Storal

Storal Nurseries Ltd

Gender Pay Gap Report

Snapshot date: 5 April 2025 | Reference period: 6 April 2024 – 5 April 2025 | Published: April 2026

Introduction

At Storal, we believe that fairness and transparency aren't just legal obligations — they're part of who we are. We're proud to publish our Gender Pay Gap Report for the snapshot date of 5 April 2025, in line with the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

This year marks a significant milestone for us: it's our first report for Storal and Children 1st operating as one. This report reflects our combined workforce for the first time.

The report covers 1,572 employees who were employed and in receipt of full pay on 5 April 2025, across our nurseries and central support teams. Our workforce is overwhelmingly female — 95.9% of our people identify as women — which is consistent with prior years and reflects the wider demographic of the early years and childcare sector across the UK.

Statutory Data

Pay Gap

Mean gender pay gap	28.6% (men higher)
Median gender pay gap	9.4% (men higher)

Bonus Gap

Mean bonus gap	79.2% (men higher)
Median bonus gap	94.1% (men higher)
Proportion of men receiving a bonus	1.6%
Proportion of women receiving a bonus	2.5%

Pay Quartiles

The table below shows the proportion of male and female employees in each pay quartile. The 2024 figures are drawn from the prior year reports of Storal and Children 1st for indicative comparison.

Pay Quartile	*Salary Range*	*% Male 2025*	*% Female 2025*	*% Male 2024**	*% Female 2024**
Lower	£3,409 – £16,224	4.1%	95.9%	4%	96%
Lower Middle	£16,250 – £23,878	1.5%	98.5%	4%	96%
Upper Middle	£23,883 – £26,624	5.0%	95.0%	2%	98%
Upper	£26,676 – £225,000	5.7%	94.3%	6%	94%

** 2024 figures are combined indicative averages from Children 1st and Storal prior year reports, provided for context only. They are not directly comparable to the 2025 combined entity figures.*

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Understanding Our Pay Gap

Our First Year as One Organisation

2025 is the first year we're reporting as Storal and Children 1st combined, and we think it's important to be transparent about what that means for how you read our numbers.

Children 1st had reported annually for eight years and had a strong pay gap story to tell: its mean pay gap had reduced from 15.9% in April 2021 to 8.7% by April 2024, with a median gap that had turned slightly negative at (1.9%) — meaning women at the midpoint of the pay distribution were, on average, marginally better paid than men. Its board was 100% female.

Storal carried a higher mean pay gap of 77% in its 2024 report, driven by a concentration of male employees in Head Office roles attracting London-weighted salaries. However, its median gap was just (2%) — again slightly favouring women — showing that at a typical employee level, pay was broadly equal.

Combining Children 1st and Storal together into a single report produces a blended picture. Our 2025 mean pay gap of 28.6% reflects the merged workforce and cannot be directly compared to either predecessor's prior year figure. It is, however, considerably lower than the Storal mean of 77%, and our median gap of 9.4% remains low — consistent with the pattern both predecessor businesses established.

How We've Tracked Over Time

The table below shows the pay gap metrics reported by Storal and Children 1st in prior years, alongside our 2025 combined figures. It helps show the direction of travel we're coming from.

Metric	***2022***	***2023***	***2024***	***2025***
Mean pay gap (Children 1st)	12.7%	12.8%	8.7%	n/a
Median pay gap (Children 1st)	n/a	0.9%	(1.9%)	n/a
Mean pay gap (Storal)	n/a	n/a	77%	n/a
Median pay gap (Storal)	n/a	n/a	(2%)	n/a
Mean pay gap (Storal — combined)	n/a	n/a	n/a	28.6%
Median pay gap (Storal — combined)	n/a	n/a	n/a	9.4%

The consistent near-zero or negative median gaps across both Children 1st and Storal give us confidence that pay at the midpoint of our distribution has been managed well. Children 1st's four-year reduction in its mean gap is also an encouraging foundation to build from. Our 2025 combined median of 9.4% is consistent with that trajectory, adjusted for the reality of bringing two different workforce structures together.

Who We Are

As of 5 April 2025, we employed 1,572 people in receipt of full pay: 1,508 women (95.9%) and 64 men (4.1%). This is consistent with the profile of both Storal and Children 1st, and with the early years sector more broadly, where many practitioners, room leaders and managers are female.

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Because we have a relatively small number of male employees, our mean and median figures are particularly sensitive to the specific roles those individuals hold. A small cohort of men in senior and specialist positions — including our Finance Director, Head of Property, Head of Technology and Head of People Operations — has a meaningful upward effect on the male average salary. This is the primary driver of our reported pay gap, not a systematic difference in how we pay men and women doing the same jobs.

The Mean Pay Gap (28.6%)

Our mean pay gap of 28.6% reflects the difference in average salaries across the whole combined workforce. It is driven by what both Children 1st and Storal described: Children 1st noted that male staff were "significantly underrepresented at apprenticeship and nursery staff grades", and Storal observed that the concentration of men in higher-paid Head Office roles skewed the mean. Both of those dynamics are present in our combined organisation.

We want to be clear: this figure does not mean we pay women less than men for the same work. Where men and women are doing equivalent roles and working comparable hours, our pay is consistent.

The Median Pay Gap (9.4%)

We think the median pay gap of 9.4% is the more honest representation of what's happening across our workforce day to day. It measures the difference between the person in the middle of the male pay distribution and the person in the middle of the female pay distribution, and it's much less susceptible to being pulled around by a small number of high earners.

Both Children 1st and Storal consistently reported near-zero or negative median gaps, and we're proud to continue in that direction. The 9.4% we're reporting in 2025 reflects the blending of two organisations with different pay structures. We don't see it as a deterioration — we see it as a starting point for our combined entity.

The gap that does exist is largely explained by a higher proportion of our female employees working in part-time roles including lunchtime assistants, evening cover and home childcare working patters which carry lower full-pay equivalent salaries. These are roles our people often choose to fit around caring responsibilities, and we are committed to supporting that flexibility while also opening pathways into higher-graded work for those who want it.

Our Leadership and the Quartile Picture

Women make up the substantial majority of our workforce in all four pay quartiles, ranging from 95.9% in the lower quartile to 94.3% in the upper quartile. This is consistent with the quartile distributions reported by both Children 1st and Storal in 2024, where female representation ranged between 93% and 99% across all quartiles.

We're particularly proud of the female representation at the top of our organisation. Our CEO, Chief Growth Officer, Education & Quality Director, Operations Director, People Director, Head of Environmental Quality, Head of Quality Assurance and Compliance, Head of Apprenticeships, Head of Sales Operations, and Head of Financial Planning & Analysis are all women. This isn't the result of quotas or positive action — it reflects a culture that has genuinely developed and promoted female talent into our most senior roles over many years.

To put that in context: according to the FTSE Women Leaders Review 2025, women hold just 35% of leadership roles across FTSE 350 companies, and only 29% of executive committee positions. Only 7% of FTSE 350 CEOs are women, and as of the end of 2025, just 8 of the 100 largest listed UK companies had a female CEO — the same number as in 2021. Six in ten leadership roles at the average FTSE 350 company are still held by men. Our leadership composition tells a very different story, and we think that matters.

The Bonus Gap

Our mean bonus gap of 79.2% and median bonus gap of 94.1% are the figures we know will draw the most scrutiny, so we want to explain them clearly.

In the reference period 6 April 2024 to 5 April 2025, we paid bonuses to 39 employees: 38 women and 1 man. With only one male bonus recipient, both gap figures are entirely a reflection of that one individual's bonus relative to the spread of female bonuses — they don't represent a pattern of men being rewarded more generously than women.

Among our female bonus recipients, the majority received awards linked to nursery management and regional leadership performance. These are typically smaller in value.

For context, Children 1st reported a 0% bonus gap in both 2023 and 2024, because no male employees were eligible for bonuses. Storal reported a mean bonus gap of 95% and median of 96% in 2024, driven by the same dynamic we see in 2025 — a small number of senior male recipients in Head Office roles. Our 2025 position is consistent with that pattern.

We're also pleased to note that a slightly higher proportion of our female employees (2.5%) than male employees (1.6%) received a bonus in this period. Most of our bonus scheme participants are female nursery managers and regional leaders, and we think that's the right reflection of where performance is being delivered across our organisation.

Our Commitments

As Children 1st and Storal, we're building on the strong foundations our predecessor businesses laid, and we're committed to continuing to make progress. Here's what we're focused on:

- Keeping women well represented at every level of our organisation, including in our most senior roles, and continuing to build the development pathways that make that possible.
- Reviewing our bonus eligibility criteria across the combined organisation to make sure the scheme works fairly and consistently and doesn't inadvertently create structural gaps as our two legacy workforces continue to integrate.
- Supporting flexible working in a way that genuinely opens doors — so that the people who work part-time or in sessional roles can access higher-graded positions if they want to, rather than feeling constrained by their working pattern.
- Keeping a close eye on pay at the point of appointment and promotion, to catch and address any unexplained disparities early.
- Actively encouraging more men into nursery practitioner roles. We know from Children 1st's experience that these matters — not just for our pay gap, but because diverse teams make better environments for the children in our care.
- Publishing our gender pay gap every year and being honest about our progress, starting from this baseline as Children 1st and Storal combined.

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Declaration

I confirm that the information and data reported in this Gender Pay Gap Report is accurate and has been prepared in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

Signed:

Name: Sarah Mackenzie

Position: Chief Executive Officer

Date: April 2026