

# 3 Gender pay gap

## Key findings

- 2020 was the 11<sup>th</sup> year where full-time females in NI earned at least as much as full-time males on average
- Full-time females earned 46p more per hour than full-time males (£13.28 compared to £12.82)
- NI is the only region in the UK where full-time females earned more than full-time males
- Considering all employees, regardless of working pattern, female hourly pay is below male pay on average due to the higher proportion of female part-time employees

Various methods can be used to measure the earnings of females relative to males. The beginning of this section is based on full-time median hourly earnings excluding overtime; including overtime can distort the picture as males work relatively more overtime than females, and using hourly earnings better accounts for the fact that males work, on average, more hours per week than females (see Figure 16). The remainder of this section considers the earnings of all female and male employees, regardless of working pattern, and also compares annual earnings for females and males.

Although median hourly pay excluding overtime provides useful comparisons of males and females earnings, it does not reveal differences in rates of pay for comparable jobs. This is because such measures do not allow for the different employment characteristics of males and females, such as the proportion in different occupations and their length of time in jobs. For example, a higher proportion of females work in professional occupations, which tend to offer higher salaries.

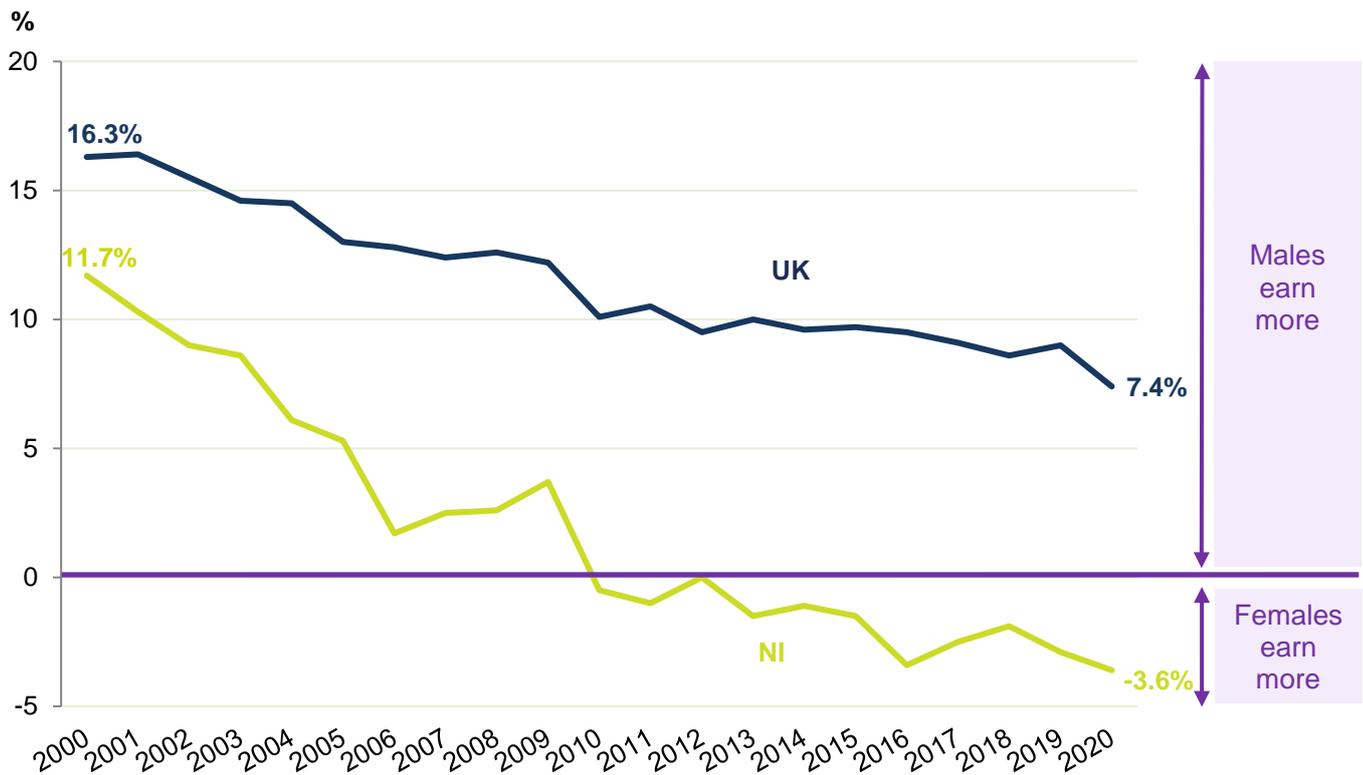
**Gross hourly earnings (excluding overtime)** includes basic pay, commissions, shift premium pay, bonus or incentive pay and allowances, and is before deductions for PAYE, National Insurance, pension schemes, student loan repayments and voluntary deductions

**Gender pay gap:** The headline measure is calculated as the difference between the median full-time hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of males and females, as a proportion of median full-time hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of males earnings.

$$\frac{\text{male earnings} - \text{female earnings}}{\text{male earnings}}$$

## 11<sup>th</sup> year where full-time females earned at least as much as full-time males

Figure 15: Gender Pay Gap for full-time employees in NI and the UK, April 2000 to April 2020



Note: there were a number of methodological changes during the series in 2004, 2006 and 2011. See Section 4 Further information for full details

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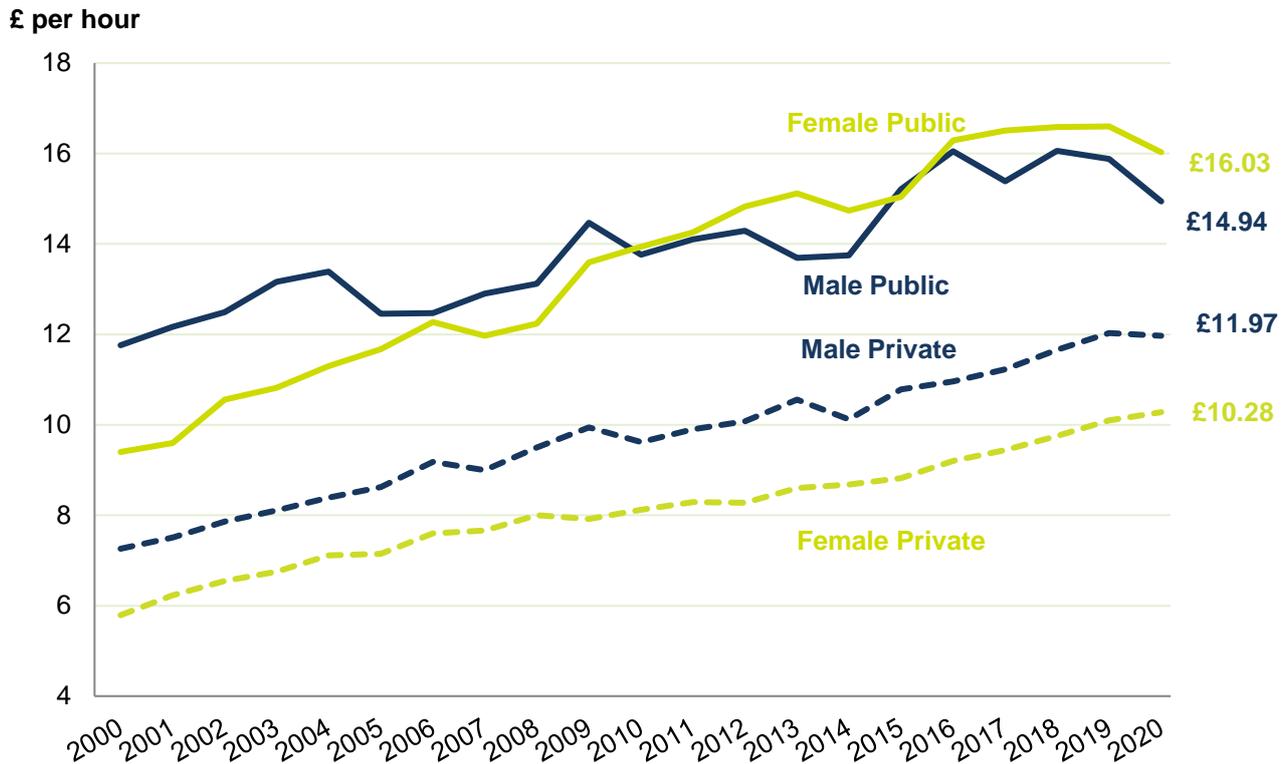
The results from the 2020 ASHE show that the gender pay gap for full-time employees in NI is negative, with females who work full-time earning 46p per hour more on average than males (£13.28 per hour compared to £12.82 per hour for males). This is equivalent to a 3.6% gender pay gap in favour of females; larger than the 2.9% gender pay gap in favour of females (equivalent to 37p per hour) recorded in 2019.

This is the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year where the gender pay gap has been zero or in favour of females, and NI continues to be the only region in the UK where this is the case. In the UK, full-time females (£14.37) earned less than full-time males (£15.53) on average in 2020; a gender pay gap of 7.4% in favour of males.

The following section explores beyond the headline gender pay gap measure (full-time hourly earnings excluding overtime) and considers the experience across different age groups, working patterns, occupations and sectors.

## Females in the public sector have highest average earnings

**Figure 16: Median gross hourly earnings excluding overtime for full-time employees in NI by sector and gender, April 2000 to April 2020**



Note: there were a number of methodological changes during the series in 2004, 2006 and 2011. See Section 4 Further information for full details  
Non-zero axis

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Overall, public sector employees earned more on average than private sector employees. Within this, females earned more in the public sector on average than males, whilst they earned less in the private sector on average than males. This has been the broad trend since 2010.

When making similar comparisons with the UK earnings, full-time males earned more in both the public and private sectors than full-time females. While full-time female public sector workers in the UK (£16.77) earned slightly more (74p per hour) than the NI equivalent (£16.03), UK full-time male private sector workers (£14.66) earn significantly more (£2.69 per hour) than the NI equivalent (£11.97).

Half of full-time females worked in the public sector compared to approximately a quarter of full-time males. Therefore, due to the composition effect of a higher relative proportion of females than males (50% compared with 26% respectively) working in the public sector, where earnings were higher on average, median earnings for full-time females were higher than males.

## Full-time and part-time females earn more than males, but overall males earn more

**Full-time employee** is defined as anyone aged 16 years or over that is directly paid from a business's payroll for carrying out more than 30 paid hours per week (or 25 or more for the teaching professions).

**Part-time employee** is defined as anyone aged 16 years or over working 30 or less paid hours a week (or less than 25 for the teaching professions).

**Figure 17: Median gross hourly earnings excluding overtime by gender in NI, April 2020**



Note: Non-zero axis

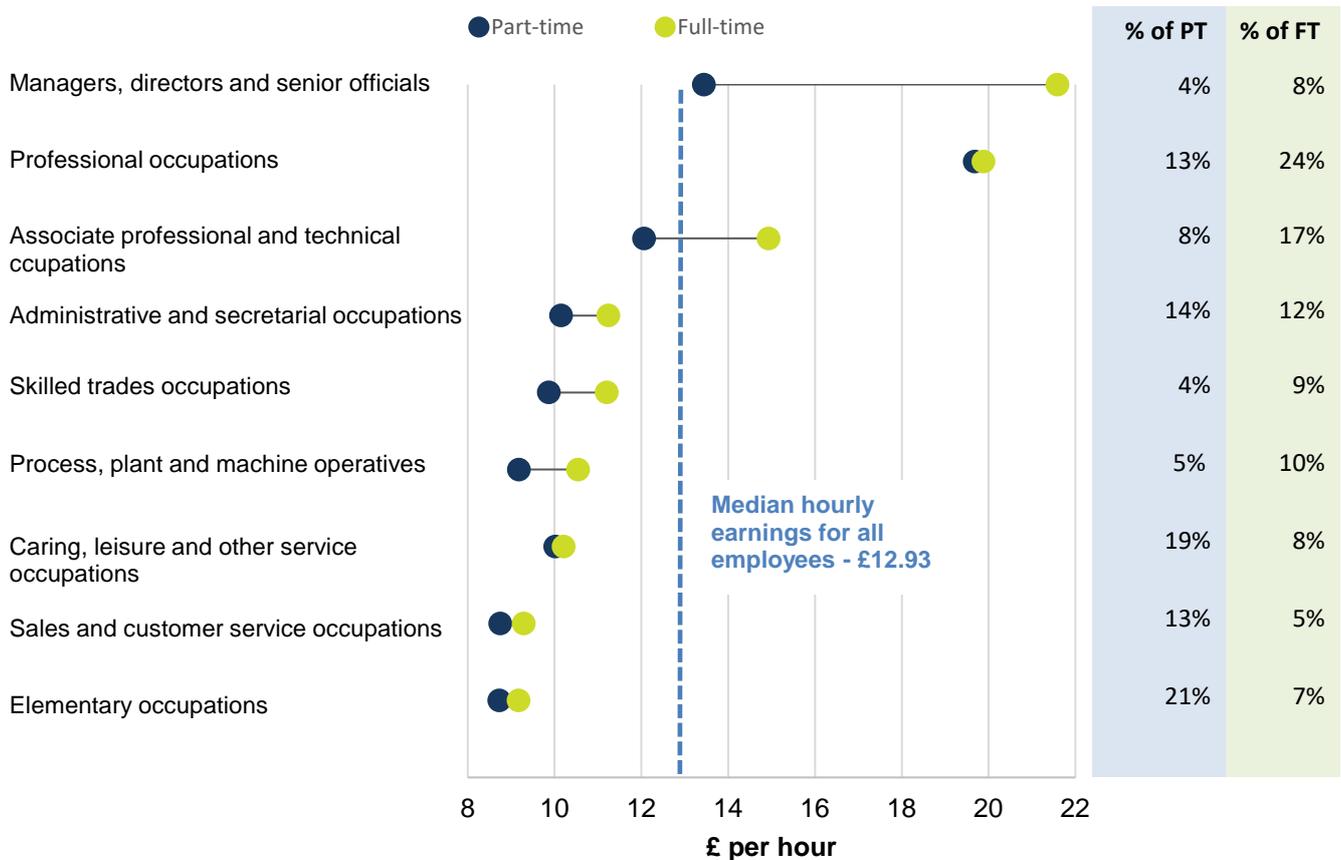
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Figure 17 presents hourly earnings for males and females disaggregated by working pattern and shows that part-time earnings for females (£9.87) were greater than part-time earnings for males (£9.63), and full-time earnings for females (£13.28) were greater than full-time earnings for males (£12.82). However, hourly earnings for males (£12.30), regardless of working pattern, were £1.01 higher than for females (£11.29), and hourly earnings for part time workers were lower than full-time workers regardless of gender.

The higher earnings for 'all' males, regardless of working pattern, is illustrated in the [Gender Pay Gap explanation](#) on the NISRA website. These higher earnings are primarily due to a larger proportion of males (84% compared with 57% of females) in full-time work, which has higher hourly rates of pay on average than part-time employment and proportionately fewer low paid jobs.

## Part-time workers earn less on average in all occupation groups

**Figure 18: Median gross hourly earnings excluding overtime by working pattern and Occupation in NI, April 2020**



Note: Non-zero axis

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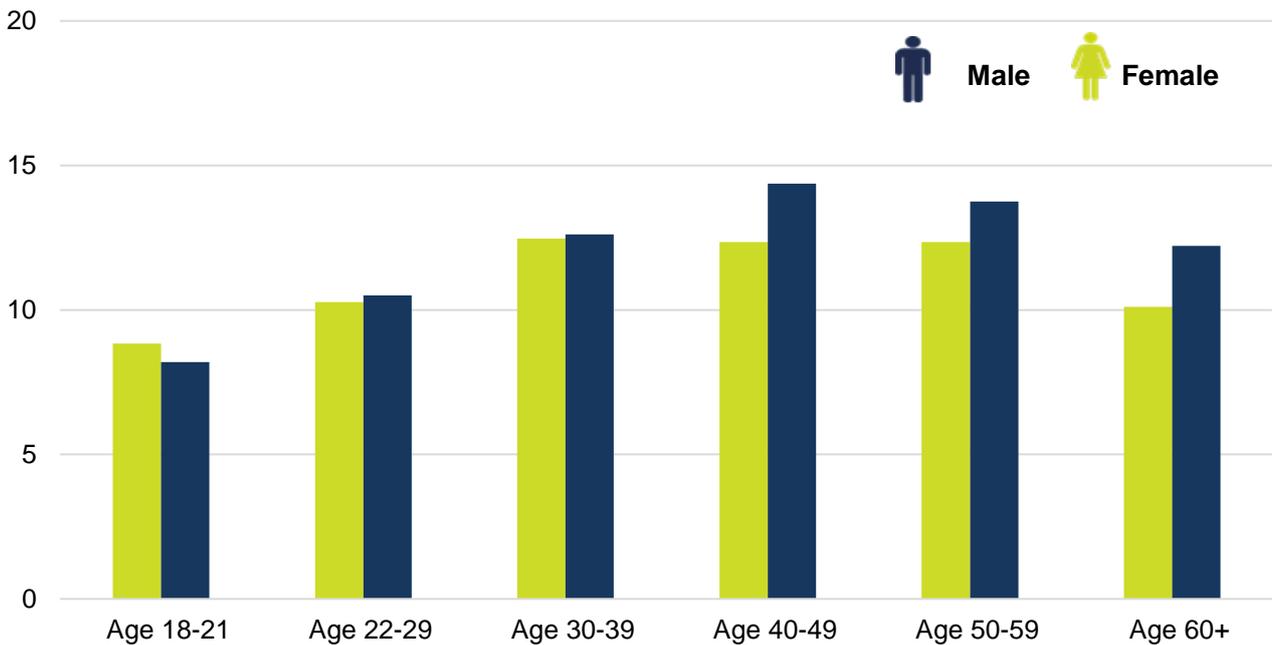
A closer examination of the pay difference between part-time and full-time jobs shows that, not only are part-time jobs more likely in lower paid occupation groups but, even within occupation groups, part-time workers' hourly pay rates are, on average, lower than full-time hourly pay rates.

Figure 18 shows that approximately a third of all part time jobs were in the two lowest paid occupation groups ('Elementary Occupations' and 'Sales and customer service occupations'), while only 12% of full-time jobs were in these occupation groups. At the other end of the pay scale, approximately a third of full-time jobs were in the top two paying occupation groups ('Managers, directors and senior officials' and 'Professional occupations'), compared to under a fifth of part time jobs.

Comparing part-time and full-time hourly rates within occupations shows that part-time workers earned less, on average, in every occupation group, with the difference ranging from £8.15 per hour in 'Managers, directors and senior officials' to 19p per hour in 'Caring, leisure and other service occupations'.

## Largest gender pay gap in the 40+ age groups

Figure 19: Median gross hourly earnings excluding overtime for all employees in NI by age and gender, April 2020



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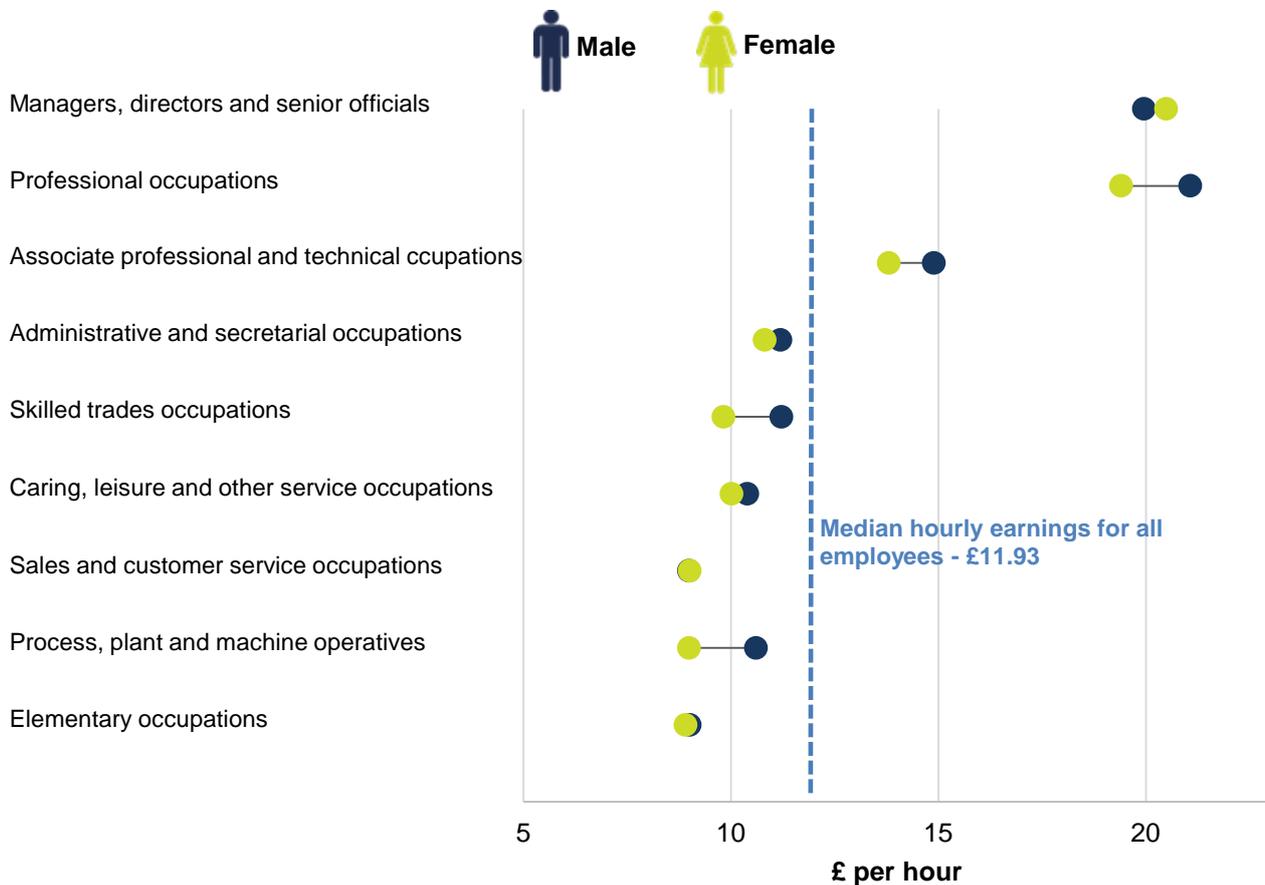
The ASHE 2020 data show that males and females have similar median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for all age groups under 40. However, males earned over £2 per hour more in the 40 to 49 and 60+ age groups, and £1.40 per hour more in the 50 to 59 age group.

Male earnings notably peak higher and later than female earnings. Median hourly earnings for males peaked within the 40-49 age group at £14.37, whilst female's median hourly earnings peaked at £12.47, almost £2.00 lower and in the earlier age category of 30-39 years.

## Females earned less on average than males in seven of the nine occupation groups

**Occupation:** Results are collated using the 2010 Standard Occupation Classification (SOC10).

**Figure 20: Median gross hourly earnings excluding overtime for all employees in NI by occupation and gender, April 2020**



Note: Non-zero axis

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The gender pay gap is in favour of males when considering all employees. Disaggregating the data into occupation groups shows that this holds in seven out of nine occupation groups.

The occupation groups in which females earned more on average were 'Managers, directors and senior officials' (54p per hour more) and 'Sales and customer service occupations' (a small difference of 1p per hour). Females however, made up only a third of employees within 'Managers, directors and senior officials', which is the highest paying group, and only 5% of all females worked in this occupation group.

The largest difference between male and female average pay was in the 'Professional occupations' group, where, on average, for every pound earned by males, females earned 92p (£21.07 compared to £19.40 per hour). Median earnings for males were highest in 'Professional occupations' and 40% of employees within this occupation group were male.

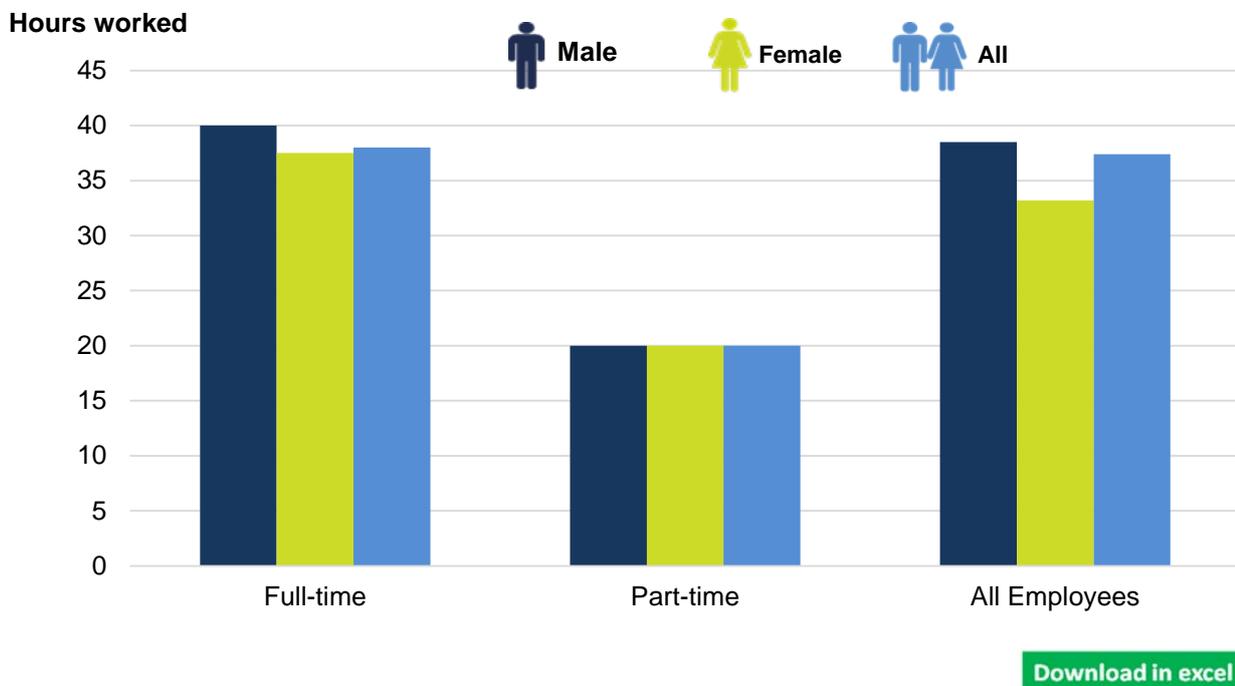
## Median annual pay higher for males due to longer working hours

**Total paid hours worked** is made up of paid basic hours and paid overtime hours. It is calculated using employees on adult rates whose pay was unaffected by absence.

Median full-time gross annual earnings in NI in 2020 was £28,324 for all employees, £26,149 for female employees, and £29,862 for males. This was an increase of 1.9% for females over the year, and a 3.3% increase for males.

The gender pay gap for full-time employees is in favour of males when calculated on annual earnings (whereas it is in favour of women when calculated on hourly pay). The difference between the annual and hourly earnings pay gap measure can be attributed to males working more hours on average and receiving higher bonuses than females.

**Figure 21: Median weekly paid hours worked by working pattern and gender, NI, April 2020**



In April 2020, males in full-time employment worked 2.5 more paid hours per week than females (40 hours compared with 37.5 hours). For those in part-time employment, males and females worked the same amount of paid hours (20 hours).

Overall, males (38.5 hours) worked 5.3 hours more than females (33.2 hours), highlighting that a greater proportion of males (87%) work full-time compared with females (57%).