



# Summary of Equal Pay Audit 2025

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## About SQA's equal pay audit

As part of its Public Sector Equality Duties, SQA is required to publish its gender pay gap information externally every two years. We also publish this information internally every year. The last external publication was in April 2023. The Equality and Human Rights Commission recommends that differences of 5% or more between male and female staff within the current year, or any recurring differences of 3% or more from year to year, merit further investigation. In line with previous reporting and based on current practice, SQA's equal pay audit is based on staff' hourly salary rather than their annual salary.

We also publish our disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation pay gap information as part of our equal pay audit to promote best practice and support our equal pay statement.

This is a summary of the equal pay audit as at 30 November 2024. In line with best practice, where there are less than 20 staff, we have opted not to provide data to maintain the anonymity of staff. In tables of data, we have indicated this with an asterisk (\*).

## Pay gap calculations

All of our pay gaps are calculated in line with best practice. The salary used for all calculations is the full-time equivalent hourly salary, plus any allowances such as market pay supplements.

### Mean

The mean is calculated by adding up the salary of all relevant staff. and dividing the figure by the number of staff.

The mean is worked out like this:

$$\frac{x + x + x}{n}$$

The sum of staff' hourly rate of pay (x) is divided by the number of staff (n).

## Median

The median is the figure that falls in the middle of a range when the salaries of all relevant staff are lined up from smallest to largest. The median is worked out like this:



## Pay quartiles

Pay quartiles are calculated by listing each staff' hourly pay from highest to lowest, before dividing into four equally sized groups.

## Gender pay gap

### What is the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between men and women in the organisation. A gender pay gap above zero will show that on average, men earn more, while a pay gap below zero shows that women, on average, earn more.

Equal pay is different from the gender pay gap. Equal pay deals with pay differences between men and women who are doing the same jobs, similar jobs, or work of equal value.

### Gender profile

This report uses HMRC gender for reporting purposes except where an individual has declared a gender identity of either 'Other' or 'Prefer not to say.' We have carried out gender pay gap calculations based on an employee population of 1021 individuals. Of these, 640 are female and 381 are male. The gender

distribution for the organisation shown below has remained consistent over the last four years and remains in line with last year’s internally published 2024 equal pay audit (62.9% female and 37.1% male)

Distribution by gender

Female	Male
62.7%	37.3%

The gender pay gap at a glance

Mean Gender Pay Gap

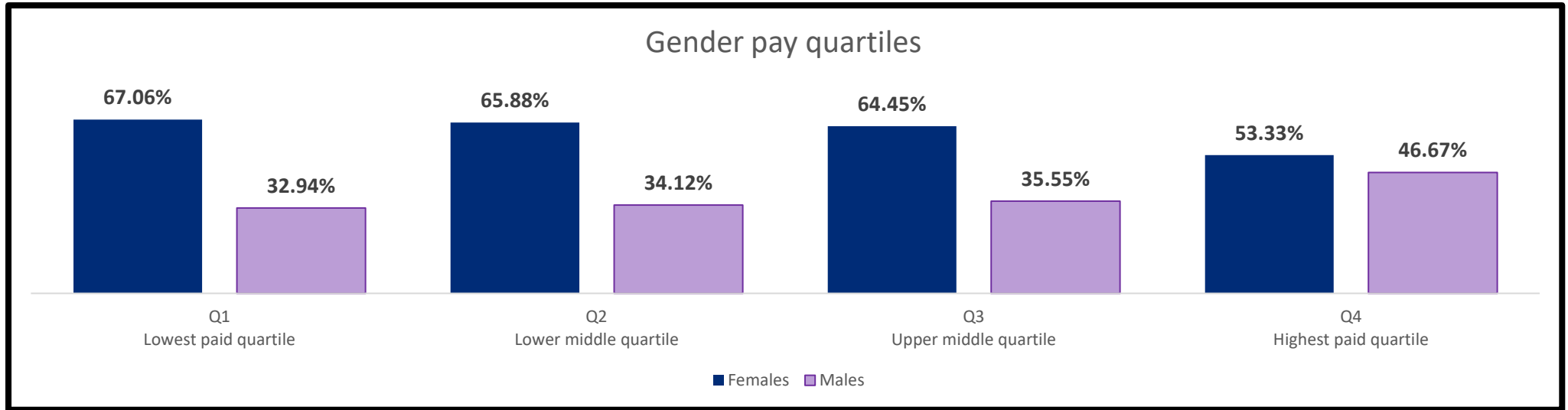
6.2%

2024: 4.9%

Median Gender Pay Gap

7.5%

2024: 4.8%



### Understanding the gap

The average hourly female salary is 93.8% of the average hourly male salary. The average female hourly salary is £22.82, and the average male hourly salary is £24.33.

This is the first time in five years that the mean gender pay gap has increased— it is up by 1.3% from 4.9% last year.

The median female salary is 92.5% of the median male salary. The median female hourly salary is £22.52, and the median male salary is £24.35.

The analysis of our gender pay gap figures tells us that our gender pay gap as of November 2024 is due to a combination of the following:

- ◆ A smaller proportion of female staff in the highest-paid quartile, which includes grade 8 to EMT roles, along with a 2.47% reduction in the percentage of females within this quartile.
- ◆ A higher proportion of male staff (24.42%) within the Business Systems Directorate, where some roles attract a market supplement due to recruitment challenges. However, 35.86% of our Business Systems roles are held by women, significantly exceeding the 23% average for women in technology roles across Scotland, as reported in the British Computing Society's *BCS Diversity Report 2023: Women in IT*.
- ◆ A higher percentage of females were hired between 1 December 2023 and 30 November 2024 and are on the minimum pay point for their respective grade.

We believe the last bullet point is the main reason for the short-term widening of the gender pay gap where a greater number of females have joined the organisation on the minimum of their respective pay grade in line with pay policy.



While our gender pay gap has increased, we believe it is useful to compare these figures with those outside of SQA to provide context. The [Office for National Statistics' Gender pay gap in the UK: 2024 statistical bulletin](#) (accessed 23 January 2025) notes that the average gender pay gap among all UK employees is 13.1%.

In addition, the most recent data from [Close the Gap](#) (accessed 23 January 2025) indicates that the gender pay gap in Scotland has widened slightly by 0.8 percentage points between 2021 and 2022. This widening means that the gender pay gap in Scotland remains stubbornly in place, currently sitting at 10.9 percent.

To identify any pay gaps of 5% or more, or any recurring differences of 3% or more between staff performing work of equal value, we have analysed a breakdown of grades across the organisation (based on average hourly salary). The breakdown has been split into full-time and part-time staff by grade, as shown in the tables below.

**Mean gender pay gap for full-time staff by SQA grade to EMT: Percentage of male and female full-time staff, average hourly salary by SQA grade/gender and respective average gender pay gap at 30 November 2024**

Grade	Number of staff	% female	% male	Average hourly salary (£)	Average hourly salary female (£)	Average hourly salary male (£)	Female hourly salary as a % of male salary	FT pay gap	Change from previous report
1	*	*	*	£13.25	£13.25	£13.25	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
3	35	68.57%	31.43%	£13.95	£13.89	£14.10	98.50%	1.50%	0.90%
4	146	62.33%	37.67%	£15.41	£15.36	£15.49	99.14%	0.86%	0.31%
5	109	62.39%	37.61%	£17.34	£17.28	£17.44	99.06%	0.94%	-0.16%
6	190	66.32%	33.68%	£21.30	£21.29	£21.31	99.93%	0.07%	1.87%
7	192	61.46%	38.54%	£26.08	£26.00	£26.21	99.21%	0.79%	-0.65%
8	197	53.81%	46.19%	£30.32	£30.19	£30.47	99.08%	0.92%	-0.55%
HoS†	34	50.00%	50.00%	£38.19	£37.50	£38.87	96.49%	3.51%	0.55%
EMT†	*	*	*	*	*	*	106.47%	-6.47%	5.16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>916</b>	<b>60.59%</b>	<b>39.41%</b>	<b>£23.48</b>	<b>£22.99</b>	<b>£24.23</b>	<b>94.87%</b>	<b>5.13%</b>	<b>1.55%</b>

Note: SQA does not have a grade 2 within its current pay and grading structure.

†HoS is the abbreviation used for Head of Service, and EMT is the abbreviation used for Executive Management Team (which includes Directors and the Chief Executive).

There are currently no pay gaps of 5% or more or any recurring differences of 3% or more among full-time staff by grade. However, there is an overall 5.13% pay gap for full-time staff, which is slightly below the overall gender pay gap and 6.2% less than the mean full-time pay gap of 7.0% noted in the Office for National Statistics' Gender pay gap in the UK: 2024 [statistical bulletin](#) (accessed 23 January 2025). We believe this is due to the reasons noted above in the explanation of the overall mean pay gap.

Our full-time workforce is predominantly female at all grades apart from head of service, where there is an even split between female and male staff.

**Mean gender pay gap for part-time staff by SQA grade: Percentage of male and female part-time staff and average hourly salary by SQA grade/gender and respective average gender pay gap at 30 November 2024**

Grade	Number of staff	% female	% male	Average hourly salary (£)	Average hourly salary female (£)	Average hourly salary male (£)	Female hourly salary as a % of male salary	PT pay gap	Change from previous report
1	*	*	*	£13.25	£13.25	£13.25	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
3	*	*	*	£14.27	£14.40	£13.52	106.52%	-6.52%	N/A
4	18	94.44%	5.56%	£15.87	£15.87	£16.01	99.11%	0.89%	3.12%
5	*	100.00%	0.00%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
6	22	90.91%	9.09%	£22.05	£22.13	£21.32	103.80%	-3.80%	-4.01%
7	13	84.62%	15.38%	£26.62	£26.46	£27.48	96.29%	3.71%	2.59%
8	28	60.71%	39.29%	£29.98	£30.20	£29.64	101.88%	-1.88%	-0.26%
HoS	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>80.95%</b>	<b>19.05%</b>	<b>£22.55</b>	<b>£21.72</b>	<b>£26.09</b>	<b>83.27%</b>	<b>16.73%</b>	<b>0.44%</b>

The number of staff working part-time has reduced by 21.6% or 29 individuals between 30 November 2023 and 30 November 2024. 80.95% of part-time staff are female. The highest number of part-time staff remain at grades 8, 6 and 4.

There are no recurring differences of 3% or more among part-time staff by grade. However, there is an overall part-time pay gap of 16.73%, which is a 0.44% increase since last year's report. On further investigation, the part-time gender pay gap is due to a combination of factors similar to previous reporting periods. These include:

- ◆ 65.88% of female part-time staff work in roles that are grade 6 or below.
- ◆ 70.00% of male staff working part-time are in grade 7 to Head of Service roles versus only 34.12% of female part-time staff working at these grades, and there was a 30.59% decrease in the number of females working part-time at these grades between 30 November 2023 and 30 November 2024 due to the ending of fixed-term contracts.
- ◆ 15.00% of males working part-time within grades 7 to Head of Service are in Business Systems roles which attract a market supplement compared to only 1.18% of females working part-time in these grades.

Our part-time gender pay gap is 5.37% less than the 22.1% mean part-time pay gap noted by Close the Gap ([Close the Gap | Blog | How has the gender pay gap changed: what the statistics tell us accessed 23 January 2025](#)).

## Mean gender pay gap for full-time staff by age group: Percentage of full-time male and female staff and average hourly salary by age/gender and respective average gender pay gap at 30 November 2024

This table has been updated since the last external publication of this report to reflect age brackets used by ONS and within our workforce equality monitoring report. It looks at the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings as a percentage of men's hourly earnings based on age group. These were calculated using data for full-time staff only — this is a more consistent basis than all employees for measuring differences in hourly pay.

Age-group	Number of staff	% female	% male	Average hourly salary (£)	Average hourly salary female (£)	Average hourly salary male (£)	Female hourly salary as a % of male salary	Full-time gender pay gap by age group	Change from previous report
16 to 24	20	50.00%	50.00%	£15.20	£16.08	£14.33	112.24%	-12.24%	-0.31%
25 to 29	115	67.83%	32.17%	£17.77	£17.68	£17.97	98.40%	1.60%	1.26%
30 to 34	95	64.21%	35.79%	£19.90	£19.73	£20.19	97.69%	2.31%	5.57%
35 to 39	116	57.76%	42.24%	£22.79	£22.79	£22.79	99.99%	0.01%	3.02%
40 to 44	136	61.76%	38.24%	£23.88	£24.00	£23.68	101.33%	-1.33%	-2.70%
45 to 49	138	55.07%	44.93%	£24.73	£24.76	£24.69	100.30%	-0.30%	3.49%
50 to 54	106	60.38%	39.62%	£27.94	£25.97	£30.93	83.96%	16.04%	4.99%
55 to 59	110	62.73%	37.27%	£27.31	£26.35	£28.93	91.06%	8.94%	-4.53%
60 to 64	71	60.56%	39.44%	£24.87	£24.05	£26.11	92.10%	7.90%	6.87%
65 +	*	*	*	£24.87	£24.05	£26.11	92.10%	7.90%	-22.49%

For employees under 40 years of age, the gender pay gap for full-time workers is 1.6%, compared to a pay gap of 5.7% for employees aged 40 and over. This aligns with ONS data trends for full-time employees — noting the gender pay gap is larger for employees aged 40 years and over than those under 40 years. ([Gender Pay Gap in the UK: 2024 - Office for National Statistics](#), accessed 27 January 2025).

We believe the larger pay gaps in age groups 50 to 54, 55 to 59, 60-64 and 65 + are due to a combination of:

- ♦ a higher percentage of males at grades 7 and above within these age groups
- ♦ more male staff than female staff receive market supplements within these age groups as there are more male than female staff within Business Systems, where certain roles are assigned market supplements

## Disability pay gap

As part of the equal pay audit, we have also looked at the salary of those staff in the organisation who have declared a disability.

### What is the disability pay gap?

The disability pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between disabled and non-disabled staff at SQA. A disability pay gap above zero will show that on average, non-disabled staff earn more while a pay gap below zero shows that disabled staff, on average, earn more.

### Disability profile

The table below illustrates the ratio of disabled to non-disabled staff across SQA in all grades. However, our disability completion rate is not 100% (currently it stands at 80.11%); any individuals who have not declared they have a disability have been excluded from our calculations. The percentage of staff who have declared a disability has increased slightly compared to both last year’s internally published 2024 equal pay audit and our previous externally published 2023 Equal Pay Audit.

Disabled	Non-disabled	Prefer not to say	No data provided
10.3%	63.5%	6.3%	19.9%

For our mean and median disability pay gap and distribution across pay quartiles, we have chosen to use the same calculation methodology as for our gender pay gap reporting.

The disability pay gap at a glance

Mean Disability Pay Gap

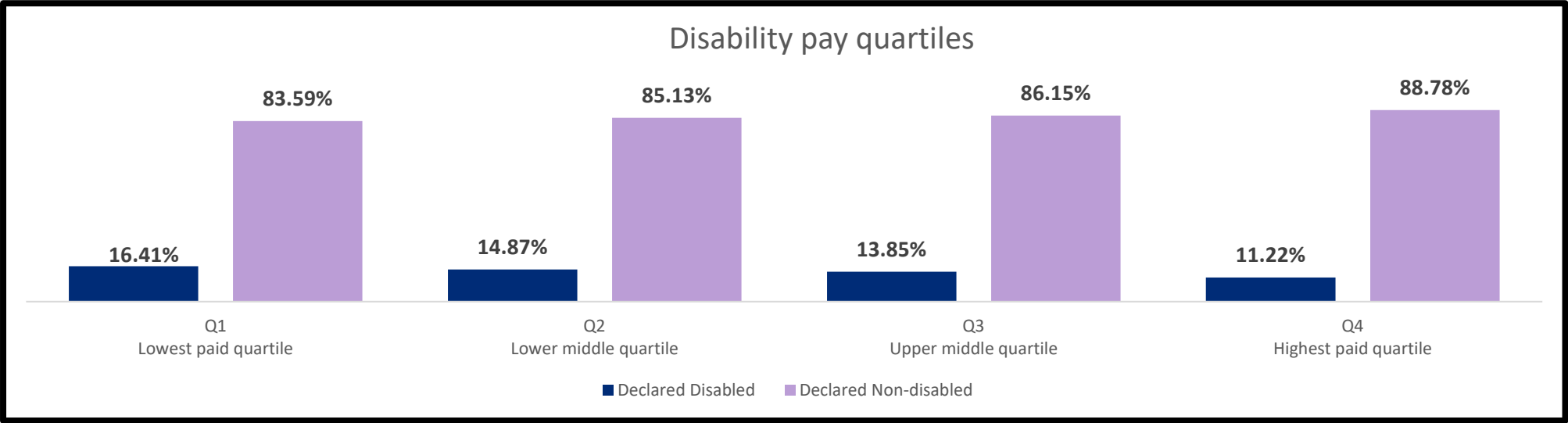
4.9%

2024: 4.1%

Median Disability Pay Gap

7.5%

2024: 4.8%



## Understanding the gap

There has been an increase in the mean disability pay gap of 2.7%. However, although the pay gap has increased, we are pleased to report that the proportion of disabled staff who have started has increased by 3.1% (from 4.1% December 2021 to November 2022 to 7.2% December 2023 to November 2024). The mix of newly hired or promoted employees (in line with the organisation's policy that an individual will normally be appointed to the minimum of the pay band) means that 10.9% of disabled staff are currently on the minimum of their respective pay bands.

The average hourly salary of those declaring a disability is 92.5% of those declaring no disability. The average hourly salary for declared disabled is £23.03, and the average hourly salary for declared non-disabled is £24.22.

The median salary of those declaring a disability is 95.2% of the median non-disabled colleague's salary. The median salary for declared disabled is £22.52, and the median salary for declared non-disabled is £24.35.

Although we realise there is still work to do to reduce the disability pay gap, we are encouraged that we are below the 17.2% disability pay gap noted by the TUC ([Disability pay and employment gaps report](#) accessed 28 January 2025). In addition, the Office for National Statistics indicated that the median disability pay gap for the UK in 2023 was 12.7%. ([Disability pay gaps in the UK: 2014 to 2023](#) accessed 28 January 2025).

We also examined the disability pay gap by sex. The female disability pay gap (median hourly salary of female disabled staff compared to non-disabled female staff) is 0.0% and the male disability pay gap (median hourly salary of disabled male staff compared to non-disabled male staff) is 14.3%. This mirrors the trend noted by the Office for National Statistics, which indicates that the disability pay gap has consistently been wider for disabled men than for disabled women, with the median pay gap for disabled women being 9.6% and 15.5% for disabled men. ([Disability pay gaps in the UK: 2014 to 2023](#) accessed 28 January 2025)

We believe the 14.3% disability pay gap for males is due to there being a larger proportion of non-disabled males in grades 8 and above (38.5%) compared to disabled males in grades 8 and above (22.22%) and to the proportion of non-disabled males who are on point 0 (6.64%) compared to the proportion of disabled males on point 0 (13.33%).



**Mean disability pay gap for all staff who have disclosed disability status by SQA grade: Percentage of disabled and non-disabled staff, average hourly salary by SQA grade/disability status and respective average disability pay gap at 30 November 2024**

Grade	Number of staff	% disabled	% non-disabled	Average hourly salary (£)	Average hourly salary disabled (£)	Average hourly salary non-disabled (£)	Disabled hourly salary as a % of non-disabled salary	Disability pay gap	Change from previous report
1	*	*	*	£13.24	£13.24	£13.24	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
3	23	*	*	£14.07	£14.25	£14.03	101.50%	-1.50%	1.80%
4	106	*	*	£15.59	£15.46	£15.61	99.05%	0.95%	1.09%
5	90	*	*	£17.39	£17.43	£17.38	100.30%	-0.30%	1.86%
6	169	13.02%	86.98%	£21.43	£21.47	£21.42	100.20%	-0.20%	-1.49%
7	170	14.12%	85.88%	£26.15	£25.90	£26.19	98.91%	1.09%	-0.12%
8	188	11.70%	88.30%	£30.36	£30.25	£30.38	99.56%	0.44%	-0.52%
HoS	32	*	*	£38.55	£39.05	£38.47	101.51%	-1.51%	-0.07%
<b>Total</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>14.08%</b>	<b>85.92%</b>	<b>£24.05</b>	<b>£23.03</b>	<b>£24.22</b>	<b>95.11%</b>	<b>4.89%</b>	<b>2.39%</b>

\*Denotes where there are fewer than 20 staff who have identified as disabled. We have redacted the numbers to protect the identity of our staff.

There are currently no pay gaps of 5% or more or any recurring differences of 3% or more among disabled staff by grade.

## Ethnicity pay gap

As part of the equal pay audit, we have also looked at the pay gap between white and minority ethnic staff.

### What is the ethnicity pay gap?

The ethnicity pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between minority ethnic staff and white staff at SQA. An ethnicity pay gap above zero will show that on average, white staff earn more while a pay gap below zero shows that minority ethnic staff, on average, earn more.

### Ethnicity profile

The table below illustrates the ratio of minority ethnic staff compared to staff who are of white ethnicity across SQA in all grades. However, our ethnicity completion rate is not 100% (currently it stands at 90.90%). Any individuals who have not provided information about their ethnicity have been excluded from our calculations. Therefore, the ethnicity pay gap may not be a true reflection.

Minority Ethnic	White	Prefer not to say	No data provided
4.3%	84.1%	2.5%	9.1%

Ethnicity pay gap at a glance

Mean Ethnicity Pay Gap

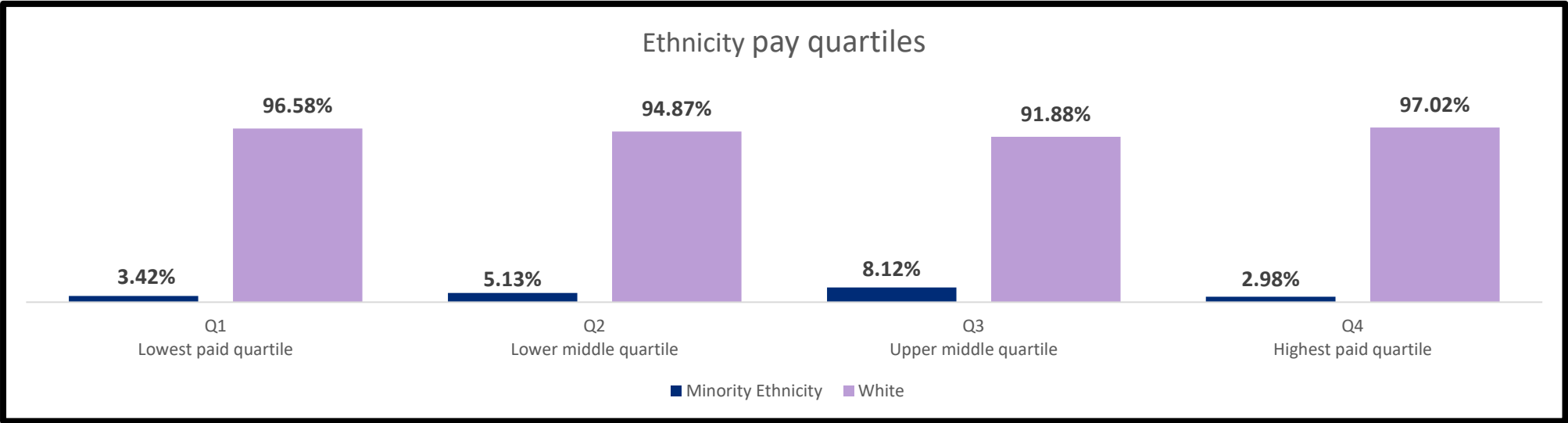
0.2%

2024: -0.2%

Median Ethnicity Pay Gap

-6.6%

2024: -5.0%



## Understanding the gap

For staff who have declared as minority ethnic, the average individual hourly salary is £23.36, and for staff who have declared their ethnicity as white, the average individual's hourly salary is £23.42. The average hourly salary of minority ethnic staff is therefore 99.8% of the average hourly salary of those of white ethnicity.

There has been a 0.4% increase in our ethnicity pay gap this year. We believe this is due to a slight decrease (0.42%) in the minority ethnic staff in the highest-paid quartile. As minority ethnic employees account for only 4.3% of the workforce (small sample size) this will result in greater volatility in the results of the ethnicity pay gap.

The median annual salary for minority ethnic staff is 106.6% of the median salary for staff of white ethnicity. The median annual salary for minority ethnic staff is £24.00, and the median salary for staff of white ethnicity is £22.52. There has been a 1.6% decrease in the median pay gap from our internally published 2024 Equal Pay Audit.

The area of ethnicity pay gap information is a complex one. We would like to acknowledge that for each minority ethnic group, there is a pay gap, and that the experience of one group can often be different to that of another. However, we are unable to publish ethnicity pay gaps by individual minority ethnic groups due to the small sample size of these individual groups.

**Mean ethnicity pay gap for all staff who have disclosed ethnicity by SQA grade: percentage of minority ethnic and white staff, average hourly salary by SQA grade/ minority ethnic status and respective average ethnicity pay gap at 30 November 2022**

Grade	Number of staff	% minority ethnic	% white	Average hourly salary (£)	Average hourly salary minority ethnic (£)	Average hourly salary white (£)	Minority ethnic hourly salary as a % of white salary	Ethnicity pay gap	Change from previous report
1	*	*	100.00%	£13.25	N/A	£11.43	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	36	*	100.00%	£14.05	N/A	£14.05	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	151	*	*	£15.47	£15.42	£15.47	99.64%	0.36%	-0.13%
5	105	*	*	£17.36	£17.39	£17.36	100.13%	-0.13%	-1.08%
6	195	*	*	£21.30	£21.11	£21.31	99.07%	0.93%	-1.49%
7	194	*	*	£26.09	£25.09	£26.16	95.91%	4.09%	-0.92%
8	208	*	*	£30.30	£29.57	£30.34	97.45%	2.55%	2.25%
HoS	32	*	*	£38.44	£36.57	£38.50	94.98%	5.02%	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>4.91%</b>	<b>95.09%</b>	<b>£23.15</b>	<b>£23.36</b>	<b>£23.14</b>	<b>100.97%</b>	<b>-0.97%</b>	<b>0.65%</b>

\*Denotes where there are fewer than 20 staff who have identified as minority ethnic. We have redacted the numbers to protect the identity of our staff.

There is one recurring difference of more than 3% at grade 7 and a difference of greater than 5% at Head of Service. The overall pay gap is addressed earlier in this section. The recurrence at grade 7 and the pay gap of greater than 5% at Head of Service is due to a larger proportion of white staff receiving market supplements for roles where there are recruitment challenges.

# Sexual orientation pay gap

## What is the sexual orientation pay gap?

The sexual orientation pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between heterosexual and LGBQ+ staff (encompassing individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning and describing their sexual orientation in another way). A sexual orientation pay gap above zero will show that on average, heterosexual staff earn more, whilst a pay gap below zero shows that LGBQ+ staff, on average, earn more.

## Sexual orientation profile

The table below illustrates the ratio of staff identifying as LGBQ+ compared to staff who have identified as heterosexual across SQA in all grades. However, our sexual orientation completion rate is not 100% (currently it stands at 81.8%). Any individuals with undisclosed sexual orientation are excluded from our calculations. Therefore, the sexual orientation pay gap may not be a true reflection.

LGBQ+	Heterosexual	Prefer not to say	No data provided
6.9%	68.4%	7.7%	17.0%

Sexual orientation pay gap at a glance

Mean Sexual Orientation Pay Gap

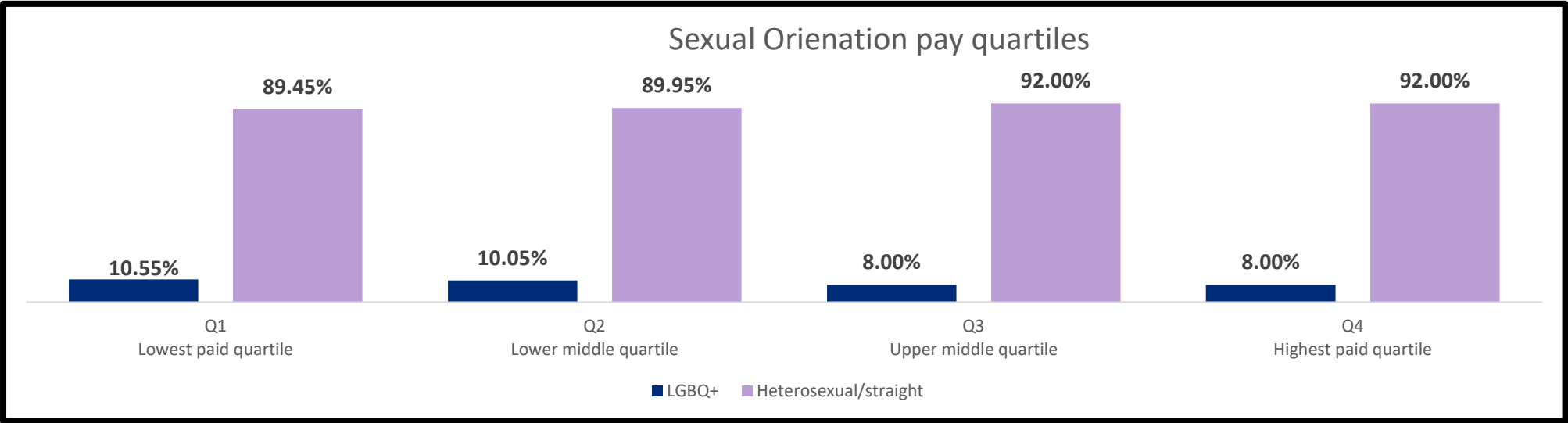
4.9%

2025: 2.4%

Median Sexual Orientation Pay Gap

6.6%

2024: 5.0%



## Understanding the gap

The average hourly LGBQ+ salary is 95.1% of the average hourly heterosexual salary. The average LGBQ+ hourly salary is £22.77, and the average heterosexual hourly salary is £23.96. This is a 2.5% increase in the sexual orientation pay gap published in our internally published 2024 Equal Pay Audit Report.

As LGBQ+ staff account for only 7.56% of the workforce (small sample size) this will result in greater volatility in the results of the sexual orientation pay gap. The mix of newly hired or promoted employees (in line with the organisation's policy that an individual will normally be appointed to the minimum of the pay band) means that 15.1% of LGBQ+ staff are currently on the minimum of their respective pay bands.

The median LGBQ+ salary is 93.4% of the median heterosexual salary. The median LGBQ+ hourly salary is £21.21, and the median heterosexual salary is £22.72.

It is useful to compare these figures with those outside of SQA to provide context. A 2019 survey conducted by YouGov in partnership with LinkedIn and LGBTQ organisation Black Pride found that there is a pay gap equivalent to 16% in the UK for the LGBQ+ population. No more recent data has been published.

To identify any pay gaps of 5% or more, or any recurring differences of 3% or more between staff performing work of equal value, a breakdown of grades has been analysed across the organisation (based on average hourly salary). The breakdown has been split by grade, as exhibited in the table below. Data on our Executive Management Team (EMT) which includes the Chief Executive and Director level staff has not been disclosed in the sexual orientation pay gap grade split due to the size of this population and to ensure compliance with GDPR legislation protecting individuals' personal information.

We would like to acknowledge that the experience of one group can often be different to that of another. However, we are unable to publish sexual orientation pay gaps by individual sexual orientation groups due to the small sample size of these individual groups.



**Mean sexual orientation pay gap for all staff who have disclosed sexual orientation by SQA grade: Percentage of heterosexual and LGBQ+ staff, average hourly salary by SQA grade/sexual orientation and respective average sexual orientation pay gap at 30 November 2024**

Grade	Number of staff	% LGBQ+	% heterosexual	Average Hourly salary (£)	Average hourly salary LGBQ+ (£)	Average hourly salary heterosexual (£)	LGBQ+ hourly salary as a % of heterosexual salary	Pay gap	Change from Previous Report
1	*	*	*	£13.25	*	*	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	26	*	*	£14.05	£13.52	£14.07	96.08%	3.92%	6.61%
4	112	*	*	£15.52	£15.34	£15.54	98.69%	1.31%	0.03%
5	94	*	*	£17.38	£17.21	£17.41	98.85%	1.15%	0.18%
6	174	*	*	£21.32	£20.86	£21.38	97.56%	2.44%	-1.90%
7	169	*	*	£26.09	£25.21	£26.16	96.37%	3.63%	-1.57%
8	187	*	*	£30.34	£30.13	£30.36	99.23%	0.77%	-1.81%
HoS	28	*	*	£38.40	£38.22	£38.43	99.45%	0.55%	-3.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>9.98%</b>	<b>90.02%</b>	<b>£23.54</b>	<b>£22.77</b>	<b>£23.96</b>	<b>95.05%</b>	<b>4.95%</b>	<b>2.17%</b>

\*Denotes where there are less than 20 staff who have identified as LGBQ+. We have redacted the numbers to protect the identity of our staff.

There were no pay gaps of 5% or more. However, there was one recurring pay gap of greater than 3% at grade 7. There is an overall 4.95% pay gap for staff in grades 1 to Head of Service, which is slightly higher the overall sexual orientation pay gap. The pay gap at grade 7 is due to the payment of market supplements to heterosexual staff within some roles where recruitment challenges have been evidenced.

## Occupational segregation

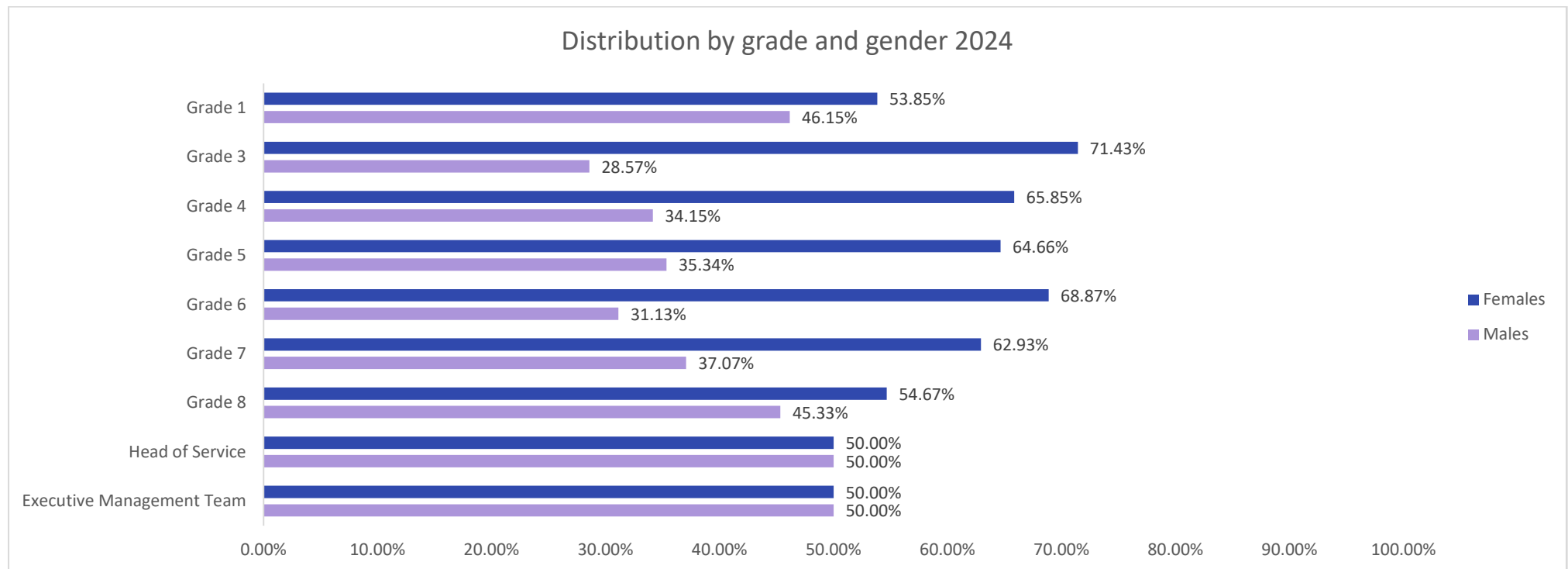
For the purposes of this report, occupational segregation is the distribution of people by gender in different types of jobs and grades across the organisation.

Horizontal segregation refers to the numbers of men and women in different types of jobs across the same grade. For example, in a public authority this might mean that there are more women working as cleaners and more men working as maintenance workers. Vertical segregation refers to the clustering of men and women in different grades, such as where more men than women may be working as senior managers and more women than men may be working in administrative roles.

There are many different factors that underlie occupational segregation, including stereotyping about men's and women's capabilities and skills, the culture associated with different types of work, and access to training and development opportunities.

## Gender

### Distribution by grade and gender of SQA grade 1 – EMT



◆ There are more females at every grade within the organisation. The splits are as follows:

- 67.0% of administration staff (grades 3 and 4) are female
- 67.4% of staff in grades 5 and 6 are female
- 58.6% of staff in grades 7 and 8 are female
- 50.0% of staff at Head of Service and EMT are female

On examining the gender split by business area:

- ◆ There are more females than males in all but five business areas: Applications Solutions; Data & Analytics; Data Solutions; Planning, Governance and Compliance; and Service Delivery. In these five areas the percentage of males is:
  - Service Delivery (71.9 %) followed by Application Solutions (63.3%), Data & Analytics (62.5%), Data Solutions (58.3%) and Planning, Governance and Compliance (57.5%)
- ◆ Business areas made up of more than 70.0% female staff include:
- ◆ Equalities and Policy NQ (100.0%); OD & Change Management (87.5%); Chief Executive's Office (83.3%); Operations - Planning & Process Improvement (80.0%); Standards, Malpractice & Complaints (78.6%), English, Languages & Business (77.5%); Operations - HN & Vocational Qualifications (74.5%); Qualifications Portfolio Management (73.8%); Accreditation and Finance Systems (73.7%); Operations - Logistics & Customer Engagement, Policy HNVQ and Procurement (71.4%); and Business Development – UK & Ireland (70.8%)

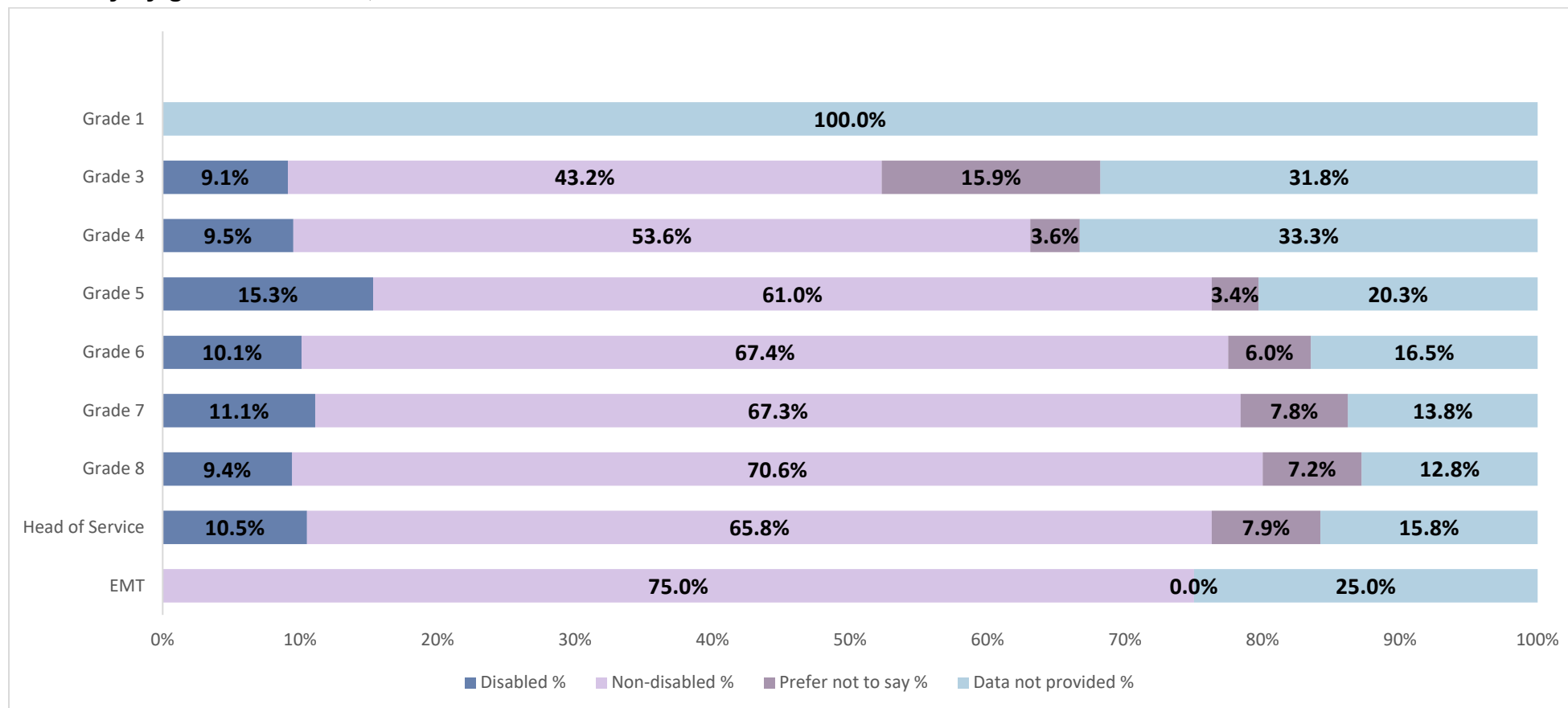
The grade split by grade and business area shows the following:

- ◆ There are more female than male administrator staff (grades 3 and 4) in all business areas except for International, Marketing, and Strategic Planning & Governance (100% male); and Service Delivery (80.0% male).
- ◆ There are also more females at grades 5 and 6 in most business areas apart from: Appointee Management and Data & Analytics (100% male); Service Delivery (72.0% male); and QA – NQ (55.6% male).
- ◆ At grades 7 and 8, there are more females in all business areas except for: Chief Executive's Office (100.0% male); Application Solutions (72.7% male); Service Delivery and Technology, Engineering & Construction (69.2% male); Appointee Management and Planning, Governance & Compliance (66.7% male); International (60.0% male); Contract Operations and Finance (57.1% male); Data Solutions (54.6% male)
- ◆ For Head of Service, we have looked at the gender split by Directorate as there are a number of business areas that only have one Head of Service. At Head of Service 100.0% are male in Accreditation, Communications and Corporate Office; 66.7% are male in Business Systems and 57.1% are male in Qualifications Development. 75.0% are female in Operations; 66.7% are female in Corporate Strategy & Business Development and People; and 50% are female in Finance and Policy, Analysis and Standards.

The gender by grade split for all business areas is outlined in [Appendix 2](#).

## Disability

### Disability by grade — all staff, Grade 1 to EMT

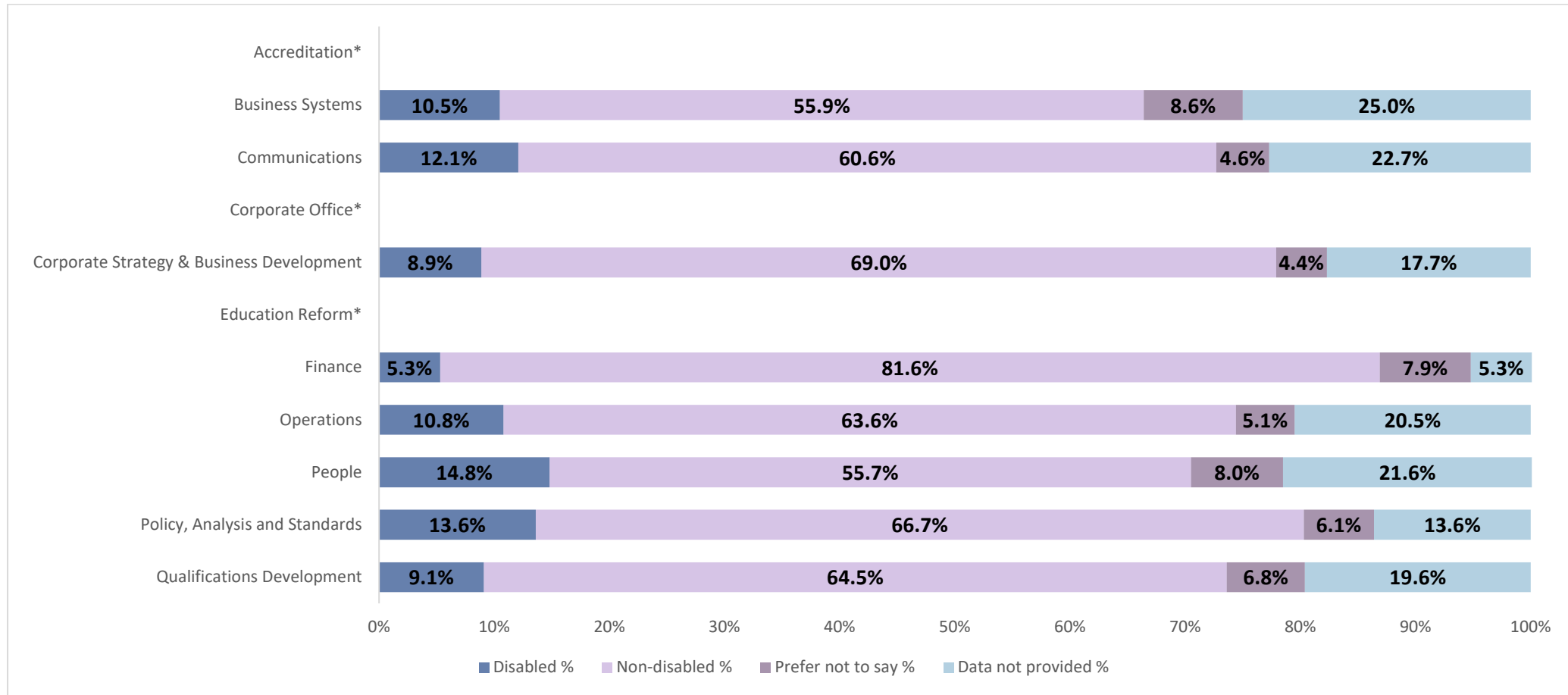


The grade split by disability shows the following:

- ◆ 10.4% of the workforce have declared a disability; 63.4% are non-disabled; 6.3% 'prefer not to say;' and 19.9% have not yet provided data.
- ◆ Grade 5 has the highest overall concentration of staff declaring a disability at 15.3%, followed by grade 7 with 11.1% staff respectively declaring a disability.
- ◆ The percentage of staff at grades 3 and 4 who have declared a disability is 9.4%.
- ◆ The percentage of staff at grades 5 and 6 who have declared a disability is 11.9%.
- ◆ The percentage of staff at grades 7 and 8 who have declared a disability is 10.2%.

- ♦ The percentage of staff at Head of Service who have declared a disability is 10.5%

### Disability by directorate — all staff, grade 1 – EMT



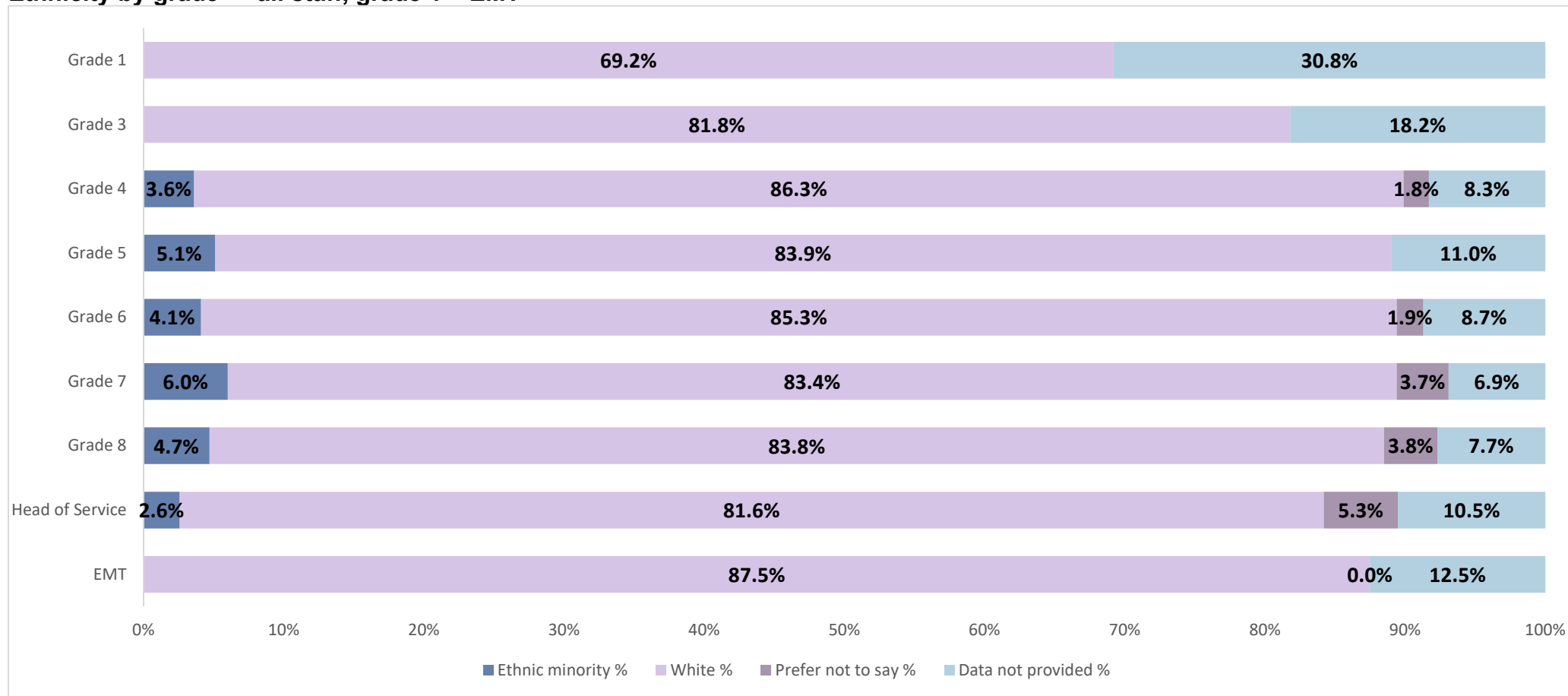
\*Denotes where there are 20 or fewer staff. We have redacted the numbers to protect the identity of our staff.

The directorate breakdown of disability shows the following:

- ♦ The largest concentrations of staff declaring a disability are in People (14.8%), followed by Policy, Analysis and Standards (13.6%), and Communications (12.1%).

## Ethnicity

### Ethnicity by grade — all staff, grade 1 – EMT

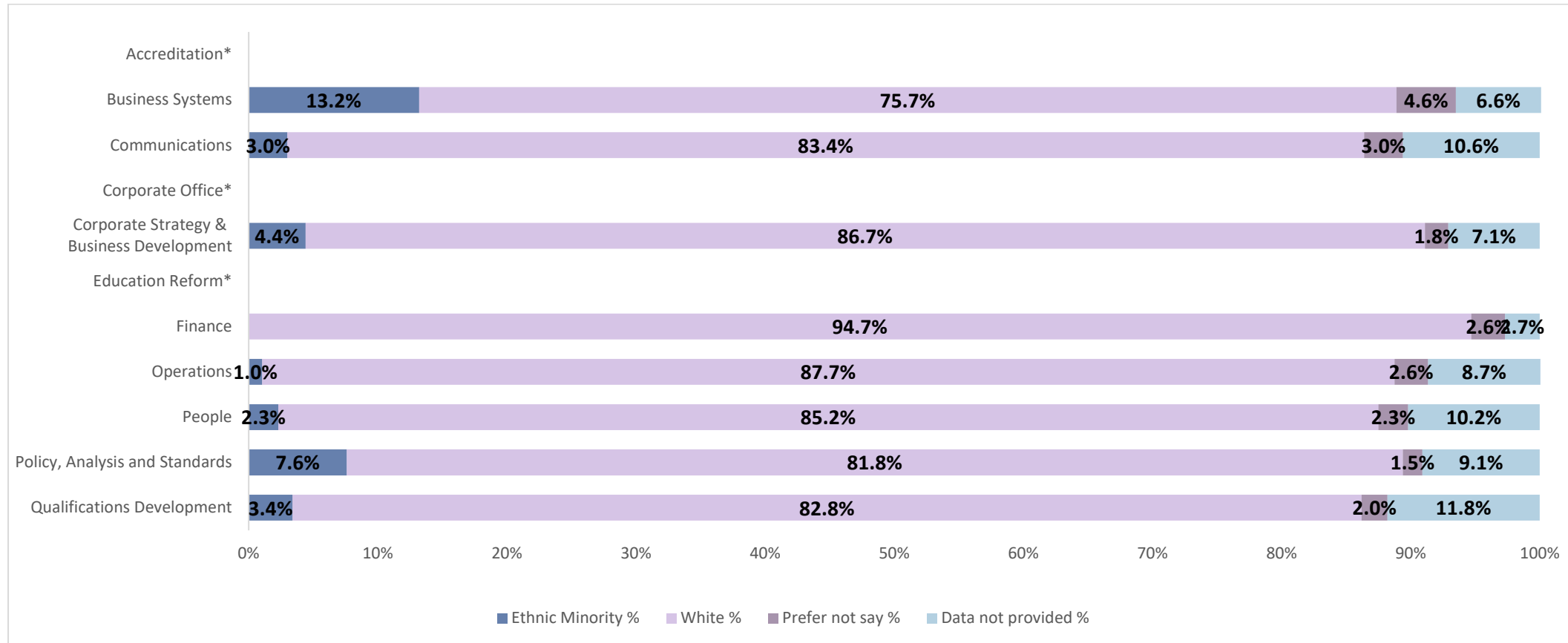


The grade split by ethnicity shows the following:

- ◆ 84.1% of the workforce are white; 4.3% are of a minority ethnicity; 2.5% 'prefer not to say;' and 9.1% have not yet provided data.
- ◆ 26.1% of staff at grades 1 to 5 are of a minority ethnicity, and 73.9% of staff at grades 6 to Head of Service are of a minority ethnicity.
- ◆ Grade 7 has the highest overall concentration of minority ethnicity staff at 6.0%, followed by grade 5 at 5.1%.
- ◆ The percentage of staff at grades 1–4 who are of a minority ethnicity is 2.7%.
- ◆ The percentage of staff at grades 5 and 6 who are of a minority ethnicity is 4.5%.
- ◆ The percentage of staff at grades 7 and 8 who are of a minority ethnicity is 5.3%.

- ♦ The percentage of staff at Head of Service and EMT level is 2.2%.

### Ethnicity by directorate — all staff, grade 1 – EMT



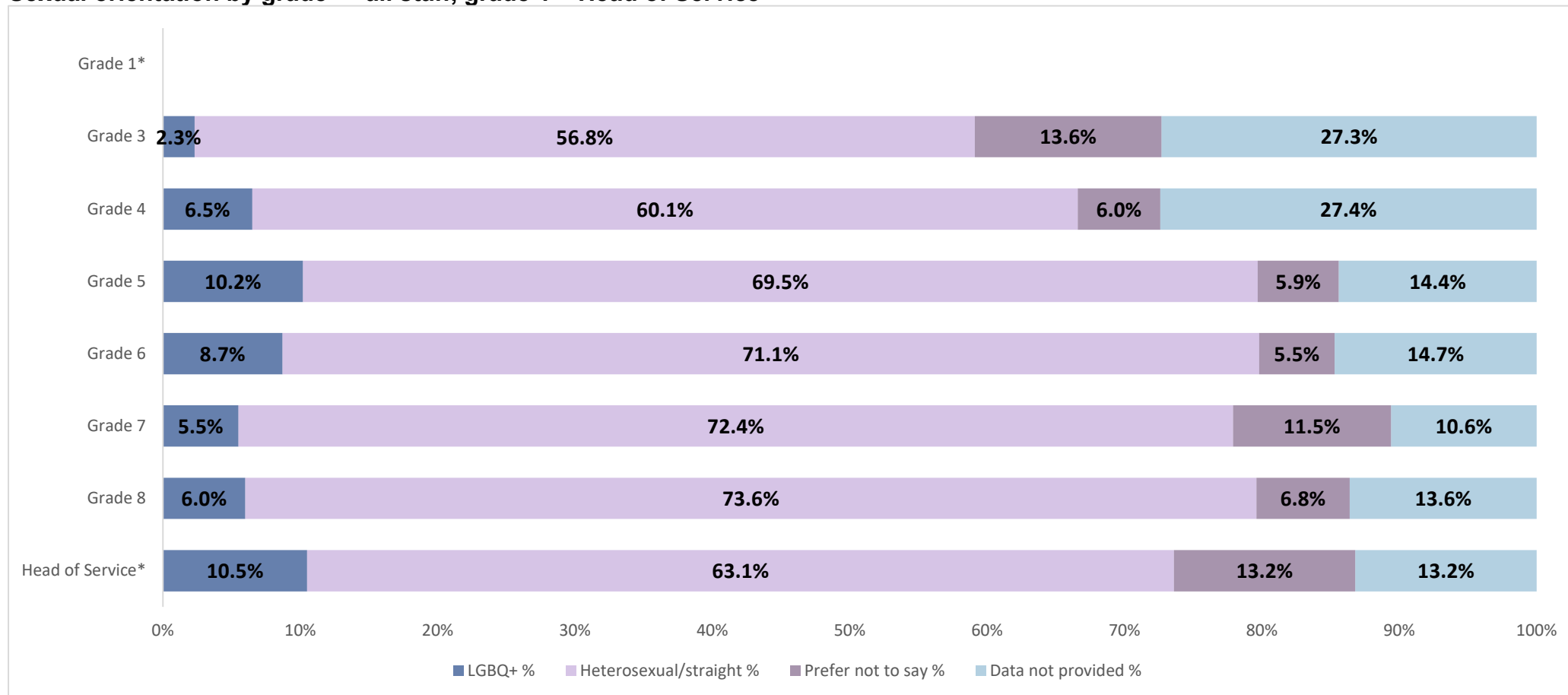
\*Denotes where there are 20 or fewer staff. We have redacted the numbers to protect the identity of our staff.

The directorate breakdown of ethnicity shows the following:

- ♦ The largest concentrations of minority ethnicity staff declaring are in Business Systems (13.2%), followed by Policy, Analysis and Standards (7.6%).

## Sexual orientation

### Sexual orientation by grade — all staff, grade 1 – Head of Service



\*Denotes where there are 20 or fewer staff. We have redacted the numbers to protect the identity of our staff.

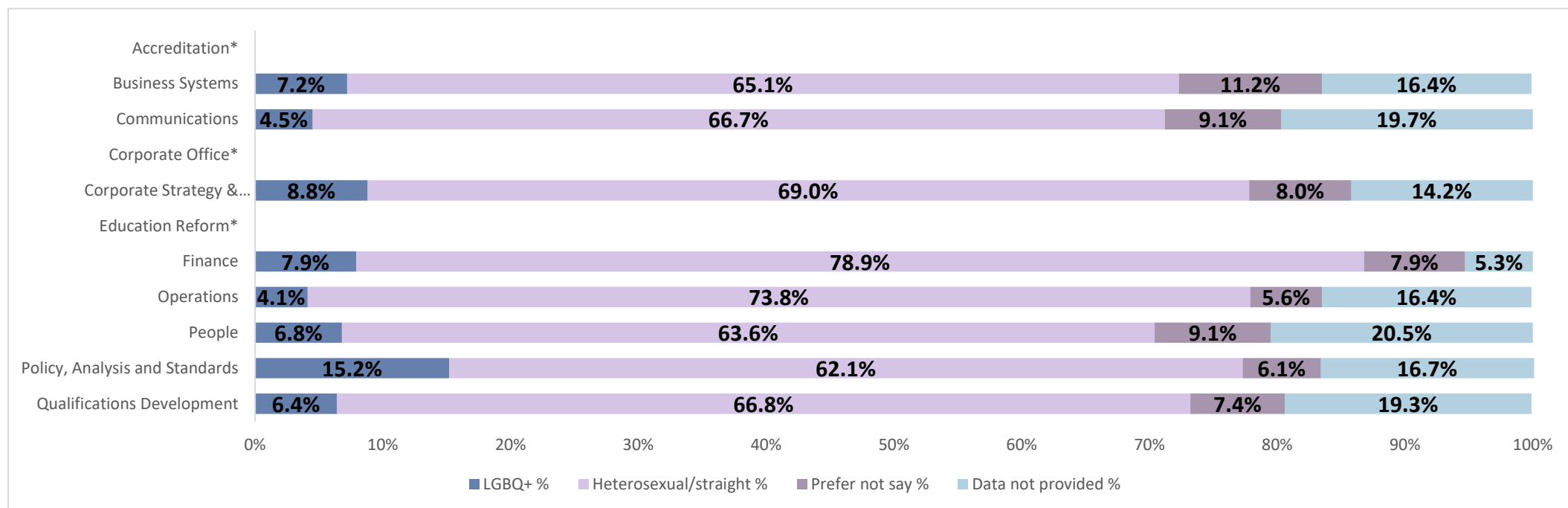
The grade split by sexual orientation shows the following:

- ◆ 68.5% of the workforce are heterosexual/straight; 6.9% are LGBTQ+; 7.6% 'prefer not to say;' and 17.0% have not yet provided data.
- ◆ 32.9% of LGBTQ+ staff are at grades 1 to 5, and 67.1% of LGBTQ+ staff are at grades 6 and above.
- ◆ Head of Service has the highest overall concentration of LGBTQ+ staff at 10.5%, followed by grade 5 at 10.2%.
- ◆ The percentage of staff at grades 1–4 who are LGBTQ+ is 6.5%.



- ◆ The percentage of staff at grades 5 and 6 who are LGBQ+ is 9.2%.
- ◆ The percentage of staff at grades 7 and 8 who are LGBQ+ is 5.8%.

## Sexual orientation by directorate — all staff, grade 1 – EMT



\*Denotes where there are 20 or fewer staff. We have redacted the numbers to protect the identity of our staff.

The directorate breakdown of sexual orientation shows the following:

- ◆ The business areas with the largest concentration of LGBQ+ staff are: Policy, Analysis and Standards (15.2% LGBQ+) and Finance (7.9% LGBQ+).
- ◆ Accreditation, Corporate Office and Education Reform have 20 or fewer staff and have therefore been excluded from the breakdown by directorate.

## What we're doing to close the gap

The data in this report will continue to enable us to better consider the impact of policy and practice on pay equality across the organisation. It will inform action plans to support these groups of staff.

We continue to progress our equality, diversity and inclusion work to promote our inclusive culture and to increase a sense of belonging for all employees. For example, between 2023–25 this has included the following measures:

- ◆ Implementation of a pay award which provided higher increases for lower paid staff.
  - ◆ We have increased the number of weeks full pay for those on maternity, adoption or shared parental leave.
  - ◆ A revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy was published in April 2023.
  - ◆ New revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training was launched in December 2023, and we are currently exploring mandatory training approaches.
  - ◆ Equality and diversity data categories were revised and updated in line with the census and based on feedback from our Employee Networks to enable both more accurate benchmarking and to reflect current inclusive language.
  - ◆ A 'Data Matters' campaign took place in 2024 and 2025 to raise awareness of SQA's responsibilities and the importance of equality data declaration. Data declaration supports our understanding of workforce demographics enabling SQA to make informed decision to progress equality, diversity and inclusion.
  - ◆ We have further developed our Line Manager Fundamentals Programme to include equality, diversity and inclusion. This training also includes mandatory inclusive recruitment training for any employee involved in recruitment and selection processes.
- ◆ A range of training and educational communications have been developed for employees. Topics include, for example, anti-racist education, trans awareness, menopause awareness, neurodiversity, inclusive language and dementia.
  - ◆ Introduction of hybrid guidance to support the flexibility of where staff work.

We will continue to:

- ◆ use a tool to review the language used in adverts to ensure it is free from bias
- ◆ follow our Pay Policy, including guidance on starting salary and review of market supplements
- ◆ review our EDI statement

This report also helps us to assess whether the objectives and actions within the 2021–25 HR Equality Outcomes are making an impact in removing or mitigating barriers to progression for women, disabled, minority ethnic and LGBTQ+ staff. Some of these objectives include:

### **Foster an inclusive culture and environment where all staff feel valued, respected and supported:**

- ◆ A Reasonable Adjustments Passport was introduced in October 2024.
- ◆ We have developed Reasonable Adjustments Guidance for Managers.
- ◆ We are working towards Carer Positive 'Established' status.
- ◆ We are developing a Carer's Policy and have developed associated resources for staff such as a Carer Support Hub and a Carer's Network.

**Embed the principles of inclusive culture as part of our employee education and training on equality to advance diversity and inclusion practices:**

- ◆ We will continue to embed our mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training within our organisation.
- ◆ We will continue to increase awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce through education and training.
- ◆ We will continue to highlight key equality dates and events through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Calendar to increase knowledge and awareness.
- ◆ We will continue to support our employee network activity to increase a sense of belonging and provide safe spaces to share lived experiences.

**Develop and implement a race equality action plan with published milestones to support and increase the diversity of our workforce and meet SQA's BITC Race at Work Charter:**

- ◆ We are continuing to develop and refine our anti-racist actions with support from the Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO) and in line with best practice to advance equality in this area.

**Improve the collection and analysis of equality data, including pay data, to aid the development of action plans and identify trends to support the progression of equality, diversity and inclusion:**

- ◆ We will continue to monitor the results of our annual 'Data Matters' Campaign and identify future actions required.
- ◆ Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion principles are embedded in our governance, strategy and planning
- ◆ A new equality, diversity and inclusion deliverable has been developed and included in our strategic plan.
- ◆ We are in the process of refreshing our Equality Outcomes for April 2025 in line with current available internal and external evidence, in consultation with our workforce and external stakeholders.
- ◆ We will develop our People Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in 2025.

Equality and diversity will continue to be an overarching goal on the current and future People Directorate operational plans. It is linked to the overall people strategy, with governance arrangements in place to drive progress.

The next equal pay audit publication date is April 2026.

## Appendix 1: Pay gap information tables: breakdown of average salaries at 30 November 2024

### Gender: all staff (FTE)

	All staff including Chief Executive	All staff excluding Chief Executive
% Female	62.7	62.7
% Male	37.3	37.3
Average Hourly Salary (£)	23.38	23.33
Average Hourly Salary Female (£)	22.82	22.74
Average Hourly Salary Male (£)	24.33	24.33
Female Hourly Salary as a % of Male Salary	93.8	93.5
Mean Pay Gap	6.2%	6.5%
Change from Previous Report	1.3%	1.20%
Median (£)	22.52	22.52
Median Salary Female (£)	22.52	22.52
Median Salary Male (£)	24.35	24.35
Median Female Salary as a % of Male Salary	92.5	92.5
Median Pay Gap	7.5%	7.5%
Change from Previous Report	2.8%	2.8%

### Gender: all staff by grade (FTE) up to head of service at 30 November 2024

Grade	1	3	4	5	6	7	8	HoS
Number of staff	13	42	164	116	212	205	225	36
% female	53.9	71.4	65.9	64.7	68.9	62.9	54.7	50
% male	46.1	28.6	34.1	35.3	31.1	37.1	45.3	50
Average hourly salary (£)	13.25	14.01	15.46	17.36	21.38	26.11	30.28	38.34
Average hourly salary — female (£)	13.25	13.99	15.44	17.32	21.41	26.04	30.19	37.64
Average hourly salary — male (£)	13.25	14.05	15.50	17.44	21.31	26.24	30.38	39.05
Female hourly salary as a % of male salary	100.0	99.6	99.6	99.3	100.5	99.2	99.4	96.4
Pay Band minimum	13.25	13.52	14.83	16.81	19.55	23.65	27.48	34.51
Pay Band maximum	13.25	14.50	16.01	18.00	22.52	26.93	30.96	39.88

### Disability: all staff (FTE) at 30 November 2023

	All staff including Chief Executive	All staff excluding Chief Executive
% Disabled Individual	11.9	11.9
% Non-Disabled Individual	88.1	88.1
Average Disabled Individual's Hourly Salary (£)	20.73	20.73
Average Non-Disabled Individual's Hourly Salary (£)	21.62	21.62
Disabled Individual's Salary as a % of Non-Disabled Individual's Hourly Salary	95.9	95.9
Disability Pay Gap	4.1%	4.1%
Change from Previous Report	3.4%	3.4%
Median Disabled Individual's Salary (£)	20.65	20.65
Median Non-Disabled Individual's Salary (£)	21.68	21.68
Median Disabled Individual's Salary as a % of Non-Disabled Salary	95.3	95.3
Median Disability Pay Gap	4.75%	4.75%
Change from Previous Report	4.75%	4.75%

## Ethnicity: all staff (FTE) at 30 November 2023

	All staff including Chief Executive	All staff excluding Chief Executive
% Minority Ethnic	3.8	3.8
% White Ethnicity	82.3	82.3
% Prefer Not to Say	3.1	3.1
% Not disclosed	10.7	10.7
Average Hourly Minority Ethnic (£)	21.02	21.02
Average Hourly Salary White Ethnicity (£)	20.98	20.98
Minority Ethnic as a % of White Ethnicity Hourly Salary	100.2	100.2
Ethnicity Pay Gap	-0.20%	-0.20%
Change from Previous Report	-7.30%	-7.30%
Median Salary Black or Minority Ethnic (£)	21.68	21.68
Median Salary White Ethnicity (£)	20.65	20.65
Median Minority Ethnic as a % of White Ethnicity Salary	105.0	105.0
Median Ethnicity Pay Gap	-5.00%	-5.00%
Change from Previous Report	-10.50%	-10.50%

## Sexual orientation: all staff (FTE) at 30 November 2023

	All staff including Chief Executive	All staff excluding Chief Executive
% Heterosexual	65.9	65.9
% LGBTQ+	6.6	6.6
% Prefer Not to Say	8.4	8.4
% Not disclosed	19.1	19.1
Average Hourly Salary Heterosexual (£)	21.57	21.57
Average Hourly Salary LGBTQ+ (£)	21.06	21.06
LGBTQ+ as a % of Heterosexual Hourly Salary	97.6	97.6
Sexual Orientation Pay Gap	2.4%	2.4%
Change from Previous Report	1.1%	1.1%
Median Salary Heterosexual (£)	21.68	21.68
Median Salary LGBTQ+ (£)	20.60	20.60
Median LGBTQ+ as a % of Heterosexual Salary	95.0	95.0
Median Ethnicity Pay Gap	5.0%	5.0%
Change from Previous Report	-0.5%	-0.5%



## Appendix 2: Occupational segregation tables

### Gender split by business area: Grades 1 to Head of Service

Business Area	% female	% male
Accreditation	73.7%	26.3%
Application Solutions	36.7%	63.3%
Appointee Management	55.0%	45.0%
Assessment Development & Delivery: Digital Assessment Services	64.4%	35.6%
Business Development – UK & Ireland	70.8%	29.2%
Chief Executive's Office	83.3%	16.7%
Communications & Engagement	68.3%	31.7%
Contract Operations	55.2%	44.8%
Creative, Hospitality & Sport	69.0%	31.0%
Data & Analytics	37.5%	62.5%
Data Solutions	41.7%	58.3%
Education Reform	66.7%	33.3%
English, Languages & Business	77.5%	22.5%
Equalities	100.0%	0.0%
Finance	54.5%	45.5%
Finance Systems	73.7%	26.3%
Human Resources	69.7%	30.3%
Humanities, Care & Services	69.2%	30.8%
International	55.6%	44.4%
Marketing	52.2%	47.8%
NQ Delivery: Assessment & Data Services	60.0%	40.0%
OD & Change Management	87.5%	12.5%
Operations - HN & Vocational Qualifications	74.5%	25.5%
Operations - Logistics & Customer Engagement	71.4%	28.6%
Operations - Planning & Process Improvement	80.0%	20.0%
Opportunity Appraisal & Bid Management	64.3%	35.7%
Planning, Governance & Compliance	42.5%	57.5%
Policy HNVQ	71.4%	28.6%
Policy NQ	100.0%	0.0%
Procurement	71.4%	28.6%
QA - NQ	63.6%	36.4%
Qualifications Portfolio Management	73.8%	26.3%
Research & Evaluation	68.8%	31.3%
Science, Mathematics & Core Skills	61.1%	38.9%
Service Delivery	28.1%	71.9%
Standards, Malpractice & Complaints	78.6%	21.4%
Strategic Design	50.0%	50.0%
Strategic Planning & Governance	61.1%	38.9%
Technology, Engineering & Construction	59.4%	40.6%
Test Operation Services	62.5%	37.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>62.8%</b>	<b>37.2%</b>

## Gender split by business area: Grades 3 and 4

Business Area	% female	% male
Accreditation	100.0%	0.0%
Appointee Management	55.0%	45.0%
Assessment Development & Delivery: Digital Assessment Services	56.3%	43.8%
Communications & Engagement	78.6%	21.4%
Contract Operations	60.0%	40.0%
English, Languages & Business	50.0%	50.0%
Finance Systems	75.0%	25.0%
Human Resources	100.0%	0.0%
Humanities, Care & Services	100.0%	0.0%
International	0.0%	100.0%
Marketing	0.0%	100.0%
NQ Delivery: Assessment & Data Services	61.5%	38.5%
Operations - HN & Vocational Qualifications	75.0%	25.0%
Operations - Logistics & Customer Engagement	81.0%	19.0%
Operations - Planning & Process Improvement	100.0%	0.0%
Planning, Governance & Compliance	66.7%	66.7%
Policy HNVQ	100.0%	0.0%
Procurement	100.0%	0.0%
QA - NQ	70.6%	29.4%
Qualifications Portfolio Management	68.0%	32.0%
Research & Evaluation	100.0%	0.0%
Science, Mathematics & Core Skills	100.0%	0.0%
Service Delivery	20.0%	80.0%
Strategic Planning & Governance	0.0%	100.0%
Grand total	67.0%	33.0%

## Gender split by business area: Grades 5 and 6

Business Area	% female	% male
Accreditation	75.0%	25.0%
Application Solutions	57.1%	42.9%
Appointee Management	40.0%	60.0%
Assessment Development & Delivery: Digital Assessment Services	68.0%	32.0%
Business Development – UK & Ireland	87.5%	12.5%
Chief Executive's Office	100.0%	0.0%
Communications & Engagement	77.8%	22.2%
Contract Operations	66.7%	33.3%
Creative, Hospitality & Sport	68.8%	31.3%
Data & Analytics	0.0%	100.0%
English, Languages & Business	92.9%	7.1%
Equalities	100.0%	0.0%
Finance	100.0%	0.0%
Finance Systems	80.0%	20.0%
Human Resources	66.7%	33.3%
Humanities, Care & Services	78.6%	21.4%
International	100.0%	0.0%
Marketing	50.0%	50.0%
NQ Delivery: Assessment & Data Services	58.3%	41.7%
OD & Change Management	100.0%	0.0%
Operations - HN & Vocational Qualifications	66.7%	33.3%
Operations - Logistics & Customer Engagement	66.7%	33.3%
Operations - Planning & Process Improvement	75.0%	25.0%
Planning, Governance & Compliance	50.0%	50.0%
Policy HNVQ	66.7%	33.3%
Procurement	50.0%	50.0%
QA - NQ	44.4%	55.6%
Qualifications Portfolio Management	81.8%	18.2%
Research & Evaluation	50.0%	50.0%
Science, Mathematics & Core Skills	57.1%	42.9%
Service Delivery	28.0%	72.0%
Standards, Malpractice & Complaints	100.0%	0.0%
Strategic Planning & Governance	66.7%	33.3%
Technology, Engineering & Construction	83.3%	16.7%
Test Operation Services	66.7%	33.3%
Grand total	67.4%	32.6%

## Gender split by business area: Grades 7 and 8

Business Area	% female	% male
Accreditation	75.0%	25.0%
Application Solutions	27.3%	72.7%
Appointee Management	33.3%	66.7%
Assessment Development & Delivery: Digital Assessment Services	70.6%	29.4%
Business Development – UK & Ireland	66.7%	33.3%
Chief Executive's Office	0.0%	100.0%
Communications & Engagement	58.8%	41.2%
Contract Operations	42.9%	57.1%
Creative, Hospitality & Sport	69.2%	30.8%
Data & Analytics	60.0%	40.0%
Data Solutions	45.5%	54.5%
Education Reform	50.0%	50.0%
English, Languages & Business	76.2%	23.8%
Equalities	100.0%	0.0%
Finance	42.9%	57.1%
Finance Systems	50.0%	50.0%
Human Resources	58.3%	41.7%
Humanities, Care & Services	60.0%	40.0%
International	40.0%	60.0%
Marketing	66.7%	33.3%
NQ Delivery: Assessment & Data Services	54.5%	45.5%
OD & Change Management	100.0%	0.0%
Operations - HN & Vocational Qualifications	81.3%	18.8%
Operations - Logistics & Customer Engagement	66.7%	33.3%
Operations - Planning & Process Improvement	75.0%	25.0%
Opportunity Appraisal & Bid Management	61.5%	38.5%
Planning, Governance & Compliance	33.3%	66.7%
Policy HNVQ	77.8%	22.2%
Policy NQ	100.0%	0.0%
Procurement	75.0%	25.0%
QA - NQ	66.7%	33.3%
Qualifications Portfolio Management	71.0%	29.0%
Research & Evaluation	87.5%	12.5%
Science, Mathematics & Core Skills	50.0%	50.0%
Service Delivery	30.8%	69.2%
Standards, Malpractice & Complaints	72.7%	27.3%
Strategic Design	50.0%	50.0%
Strategic Planning & Governance	57.1%	42.9%
Technology, Engineering & Construction	30.8%	69.2%
Test Operation Services	55.6%	44.4%
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>58.6%</b>	<b>41.4%</b>

## Gender splits by directorate: head of service

Directorate	% female	% male
Accreditation	0.0%	100.0%
Business Systems	33.3%	66.7%
Communications	0.0%	100.0%
Corporate Office	0.0%	100.0%
Corporate Strategy & Business Development	66.7%	33.3%
Education Reform	100.0%	0.0%
Finance	50.0%	50.0%
Operations	75.0%	25.0%
People	66.7%	33.3%
Policy, Analysis and Standards	50.0%	50.0%
Qualifications Development	42.9%	57.1%
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>