bias for all IRFU staff;
- An Equity, Diversity and Inclusion group was established in 2024, which will continue their meetings and initiatives to further understand the experience and culture within the organisation;
- Continue to acknowledge and recognise key diversity milestones achieved through regular and targeted communication to all of our staff via our newsletter and town hall meetings;
- Continue to encourage Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity to be an agenda point of discussion with representatives from various rugby unions to inform future actions, share best practice and learnings;
- Continue to promote internal IRFU milestones within the ED&I space on external platforms, including on social media platforms such as LinkedIn; and
- Continue the female accelerator course which is designed to support women at representative levels of the game to move into key decision-making and senior leadership roles.
- The IRFU are committed to ensuring we are aligned to the legislation requirements for the EU Pay Transparency.

3

Employee Engagement

The IRFU are committed to continuous engagement and seeking of feedback from their employees.

- The IRFU are committed to gaining insight from employees which will be used to drive change within the organisation across all aspects of the employee lifecycle, including aspects such as EDI;
- The IRFU will continue to run a staff engagement group which hosts team huddles that discuss a range of topics in relation to employee voice and wellbeing; and
- The IRFU will build on feedback from Great Place to Work and Irish Centre for Diversity Silver Award survey to continue to embed a culture of inclusivity for all employees.



2026 ACTION PLAN

While not directly impacting the gender pay gap data, we believe the following actions will empower our organisation to influence the position of women in rugby and to create a more equitable and inclusive community across the whole of the game that is representative of Irish society.

4

Continued Focus on the Acceleration of the Women's Game

The IRFU produced its Strategy in June 2025 that includes the women's game as one of its core pillars, the following targets have been set to create inclusive experiences for all involved:

- Create an attractive pathway for female coaches/match officials and volunteers in the women's game;
- Drive a club ethos and culture that will accelerate the development of the women's game through leadership and mentoring programmes;
- Work towards 40% female governance representation at provincial and club level, ensuring women are included as key decision makers in the club;
- Create dynamic marketing campaigns with a view to lifting the profile of women in rugby;
- Continue the IRFU Club Facility Grant to assist clubs to create inclusive spaces;
- Continue the expansion of the Women's Rugby Network to provide support to those working in the female game; and
- To upskill coaches and volunteers with female specific sports information and lead out on period positive and breast health initiatives.
- Ongoing efforts to strengthen succession planning and support the advancement of women through targeted development initiatives

5

Continued Investment in Education and Training

The IRFU will build on its education and training programme to ensure coaches and volunteers are skilled in the area of EDI.

- Inclusivity & Diversity training to expand to all volunteers and committees across the clubs and provinces;
- Continued work with International Gay Rugby, Sporting Pride, Irish Centre for Diversity and Immigrant Council of Ireland to provide e-learning to supplement D&I module; and
- Continued investment in the Spirit EDI projects, such as Pride festivals, Show Racism the Red Card and expansion of the disability projects throughout our clubs.
- Continue strengthening our investment in Leadership and Management Development through strategic partnerships with University College Dublin, fostering a culture of excellence and continuous growth supporting career pathways for males and females within the organisation.
- Continue to invest in Female Leadership Development by actively supporting women to participate in high-impact leadership courses, fostering growth, confidence, and representation at all levels.

6

Creating Positive, Welcoming and Inclusive Rugby Environments

The IRFU Strategy has set out the following targets to 2028:

- Implement Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action plans for the whole of the game to complement the EDI Policy in place for staff; and
- Provide Leadership guidance and support to our clubs to enhance governance structures to create an equitable game for all.
- Continue collaborating with charities through initiatives such as audio descriptions, work access, and communication boards throughout stadiums and clubs fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels supported and empowered.

