

## Gender Pay Gap Figures Show Little Progress

**Private sector companies with 250 or more employees were required to publish their latest gender pay gap reports by 4th April 2019. As this deadline has now passed, we have been left with a new set of figures showing the pay practices of some of the UK's largest private employers:**

- The figures show almost 8 out of 10 employers still pay men more than women, whilst the difference in pay increased in favour of men at 45% of firms.
- However, the overall average pay gap in favour of men lowered slightly to 9.6% this year from 9.7% in 2018.
- The construction sector had the widest gender pay gap, with an average gap of 24.2% between men and women, followed by finance with 23.9%.
- In contrast the accommodation and food services sector had the lowest average pay gap of 0.6% in favour of men.
- 10,428 eligible organisations successfully submitted their reports before the deadline, whilst 352 organisations with less than 250 employees chose to voluntarily submit a report.
- There has been no confirmation on how many firms failed to file by the deadline, however the Equality and Human Rights Commission have promised to take enforcement action against those who continue to ignore this requirement.

### Only 1% of new parents took up Shared Parental Leave

A TUC study has shown only 1% of parents took up Shared Parental Leave (SPL) in 2018. This adds support to the suggestion that many employees are either unaware of how SPL works or do not find it an attractive way of balancing work and family commitments.

#### Did you know?

Qualifying parents can share up to 50 weeks of SPL, receiving pay for up to 37 weeks of this. SPL can be taken flexibly; parents will decide for themselves whether leave is taken as one single continuous period or in separate blocks. It is also possible for both parents to be on SPL at the same time.

### Injury to feelings compensation increases

The Vento bands which are used to categorise compensation amounts for 'injury to feelings' at employment tribunals increased on 6th April 2019. This means employers could face greater pay outs for cases where their actions have caused employees significant emotional distress.

#### Did you know?

Employers could have to pay between £900 -£44,000 for injury to feelings depending on the seriousness of their actions. This is part of the overall unlimited compensation amount that applies to discrimination claims which are successful at an employment tribunal.

### 'Management style' blamed for stress related absences

A CIPD and Simplyhealth study has revealed that heavy workloads (62%) and management style (43%) were common reasons respondents had to take time off work due to stress, suggesting managers may benefit from more training to support staff with work related stress.

#### Did you know?

Sick leave costs UK employers £77billion a year in lost productivity and it is important to reduce sickness wherever possible. Managers and HR personnel have an important role to play by keeping a close eye on employees who appear to be struggling with stress and stepping in to help when necessary.

Employers continue to be under pressure to improve gender equality and address unequal pay practices at work. Whilst the Gender Pay Gap reporting requirements are seen as one solution to this, there are many other positive steps employers can take. Therefore, for expert advice on improving the gender balance in your organisation give our 24 hour Advisory Service a call.

Please contact the 24 Hour Advice Service for advice on your specific situation before acting on the information in this publication.