

# Disability pay gap report

Network Rail's disability pay gap has been calculated in line with Government regulations. The report is based on snapshot data as of 31 March 2024 and covers activities between April 2023 – March 2024.



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**2024**

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This report is prepared on behalf of Network Rail Infrastructure Limited, a member of the Network Rail Group of companies owned by Network Rail Limited.

# This is the fourth year we have published this report, which demonstrates our commitment as disability confident leaders.

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Regrettably, our disability pay gap increased by 2.2% compared to the previous year. Although this remains 10.2% lower than the UK average, it is not the direction we want to be going.

On a more positive note, more than three quarters (76.4%) of our colleagues are now openly sharing their disability status, reflecting a 1.8% increase from the previous year. This is a positive indicator of inclusion and suggests that we are fostering a more psychologically safe culture. More comprehensive data also allows for a more thorough pay gap analysis. Additionally, there has been a 0.4% increase in the representation of disabled colleagues in management roles. Supporting colleagues in progressing into more senior roles within the organisation remains a key priority.

We have made significant efforts this year to remove barriers. For instance, we recognise that obtaining the right workplace adjustments can make a substantial difference. Following a thorough review of our adjustments policy, process, and guidance, we established a cross-

functional project group to take meaningful action based on the findings. Since then, we have simplified the process, making it fairer and more supportive for everyone. Clearer guidance and a dedicated platform are just some of the actions we've already implemented, but we remain committed to listening, learning, and continuously improving.

We have also partnered with Ambitious about Autism to offer neurodivergent individuals a one-year paid placement. The team worked diligently to make the recruitment process both simple and clear, and we hope to apply these learnings to our future advertisements. This initiative will compliment the work we're already doing across Network Rail to attract more disabled candidates.

As disability confident leaders, we are dedicated to improving our workplace for all colleagues, ensuring they can feel psychologically safe and able to help us in our mission to connect people and goods with where they need be.



**Clive Berrington**

Group director, Railway Business Services



# Our disability pay gap

## What is the disability pay gap?

The disability pay gap shows the difference in the average hourly rate of pay between disabled and non-disabled employees. When calculating this pay gap, we look at the median value which is the middle number in a sorted list of data. The median is the most representative measure as it voids a small amount of very high and low salaries skewing the results. The gap is driven by an underrepresentation of disabled people in higher paid roles.

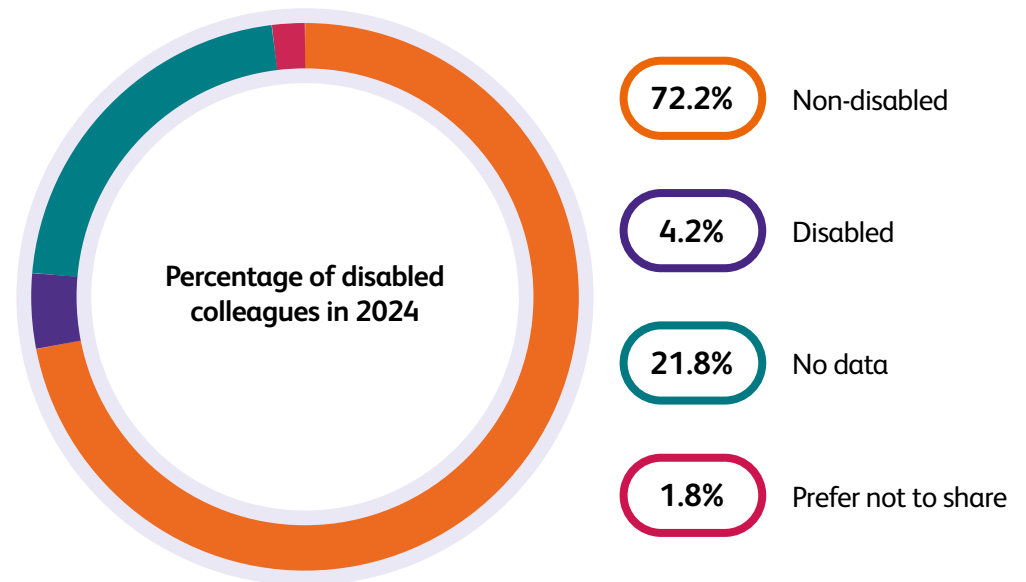
## How we calculate the pay gap

To calculate our disability pay gap we take a snapshot of our pay data at 31 March 2023 (in line with our gender and ethnicity pay gap reporting approach). A pay gap above zero per cent shows that on average disabled employees earn less than their non-disabled counterparts and the opposite would be true if the pay gap is below zero per cent.

# Our 2024 results

Our median disability pay gap has increased by 2.2 percentage points to 3.6% compared to last year. This remains lower than the UK average disability pay gap in 2021 of 13.8 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

Year	Median disability pay gap	Mean disability pay gap
2024	3.6%	4.4%
2023	1.4%	3.2%
2022	2.6%	3.8%

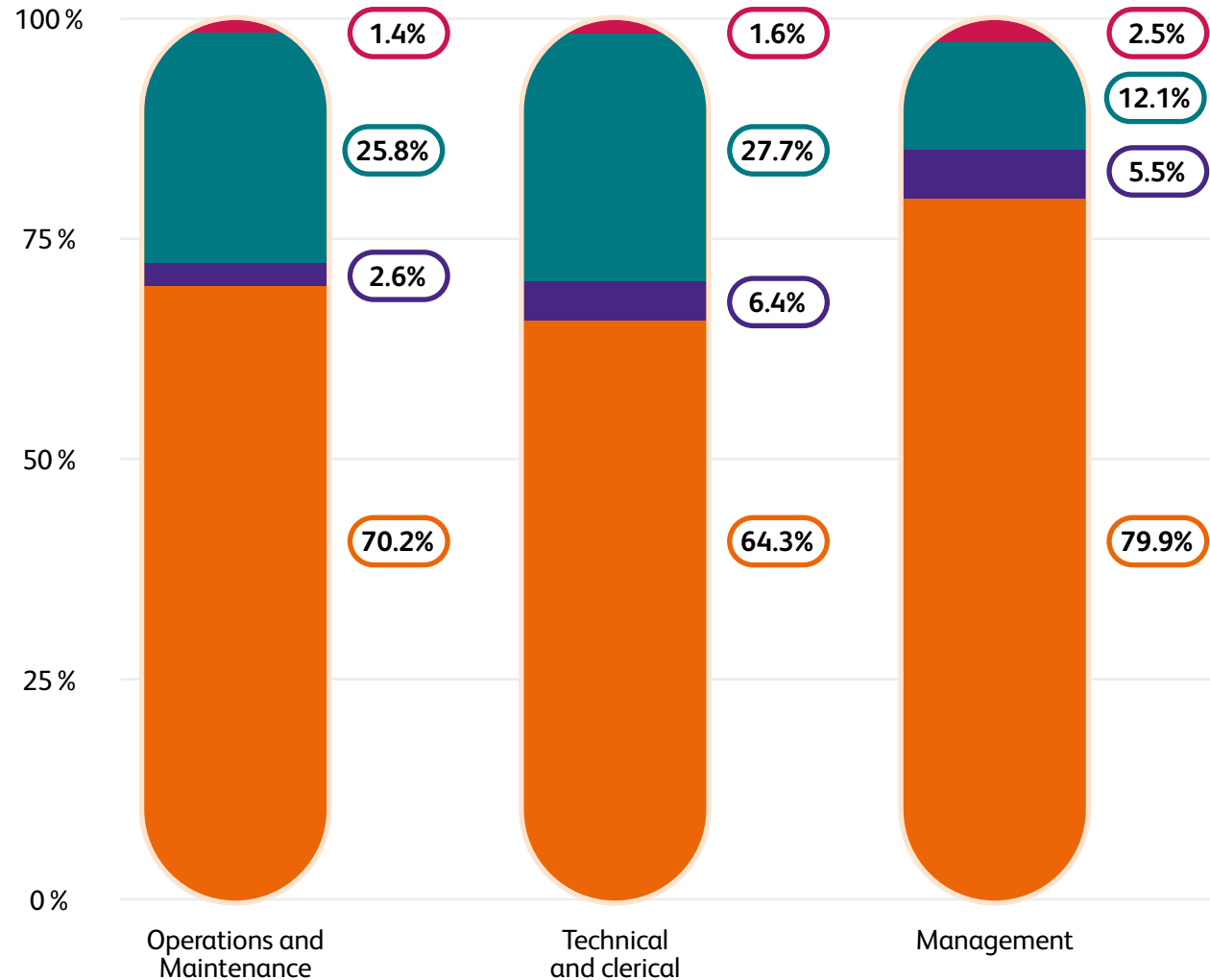


Last year we had an increase in the number of employees who had shared their disability status to 74.6 per cent. This year, we are pleased to confirm a continued increase in the disclosure rates with 76.4 per cent of employees now sharing their disability status. This is a 1.8 percentage point increase from last year. It is encouraging to see this continuing to increase since we began reporting our disability pay gap.

However, just under a quarter of our workforce (23.6 per cent) still have either chosen not to share or have not provided their data at all.

# Sharing of disability status by role type

Disability status by role type



The highest sharing rates remain in management roles with 85.4 per cent of employees sharing their disability status. There has been an increase in the number of employees sharing their data within the Operations and Maintenance population at 72.8 per cent, an increase of 3.1 percentage points from last year. This puts the Operations and Maintenance group ahead of the Technical and Clerical group for disclosure rates for the first time. The biggest percentage of employees not sharing their data now sits within the Technical and Clerical population, with only 70.7 per cent sharing. This is a 1.4 percentage point decrease on last year.

Of the role types where colleagues have shared their disability status, the highest proportion of disabled colleagues sit in Technical and Clerical roles at 6.4 per cent, followed by Management at 5.5 per cent and then Operations and Maintenance where only 2.6 per cent have shared they have a disability.

- Non-disabled
- Disabled
- No data
- Prefer not to share

# Disability pay gap compared with 'no data'

Disability status	Median hourly rate	Pay gap
Non-disabled	£25.98	
Disabled	£25.05	3.6%
No data	£26.00	-0.1%
Prefer not to share	£27.95	-7.6%

The highest disability pay gap is -7.6 per cent between those with a disability and the employees who preferred not to disclose their disability status. However, this group is very small and therefore sensitive to large fluctuations.

We hold no data for 21.8 per cent of our colleagues and these employees have a higher median hourly rate than both our disabled and non-disabled employees. By increasing our data sharing for this group of colleagues, this will have an impact on our disability pay gap.

# Disability project

Our disability project is part of our wider **'Everyone Belongs' strategy for equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)**, which spans from 2024 to 2029. It aims to remove barriers we know disabled colleagues and candidates face and improve representation at all levels of the organisation to enhance disabled employee experience. We have adopted the social model of disability, and the principles of 'nothing about us without us' which means that disabled colleagues are actively involved in informing our proposals, plans and processes. We want to increase the visibility, voice, and leadership of disabled colleagues and we have set up a 'disability steering group' composed of key stakeholders including our Executive sponsor, our Trade Unions and those with lived experience, to ensure we are held accountable for the progress we are making.

**"We know the information we are sharing is not the whole picture of the disability pay gap or our disabled employees' experience at Network Rail. However, we are publishing this information to encourage more of our people to share their diversity data with us, to highlight the action we're taking, and to lead the industry in prioritising disability inclusion. The more data we hold, the more analysis we can do to better understand the outcomes of our processes for disabled people and those with long term health conditions, and crucially take action to address disparities in the outcomes of our processes. The pay gap figure itself is just one way we measure our progress, and must be considered alongside other crucial measures such as employee experience, retention and engagement. We're committed to making disability inclusion a business priority, and address issues that are too often put in the 'too difficult' box."**

**Lily Kitchen**, Senior equity, diversity and inclusion specialist and disability project lead at Network Rail.

In this next section we set out the progress we have made between April 2023 and March 2024, as this is the period in which activities have had the chance to impact our pay gap results.



## Making adjustments: Our Commitment to Improvement



We know that getting the right workplace adjustments can make a huge difference, and we've been working hard to make the process simpler, fairer, and more supportive for everyone.

Following a thorough review of our adjustments policy, process, and guidance, we formed a cross-functional project group to take meaningful action based on the findings. Our goal is to improve the experience of requesting and receiving adjustments, making the process clearer, more accessible, and truly supportive for everyone who needs it. The project has introduced:

- A clearer, more accessible policy and guidance – making it easier to understand and apply.
- A streamlined process – reducing complexity and making adjustments quicker to put in place.
- A national cost centre – ensuring cost is never a barrier, so line managers don't have to cover adjustments from their own budgets.
- A dedicated adjustments platform– allowing colleagues to request adjustments easily and giving managers the tools to review and action requests.
- A specialist Adjustments Team within the national EDI team – providing expert support to colleagues, managers, and HR.
- A new dashboard to track impact – monitoring key data, including tribunal cases and feedback from employees and managers.

This new way of working is already making a real difference for disabled colleagues across the country, ensuring they feel supported, valued, and able to thrive at work. This is just the beginning of our journey and we are committed to listening, learning, and continuously improving so that every colleague can thrive at work.



## CanDo employee network

CanDo is our employee network for disability confidence. Its vision is a disability-inclusive culture founded on awareness, advocacy and respect. After recently celebrating their 10-year anniversary, the network now has over 1200 members at all levels and role types across Network Rail. They offer support by sharing their lived experience with the business and with disabled colleagues looking to speak to someone who understands their perspective.

In 2023, CanDo organised and participated in over 20 national events, including an online session, 'Neurodivergence advocacy: ADHD in women' to raise awareness of Neurodivergence in the workplace. With 275 attendees, it was the highest-attended online session by CanDo to date. All our networks work together with CanDo to host events that highlight the intersectionality of disability across the workforce. Events and initiatives include:

- Menopause awareness and support
- 'Activate your Potential' talent development programme
- Sessions on supporting autistic children moving into adulthood
- 'Chronically Brown' speaker session on advocacy for South Asians living with non-visible and visible disabilities

In September 2024 CanDo held their their first annual conference to celebrate 10-years of their network. Bringing together their members, subject matter experts and senior leaders from across the industry to discuss disability inclusion at Network Rail.

## Ambitious about Autism

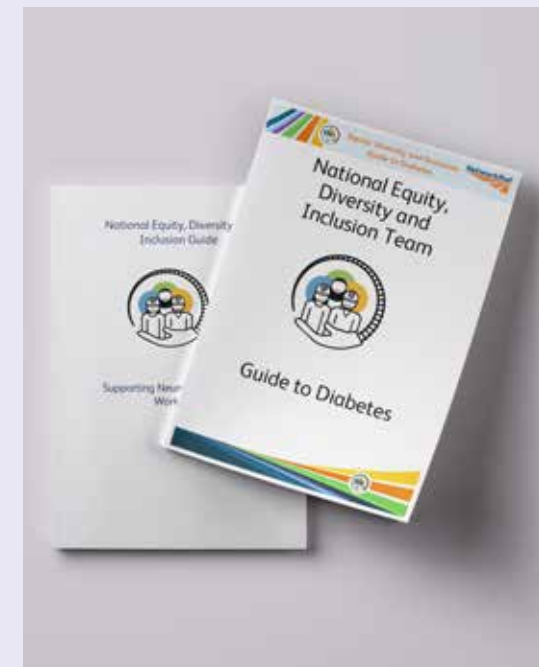
Our colleagues in Route Services Supply Chain Operations (SCO) have recently recruited 3 roles through a partnership with Ambitious about Autism. They wanted to give this underrepresented group of people an opportunity to firstly gain interview experience and if successful, gain work skills through a one-year paid placement. By reducing barriers, they could make it more accessible for neurodivergent individuals to get into full time work. Only 3 in 10 of autistic people are in some form of paid employment<sup>1</sup>, so this was an opportunity to make a difference.

They created 3 1-year placements aimed at neurodivergent candidates, with targeted campaigns for a Contracts Assistant, Project Management Assistant, & Technical Clerk. The roles were advertised via Ambitious about Autism where the advert was adapted to be simpler and clearer. Here is how they approached it:

- The interview questions were simplified and not competency based. Importantly, clear and constructive feedback was provided to all individuals, each candidate was asked how best to receive feedback, via email or call etc. This feedback would have been good for them to take into future applications if unsuccessful with Network Rail. The team found that most individuals preferred feedback via email (not phone call) so they can digest it in their own time, possibly with others who support them.
- The team offered timescales for communications and stuck to each one, so individuals knew what to expect and who they would be hearing from.
- The team filmed a walkthrough of the interview building, to reduce anxiety in interviewees and sent it to them before they came to site.
- Interview questions were sent in advance to give the candidates the best chance to come prepared.
- There was a transition into full time hours over several weeks so that the candidates felt supported. For some candidates, this was the first time they had been in full time work.
- Successful candidates have since been supported with time out for Access to Work meetings and other appointments that support both the individual and the company.
- Everyone involved in the campaign created One Page Profiles to help everyone understand how best they work and the best way to reach out to them. The team made these available on their email signatures.

## New guidance on diabetes and neurodiversity

We have a suite of guidance documents for managers, HR and employees on how to support different conditions in the workplace, including D/deaf and hard of hearing, menopause and supporting accessible and inclusive events. This year we built on this library and created new guidance on diabetes and neurodiversity.



## Providing work experience

Work experience placements and insight sessions are offered on a local level across the business. The central team provide guidance to enable Network Rail colleagues to organise and deliver placements. As part of the process, we ensure that we are proactively offering and making reasonable adjustments which we cover in risk assessments, to ensure that we are being inclusive to all young people, making sure they are fully supported.

We offer insights days in our office in Milton Keynes, and again these are open to all young people. We have delivered sessions to Slated Row School, which is a Special Educational Needs (SEN) school. We recruited volunteers from our CanDo employee network so young people can see and speak to relatable role models, and we delivered activities that were appropriate for the young people based on their learning requirements.

## Sharing our approach and industry collaboration

Sharing our approach and learning from others remains key to our progress.

In 2021, our EDI Manager created a cross-industry collaboration group called 'Rail Unites for Inclusion', with the specific aim to share and learn from each other within rail. This group has expanded to include over 200 people industry wide and is focused on embedding inclusion confidence within the future of rail. We have spoken at external events on disability inclusion and attended many conferences to learn from others.

The Rail Industry Neuroinclusive Community (RINC) has also been established to bring about a neuroinclusive industry where all passengers and employees feel they belong and are treated equitably. This will contribute to a better, greener, growing railway.

We have created a mentoring programme called 'Track to the Future' which is one of our social mobility partnerships delivered by Talent Foundry. This four-part programme is delivered in schools and at our offices, giving young people the opportunity to work on a project as well as be mentored by Network Rail role models. Talent Foundry's ethos is to level the playing field of opportunity so every child can achieve their full potential, regardless of their socio-economic background.

During any work experience or insight days sessions, we actively promote we are a Disability Confident Leader (DCL). In our internal staff briefing document you will see we promote we are a DCL. We are also producing a poster for our STEM Lab to show young people that we are a DCL and will feature some communications about colleagues in roles with non-visible disabilities.

## Recruitment

Over the last year we have put focus on attracting and recruiting disabled candidates into Network Rail. We work with Evenbreak and all of our external roles are pulled through to their careers live job board that is specifically aimed at disabled people.

As mentioned, we have run a successful positive action campaign in Route Services collaborating with Ambitious about Autism, adapting our standard recruitment process to provide a better service to neurodivergent candidates.

We have re-established our assurance activity across the end-to-end resourcing process which has found that all of our adverts confirm our commitment to being a Disability Confident Leader. We also check that our recruiting teams are giving candidates instructions on how to request adjustments at each step of the process, managing candidate expectations throughout and giving tailored feedback.

We have updated the guidance around what adjustments can be offered within the recruitment process to ensure that we are clear that we are removing barriers to promote an equitable process.

**“We’re disappointed that our disability pay gap has increased since last year. While this isn’t what we want to see, the picture is still positive, and we are continuing to work to improve this.**

**We are doing all we can to help colleagues advance to more high-paying roles, through a range of methods, including nurturing a culture of psychological safety. More than three quarters of our colleagues are now openly sharing their disability data, which is a positive statistic.**

**There is more to do as we continue to drive the Everyone Belongs strategy by focusing on inclusion and opportunities for all, so people including all our new starters can thrive and progress through our organisation which will help reduce pay gaps over the coming years.”**



## **Navleen Kalra**

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