Disability pay gap 2024 – explained

We are pleased to report our first disability pay gap report. While there is no statutory requirement to do so, we are choosing to do so as we are committed to transparency and equity in pay and improving representation and the experience of disabled staff at Cranfield. This data and analysis will help us better understand our staff demographic and experience. The pay gap data informs us about areas where we need to make progress, and to implement relevant action plans in line with our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and People strategies.

Definitions

The pay gap is the percentage difference between the average hourly earnings of staff choosing to share they are disabled, have a long-term condition or impairment, and non-disabled staff across the University. This is different to equal pay, which shows us whether there are differences in pay between disabled and non-disabled staff doing comparable work.

Data

Our figures are based on a data 'snapshot' taken on the same date each year – 31 March. The report covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

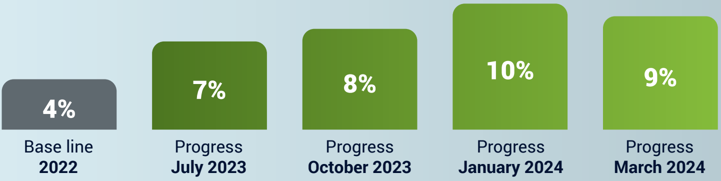
The pay gap statistics

Staff disability sharing profile

Increase in disability sharing rates

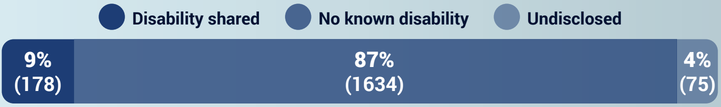
The proportion of staff sharing they are disabled or have a long-term condition or impairment has been increasing over recent years, reflecting improving levels of trust in our organisation. This is a positive reflection of several initiatives aimed at fostering an inclusive environment and the activities we have undertaken about the importance of sharing through communications and via our disability staff network. Efforts to raise awareness of disability inclusion have contributed to greater engagement in disability-related conversations.

The graphic below shows our disability sharing rates since we set our strategic KPI in 2022. We initially set our target to increase sharing rates from 4% in 2022 to 6% by 2027 and we are pleased to report we have exceeded this KPI.



Staff disability sharing profile 2024

The graphic below shows the University's staff disability sharing profile. As of March 2024, 9% (n=178) of the University population had shared a disability, long-term condition or impairment, with 87% (n=1634) sharing they had no known disability.



The number of staff choosing to share they are disabled, have a long term condition or impairment, has risen sharply in recent years, from 78 (5%) in 2021/22[1] to 166 (9%) in 2023/24[1], and at 9% compares favourably with the wider HEI sector[2]. At Cranfield, just 4% of staff (n=75) chose 'prefer not to share' this information at all.

We are pleased that our staff feel comfortable being open about this aspect of their identity, and as part of our ongoing commitment, we will continue our annual equality monitoring programme, actively seeking updates to the protected characteristics data we hold.

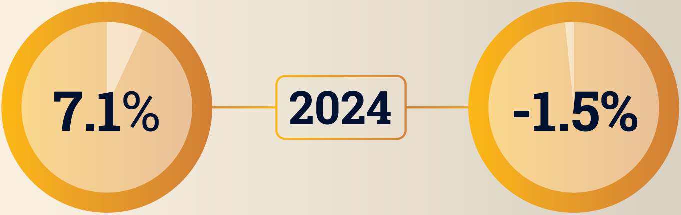
The disabilities, conditions and impairments that were shared by staff in March 2024 are shown below.

Learning difference such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D	45
Long-term illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	41
Mental health condition, challenge or disorder, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety	37
D/deaf or have a hearing impairment	18
An impairment, health condition or learning difference not listed	14
Physical impairment (a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, lifting or carrying)	11
Social/communication conditions such as a speech and language impairment or an autistic spectrum condition	5

Two or more impairments and/or disabling medical conditions	<5
Development condition that you have had since childhood which affects motor, cognitive, social and emotional skills, and speech and language	<5
Blind or have a visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	<5

[1] Source: EDI Annual report 2023-2024 (snapshot data 31 July 2024)
[2] Benchmark: Advance HE Staff statistical report 2024

Pay gap



Mean
(average)

Median
(middle)

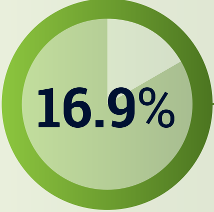
The mean disability pay gap was 7.1%, which means the average hourly salary of staff who have shared they are disabled or have a long-term condition or impairment is 7.1% lower than the equivalent for staff who have no known disability.

The median disability pay gap was -1.5%, which means the middle hourly salary for staff who have shared they are disabled or have a long-term condition or impairment was 1.5% higher than the equivalent for staff who have no known disability.

Both these pay gaps are strongly influenced by the distribution of our workforce, specifically underrepresentation of staff in senior roles sharing they are disabled, have a long term health condition or impairment. This is explained in more detail later in this report.

Bonus pay gap

Proportion of staff receiving a bonus



2024

Shared a disability

No known disability

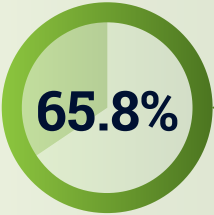
The proportion of staff who had shared a disability receiving a bonus was 16.9%, compared to 14.8% of staff who had shared they have no known disability.

There are two types of bonus payments:

Recognition award
This is open to all staff and is based on exceptional performance.

Bonus scheme
The bonus scheme for senior managers is based on the achievement of key targets which includes areas such as income and business generation.

Difference in bonus payment beween staff who have shared and not shared disability



2024

Mean (average)

Median (middle)

The mean disability bonus gap is 65.8%, which means the average bonus paid to staff who had shared they had a disability was 65.8% lower than the equivalent for staff who had shared they had no known disability.

The median disability bonus gap is 50%, which means the middle average bonus paid to staff who had shared a disability was 50% lower than the equivalent for staff who had shared they had no known disability.

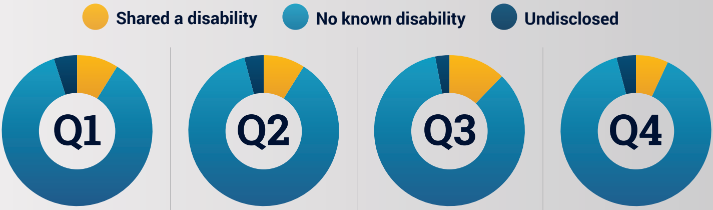
At Cranfield, bonus payments are typically calculated as a percentage of salary. As shown later in this report, staff who have shared a disability are underrepresented in the most senior roles, leading to lower average bonuses for this group compared to staff who have shared they have no known disability. This underrepresentation at senior levels may partly be due to under-reporting, in particular amongst more senior academic staff. Encouraging people to share at all levels continues to be a priority for Cranfield.

Other forms of recognition are in place at Cranfield, such as promotion, accelerated salary increments, and moves into a high-performance zone at each salary level, and these are not reported in our bonus pay gap figures. We perform Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) for our Annual Pay and Reward Review to assess whether there are any inequalities in the awarding of pay increases and reward.

Proportion of staff within each pay quartile

The quartiles are calculated by dividing employees into four bands from the lowest hourly rate of pay (Q1) to the highest (Q4). If there is a higher proportion of any group of staff at the upper or lower quartiles, then this will impact the overall pay gap.

The composition of staff in the upper and lower pay quartiles reflects strongly in our pay gap and bonus pay gap. The data in the graphics below shows that the proportion of staff who share they are disabled, or have a long term condition or impairment continue to be underrepresented in the University, especially at higher pay quartiles compared to staff with no known disability.



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Shared a disability	9.1%	9.1%	12.3%	7.2%
No known disability	86%	86.9%	84.7%	88.7%
Undisclosed	4.9%	4%	3%	4%

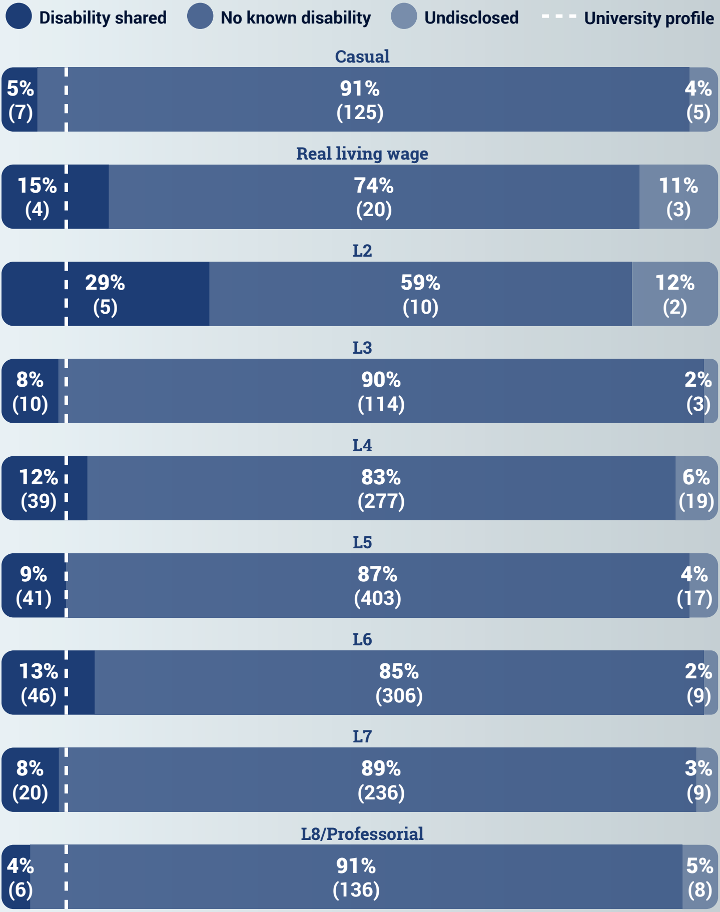
The above shows that the proportion of staff who shared they have a disability is lowest within the highest pay quartile.

Key factors affecting our disability pay gap

Workforce distribution

The graphics below show the distribution of our workforce across our pay scales as of March 2024. Staff sharing they are disabled, or have a long-term condition or impairment make up 9% of the overall staff population, and are particularly underrepresented in the top two salary levels. This representation is reflected in the overall mean pay gap.

The below also illustrates nearly three-quarters of staff who have shared they are disabled or have a long-term condition or impairment are in the middle salary levels, specifically levels 4 to 6, resulting in a higher median (middle) salary. Staff with no known disability were distributed more broadly across the pay scales resulting in a lower median salary for this group. This difference in distribution impacted the overall median pay gap.



Snapshot of initiatives and actions we are taking to help close the gap

Strengthening disability networks and advocacy

- Our disability staff network aims to promote disability awareness and a safe and supportive environment to make Cranfield a more inclusive University for disabled staff and students.
- The network has continued to provide a space for peer support and advocacy, ensuring that the lived experiences of disabled staff inform institutional policies and practices.
- The network has shaped discussions around reasonable adjustments, career progression, and workplace support.

Workplace adjustments and accessibility

- New guidance and a framework for reasonable adjustments has been developed through a cross-University working group.
- Work has commenced on improving accessibility in both digital and physical environments, ensuring staff and students can access facilities and resources equitably.

Neurodiversity awareness training

- A University-wide neurodiversity training programme was introduced, aimed at increasing awareness of neurodivergent experiences in the workplace.
- Cranfield has become a member of the Neurodiversity in Business network, enhancing knowledge-sharing and best practice implementation.

Workload and wellbeing

- Cranfield University recognises the importance of staff wellbeing and work-life balance and continues to provide a range of wellbeing support services. These include the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), Occupational Health Service, Mental Health First Aiders, resilience sessions, wellbeing campaigns, and access to physio services. While recent staff surveys have highlighted increased concerns around workload, the University remains committed to supporting staff wellbeing through ongoing initiatives and resources.

Looking ahead

To continue addressing the disability pay gap and advancing disability equality and inclusion, Cranfield's action plan includes initiatives at each stage of the employee lifecycle. Our actions include:

- A reasonable adjustments in recruitment project as part of our Disability Confident Leader submission. This will include reviewing barrier-free recruitment practices, ensuring candidates with disabilities can fully access and navigate the hiring process, and providing guidance for managers and hiring teams on making inclusive recruitment decisions.
- A full review of Cranfield's Disability Policy, ensuring it aligns with best practices in workplace accessibility and support.
- Review promotion pathways and internal progression structures to identify and address barriers and enable equal access to career advancement.
- Introduce a reverse mentoring programme, pairing senior leaders with less senior staff to foster greater awareness of workplace barriers and career challenges and to promote inclusion.
- Deliver a National Inclusion Week programme that highlights disability inclusion, neurodiversity, and workplace accessibility.
- Strengthen support for disability-focused staff networks, providing structure and platforms for advocacy.
- Continue Equality Impact Assessments of pay awards and pay gaps.
- Develop an action plan following an equal pay review.
- Conduct a campaign to encourage increased sharing rates for disabilities, conditions and impairments.