

CO-OP SUPPLIER GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2026



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RIGHT BY YOU.

A WORD FROM OUR LEADERS

At Co-op, we believe building a fairer, more inclusive future is a shared responsibility across our entire supply chain. Closing the gender pay gap is not only the right thing to do, but also fundamental to creating stronger, more sustainable businesses that truly reflect the diverse communities we serve.

I'd like to thank our suppliers for their continued support and engagement in this report. Your openness, insight and commitment are helping to drive meaningful progress.

I'd also like to specifically thank our inclusion partner Weave Analytics for their support, expertise and data focused approach which has allowed us to create such an in-depth report.

This report represents an important step forward, moving beyond transparency to deliver real, measurable change. By working together, sharing insight and taking action, we have a genuine opportunity to accelerate progress and create lasting impact across our industry.

Imran Rasul

Imran Rasul
Chief Commercial Officer, Co-op



From a commercial perspective, fairness and inclusion are not separate from performance, they are fundamental to it. Businesses that create equitable opportunities and reflect the diversity of the communities they serve are better positioned to innovate, grow and deliver long-term value. That is why this work matters not just socially, but commercially too.

What stands out in this report is the openness and commitment shown by our suppliers. By engaging with the data, sharing insights and participating in deeper analysis, you are helping to create a clearer, more honest picture of where we are today. Importantly, this report does not just highlight progress, it also shines a light on the structural challenges that remain, particularly around representation in senior roles.

As commercial leaders, we have a vital role to play in accelerating progress. We can use our partnerships to encourage transparency, share best practice and support meaningful action. By embedding inclusion into the way we work together, from supplier conversations to long-term strategic relationships, we can help drive change at scale.

This report is an important milestone, but it is only the beginning. Real progress will come from sustained collaboration, practical action and a shared determination to make a difference. I am proud of the collective steps we are taking and confident that, together, we can continue to build a more inclusive and equitable supply chain. Thank you to all our partners for your continued commitment and collaboration.

John Dickson

John Dickson
Director of Commercial, Co-op



INTRODUCTION



Gender inequality continues to shape UK workplaces, with women still earning less on average than men.

This is not just an individual organisational challenge, it extends across different sectors and supply chains.

We believe that co-operation leads to greater impact, not just within our own organisation, but across our entire supply chain. Our aim is to work in partnership with our suppliers to help close the gender pay gap in a way that is collaborative, practical and sustainable.

This report reflects that commitment. It brings together insight from across our supply base to help us better understand where progress is being made, celebrate the positive steps already taken, and stay focused on what more can be done.

We want to inspire a movement, where we work side by side with our suppliers to improve gender equity in the workplace, learning from each other and building capability together. By doing this, we can create lasting change that benefits colleagues, businesses and communities alike.



This is the first report of its kind in the grocery sector, reflecting our commitment to drive industry-wide progress through transparency and collaboration.

It combines UK Government gender pay gap reporting data from 237 suppliers who are eligible and required to report, alongside a deeper analysis of 25 of our strategic suppliers selected based on their significant importance to delivering Co-op's products and services.

All insights are shared in an aggregated and anonymised way, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for suppliers to engage openly. We recognise that many suppliers are at different stages of their inclusion journeys, and our approach is focused on collaboration and capability building, not compliance.

We're aiming to:

- Gain a clear view of gender pay gap performance across our suppliers.
- Identify where progress is happening and where more support is needed.
- Work closely with suppliers to drive lasting, meaningful change.
- Prepare for upcoming regulatory requirements, including the Employment Rights Act mandate for gender pay gap action plans from 2027.



UNDERSTANDING THE DATA

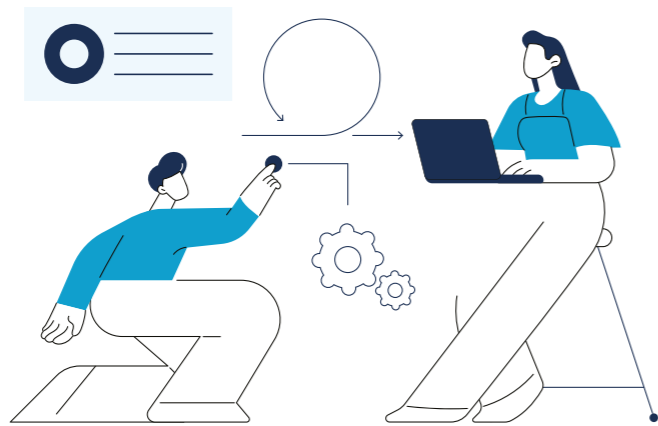
This analysis combines two complementary sources which have been independently analysed by our partner Weave Analytics:

- UK Government Gender Pay Gap reporting data.
- 25 responses from our strategic suppliers to our Gender Equity Survey.

Together, these provide directional insights into trends and highlight structural barriers. However, it is important to recognise:

- A large proportion of our suppliers fall below mandatory reporting thresholds, and this report primarily includes organisations required to report under UK gender pay gap legislation, alongside a small number of suppliers voluntarily reporting.
- The responses for the gender equity survey are a small sample and therefore are directional only.
- Reporting approaches and data quality vary across suppliers.

As a result, findings should be interpreted as indicative of patterns and themes rather than definitive conclusions.



SUPPLIER GENDER PAY GAP HEADLINE FINDINGS

2025-2026	Co-op	Supplier Average	UK Benchmark
Median Gender Pay Gap	5.8%	6.3%	11.1%
Mean Gender Pay Gap	8.8%	7.5%	11.5%
Upper Quartile Female Representation	33%	33%	42%

Key findings:

1. Co-op suppliers' mean and median gender pay gaps are below the UK benchmark, with 67% reporting lower than the national average.
2. Around half of suppliers have improved year-on-year, showing positive but uneven progress across the supply base.
3. Upper quartile female representation is lower than the UK benchmark.
4. Pay gap outcomes vary significantly, with some suppliers close to parity or even showing gaps favouring women, while others have significant gaps favouring men.
5. Median gender pay gaps range from -75% to 78%, reflecting broad sector differences and varied workforce structures.



These findings indicate that while many Co-op suppliers are outperforming the UK average and making progress, this improvement is uneven and inconsistent across the wider supply base.

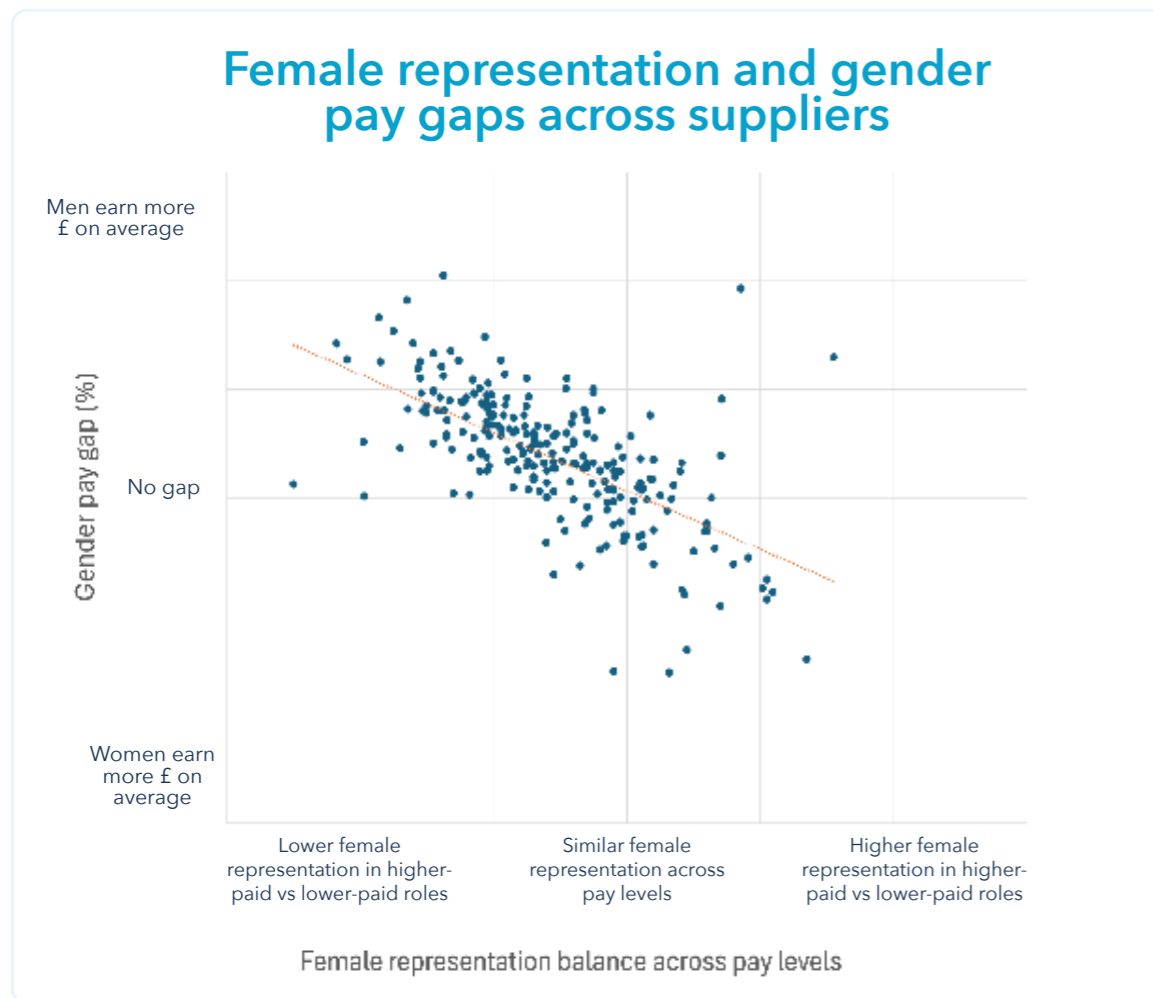
Representation remains the core challenge:

Although pay gap figures have improved, progression into higher-paid leadership roles continues to be a key challenge across both Co-op and our suppliers. Women are still underrepresented in senior and higher-paying positions remaining below the UK benchmark.

Key insights include:

1. Women hold only 33% of upper quartile roles.
2. On average no improvement in upper middle or upper quartiles year on year.
3. Representation declines as pay increases.

This suggests that recent improvements in the pay gap are likely due to pay increases for lower-paid roles, where most women work, while structural barriers to progression into higher-paid roles remain a key cause of inequality.



DIFFERENCES ACROSS SUPPLIER TYPES

There are clear differences between supplier groups, highlighting the need for targeted approaches.

Our Goods for Resale suppliers primarily service products sold in our food stores, and our Goods Not for Resale suppliers support Co-op with a range of products and services to operate, covering a breadth of sectors such as technology, property, logistics, professional services and marketing.

GFR (Goods for Resale) suppliers:

- Lower gender pay gaps.
- More balanced representation.
- Signs that progress may be plateauing.

GNFR (Goods Not for Resale) suppliers:

- Higher gender pay gaps.
- Greater structural imbalance.
- Some signs of improvement but from a higher starting point.

Representation data reinforces this divide:

- GFR: 42.5% (lower quartile) vs 34.0% (upper quartile).
- GNFR: 45.7% (lower quartile) vs 31.0% (upper quartile).

This highlights that suppliers face different structural challenges depending on their sector. For example, industries such as manufacturing or logistics may have fewer women overall due to pipeline and attraction issues, while sectors like retail or services may have higher female representation but still see women concentrated in lower-paid or frontline roles.

Therefore, a one-size-fits-all approach will not be effective, and progress will depend on targeted, tailored action across different supplier groups.

KEY THEMES FROM THE GENDER EQUITY SURVEY

Our gender equity survey was completed by 25 of our strategic suppliers, offering a comprehensive analysis of gender equity and inclusion across our key partners.

The survey used a consistent set of questions with supporting evidence covering workforce diversity and representation, inclusion strategies, policy and governance, and culture and people metrics.

The survey results highlighted the following:

Moving from activity to strategy:

Suppliers that are more advanced in their gender equity journey take a structured, long-term approach. Their efforts are embedded within a wider inclusion strategy, supported by clear goals, regular progress tracking, and active senior leadership involvement. Responsibility is shared across the organisation, rather than owned by a single team or individual.

These suppliers are addressing the root causes of inequality, including representation in senior roles, career progression, and recruitment practices.

They are also using data effectively to identify barriers and track impact. Notably, they have implemented a wide range of initiatives, highlighting that meaningful progress is driven by a combination of actions rather than a single solution.

In contrast, suppliers at an earlier stage are often still building these foundations. While intent is clear, activity can be inconsistent and more focused on awareness than long-term outcomes.

Ownership is less defined, often sitting with one individual without sufficient senior influence, and limited data makes it harder to track and evidence progress. To mature, senior leaders need to take more accountability, providing sufficient resourcing and budget, as well as vocally advocating for change.

GENDER PAY GAPS DON'T TELL THE FULL STORY

Gender pay gap figures don't tell the full story about gender equality in a workplace.

A higher mean pay gap than median pay gap can happen when a few women in very highly paid jobs increase the overall average pay figures for women.

This means that organisations with a small gender pay gap may still have few women in senior positions. This is because the pay gap measures differences in pay, not how evenly men and women are represented across the organisation.

For example, having more women in higher-paying roles can improve average pay figures and reduce the reported pay gap. However, the majority of the most senior and highest-paid positions may still be held by men.

This means a low gender pay gap does not always indicate a fair or balanced workplace. To understand gender equality more fully, it is important to look beyond pay gap figures and consider factors such as representation at all levels, recruitment and promotion outcomes, employee retention and engagement levels, and the organisation's wider commitment to inclusion and gender equality.



That's why it's important to look beyond the pay gap figures and also consider factors such as equal representation at all levels, hiring and promotion trends, retention rates, and the organisation's overall commitment to gender equality and an inclusive culture.

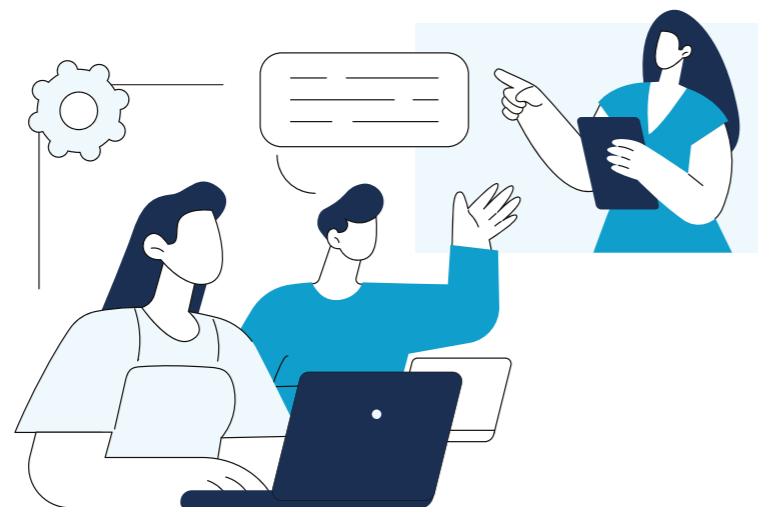
GREATER FOCUS ON DIVERSITY DATA

Our suppliers are at significantly different stages in collecting and using diversity data (workforce demographics). Many are currently only gathering data required for reporting, with less consistency in capturing wider workforce insights. Confidence in using this data to inform action also varies.

This matters because without reliable data, it's harder to identify barriers, take targeted action, and measure progress. It also hinders readiness for upcoming requirements under the Employment Rights Act, which will require organisations to report on ethnicity and disability pay gaps.

Robust data is a critical foundation for change. Strengthening data collection particularly across ethnicity, disability and socio-economic background will enable more targeted, measurable action and support long-term progress.

There is a clear opportunity for suppliers to build capability in both how data is collected and how it is used to drive meaningful change.



FROM RECRUITMENT TO PROGRESSION

Many suppliers are taking positive steps to improve inclusive hiring. Common actions include using gender neutral language in job adverts and providing inclusive hiring manager training.

However, there is much less focus on what happens after people join. This is important because the biggest representation gaps often appear at senior levels. Long term progress depends not just on hiring diverse talent, but on supporting women to stay, develop and progress into leadership roles.

Inclusion activity is strong but inconsistent:

A range of inclusion activity is visible across many suppliers, with a variety of policies and initiatives in place, such as flexible working, mentoring programmes, inclusive hiring practices, and support for women's health, including menopause action plans and menstrual health support. However, this activity is not always consistent or embedded across the organisation.

In some cases, organisations have introduced multiple initiatives but lack a coordinated, strategic approach to connect these efforts or measure their impact.

While there is clear evidence of positive activity, it does not always lead to lasting change. Greater alignment between initiatives and leadership accountability, supported by clear action plans, will be essential to delivering meaningful results.



STRATEGIC SUPPLIER SURVEY INSIGHTS

Hallmark: Turning Insight into action

Hallmark's approach demonstrates how gender pay gap reporting can move beyond compliance to drive meaningful change. Within the organisation, gender pay reporting is viewed as a starting point rather than an endpoint, with a clear focus on understanding and addressing the underlying drivers of inequality.

Their approach centres on fairness, progression, and ensuring equitable access to development opportunities so that all colleagues can reach their full potential.

A key enabler of this has been the growth of Hallmark's Women & Allies Employee Resource Group, which provides a space for connection, shared learning, and both personal and professional development. Alongside this, there is a strong emphasis on transparent and accessible communication to ensure data is widely understood and can inform action.

Hallmark also highlights the value of collaboration through Co-op's Endless Inclusion platform, which creates opportunities to share learning, connect with other organisations, and accelerate progress across the supply chain.



STRATEGIC SUPPLIER SURVEY INSIGHTS

BT: Embedding accountability and driving scale

BT's approach highlights the importance of leadership, accountability, and collaboration in tackling structural barriers to gender equality. Senior leaders play a central role by setting clear ambitions, owning measurable targets, and embedding accountability for gender pay and representation across the organisation.

This leadership focus ensures that gender equality is prioritised within core business decision-making rather than treated as a standalone initiative.

The organisation places a strong emphasis on addressing the structural drivers of inequality, particularly progression and career pathways, supported by data-led insights and a focus on measurable outcomes.

BT also identifies significant opportunity in strengthening collaboration across the supply chain, aligning organisations around shared goals and collective action.

In this context, transparency is seen as a critical enabler helping to build trust, create a shared evidence base, and support more meaningful and sustained progress between Co-op and its suppliers.



CONCLUSION



Co-op suppliers demonstrate strong performance in gender pay gap equity, with average figures significantly below the UK benchmark, reflecting a solid foundation upon which to continue their clear trajectory towards greater gender pay equity.

Progress is being made across our supply base, with gender pay gaps improving and many suppliers taking positive steps towards more inclusive and equitable workplaces. However, this progress remains uneven, and significant barriers persist particularly in relation to women's representation in senior and higher-paid roles.

A key insight from this report is that closing pay gaps alone is not enough. Lasting change requires addressing the structural barriers that limit progression, ensuring women are supported to develop, advance, and move into leadership positions.

The findings highlight clear priorities for further focus, alongside opportunities for greater collaboration.

At Co-op, we believe in the power of collaboration to create meaningful, lasting impact.

By sharing best practice particularly between organisations leading the way and those at an earlier stage we can tailor approaches to different supplier groups, accelerate progress, and take more targeted action where it is needed most.



COLLABORATING TO CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP



We are committed to:

- Working in partnership with our suppliers, recognising that they are at different starting points and operate in very different sectors.
- Creating opportunities to learn from each other and building capability across our supply chain.
- Supporting suppliers to deliver measurable outcomes through clear action plans.

We have already begun this journey through our Endless Inclusion Community, a collaborative space where partners come together to share insights and case studies, learn from one another and work jointly on diversity and inclusion initiatives.

The community offers practical resources, webinar sessions, networking opportunities, and ways to partner with Co op on shared activity such as our [Gender Pay Gap Toolkit](#), that was developed in partnership with WiHTL and Diversity in Retail, and a number of our supplier partners.

The toolkit provides practical guidance to support organisations close their gender pay gaps, including:

1. A step-by-step guide to creating a gender pay gap action plan.
2. Practical actions organisations can tailor to their needs.
3. Real-world case studies from our GFR and GNFR suppliers.
4. A downloadable template action plan to help set clear actions and measure progress.

Sources:

Page 7 - UK benchmark figures reflect the average data available on the UK Government Gender Pay Gap Service at the time of analysis (11/05/26) and may change as additional employer submissions are published.

[Consultation on mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting](#): government response - GOV.UK

CO-OP SUPPLIER GENDER PAY GAP ACTION PLAN



Priority Area:	Action:	What we'll do:	Expected Result:
Strengthen data and transparency:	Support suppliers to improve diversity data collection and reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share practical guidance, and case studies from organisations who have advanced their data collection through the Endless Inclusion Community and our ethical trade supplier forums. Work with industry to ensure alignment and reduce duplication in data collection and reporting. 	Improved data collection and better insight into workforce trends and barriers, and readiness for upcoming regulatory requirements.
Continue to improve quality of action planning:	Encourage suppliers to create measurable and accountable action plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote use of Co-op's Gender Pay Gap Toolkit and action plan template, supported by additional resources on the Endless Inclusion Hub. Provide tailored feedback to our strategic suppliers who completed the gender equity survey. 	More consistent, outcome-focused action plans addressing root causes.
Address structural representation challenges:	Focus on progression and leadership representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showcase suppliers who have improved representation for women in leadership highlighting different sectors. Facilitate webinar sessions on topics such as career progression and recruitment bias. Explore cross company initiatives such as mentoring for female employees. 	Greater focus on internal progression and improved gender balance at senior levels.



Priority Area:	Action:	What we'll do:	Expected Result:
Tailored Support:	Tailor engagement based on supplier type and maturity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Segment suppliers using government data and survey findings (e.g. GFR vs GNFR) and prioritise support where gaps are largest. Listen to suppliers to better understand their challenges and needs for support. 	More effective support and faster progress where it is most needed.
Track progress and accountability over time:	Strengthen monitoring and accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue annual pay gap analysis and reporting to track progress. Increase participation in gender equity survey. 	Clearer view of year-on-year and ability to measure whether Co-op's supplier interventions are driving meaningful change over time.

