

# **Gender Pay Gap Report**

**April 2024**



# Foreword

**At VCCP, we're dedicated to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace—one where every employee has the same opportunities to grow and succeed. Creating a truly fair and balanced workplace is at the heart of our people strategy.**

That's why we've built an industry-leading DEI team, recognised as the best in the business for the last three years, and why we invest in initiatives like our Challenger Academy in Stoke, helping to upskill the next generation of creative talent. We're making progress, as reflected in this year's gender pay gap results, but we know there's more to do.

This report outlines where we stand today, the actions we're taking to attract, retain, and upskill diverse talent, and our commitment to driving real, lasting change. Because at VCCP, we believe that addressing the gender pay gap isn't just about fairness—it's about building a stronger, more innovative future where everyone can thrive.



**Message from Stephanie Brimacombe,  
CEO EMEA at VCCP**

**We are really pleased this year to show further progress in regard to our gender pay gap. Our median gender pay gap has decreased by almost 3%, and now stands at 16.1%, down from 19%. Our mean gap has reduced by over 4%, from 22.6% to 18.2%.**

To close our gender pay further we need balance at our entry-level and a higher proportion of women in senior roles.

Encouragingly, female representation in our upper quartile has increased by 1% to 39% this year. Continuing to improve this senior representation is a key business priority, and we aim to have over 45% female representation in the upper quartile by 2026.

This is significant progress but we recognise that there is still more to do.

## **Our commitment to closing the gap**

Our strategy to close the gender pay gap is embedded within Thrive, our employer brand, which focuses on supporting our people through learning and development, wellbeing initiatives, and a strong, inclusive culture.

This year, we introduced several initiatives to help increase female representation in senior roles. We have continued our partnership with Back2Businessship for the second year, we are launching new family-friendly policies, and investing in menopause coaching to support career longevity.

We remain dedicated to closing the gender pay gap and creating an environment where everyone has equal opportunities to grow and succeed. By taking deliberate and meaningful action, we are building a more diverse and equitable workplace for the future.



**Message from Nicola Longhurst,  
Chief People Officer at VCCP**

# Gender pay gap explained

## What is the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average earnings of all men and women across an entire organisation, by expressing women's pay as a percentage of men's pay.

This is a separate issue to equal pay, which is the legal requirement for people carrying out the same or similar work to be paid equally, regardless of gender.

In simple terms men and women doing the same jobs, being paid the same salary. We are required to express our gender pay gap in two ways, by calculating the 'median' and the 'mean' values.

## What is a median pay gap?

The median pay gap is calculated by finding the midpoint in all employees' hourly pay, then comparing the midpoint for men with the midpoint for women. The difference between the two is the median pay gap, also shown as a percentage.

## What is a mean pay gap?

The mean pay gap is the average gap, and is shown as a percentage. It is calculated by adding all employees' hourly pay and dividing it by the number of employees. The difference between the mean figures for men and mean figures for women is the mean pay gap. This is shown as a percentage.

## What is a pay quartile?

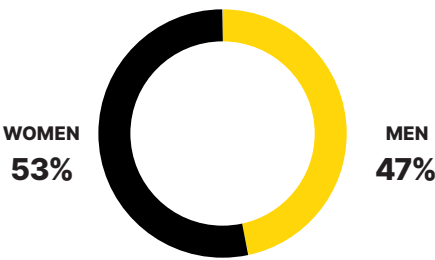
This is the hourly pay for both men and women arranged from the lowest to the highest and then divided into 4 equal quartiles. The proportion of men and women is calculated for each quartile.

## What is the bonus gap?

The bonus gap is the difference in bonus pay received by male and female employees in the 12 months ending in March 2024. This is shown as both mean and median figures.

# Our results

## VCCP employees

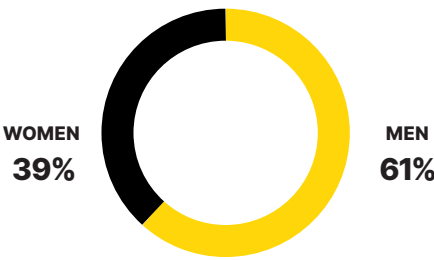


## Hourly pay gap

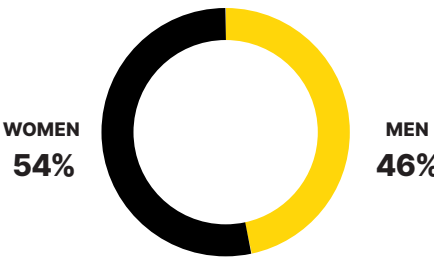
**16.1%** **18.2%**  
MEDIAN MEAN

## % Women & men in each quartile

### Upper quartile



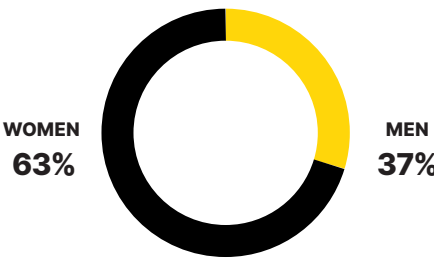
### Upper middle quartile



### Lower middle quartile



### Lower quartile



## % Who received bonus pay

**11.8%** **15.4%**  
WOMEN MEN

## Bonus pay gap

**15.8%** **30.2%**  
MEDIAN MEAN

# Attracting people from underrepresented backgrounds

**At VCCP, we are committed to building a more equitable workplace where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Tackling the gender pay gap isn't just about the numbers—it's about creating an environment where women are attracted to, retained in, and empowered to grow within our business.**

**Our approach focuses on three key pillars: attracting diverse talent through inclusive hiring practices, retaining our people by fostering a culture of support and flexibility, and upskilling employees with tailored development programs, mentorship, and leadership opportunities.**

We have a number of initiatives in place to improve the experience and representation of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

## The Challenger Academy

The Challenger Academy, formerly VCCP Stoke Academy, is our registered educational charity based in Stoke-on-Trent. Their mission is to make the advertising and creative industries more accessible and socially diverse through valuable work experience, skills training and career guidance. Their goal is to spark a passion and create a pathway for young 'challengers', regardless of their background, to thrive in a creative career within their own community.

Since launching in 2021, The Challenger Academy has delivered over **15,000 hours** of creative work experience opportunities to young people in Staffordshire, trained **629 local students** - delivering investment of more than **£4.4m into the local economy**.

This year, The Challenger Academy will also expand their focus in Stoke-on-Trent to include primary and secondary education. Working with Alpha Academies Trust, a network of six primary and secondary schools in North Staffordshire, The Challenger Academy will create teaching resources that will introduce students to the creative industries at a younger age and develop pupils' skills.

## Ad School

We **welcomed over 40 students** to our Adschool programme, a week long experience scheme with a difference. Ad-schoolers get a jam-packed week giving them a genuine insight into life in an advertising agency.

They have a timetable of talks from industry leading specialists, armed with all the information required to pull together their very own campaign, as well as mentorship from the best in our agency to deliver a team pitch for a live brief.

## The Table

The Table is our paid entry-level, year-long scheme for anyone who wants to kick start their career in advertising. Each year we welcome around **14 new Tablers** who are each placed in one of our client teams in the VCCP London office for a full year, gaining invaluable experience and working on live briefs for some of the world's biggest brands. We also provide a thorough training programme to give our new talent all the tools they need to thrive in their new roles, as well as 1-2-1 career coaching. We are delighted that at the end of the year our Tablers are offered a full time job with VCCP.

## The Den

The Den is our home for all budding creatives to play, learn, practice and grow, with a view to coming up with some amazing ideas and getting their first job in the industry. At VCCP we only look for the best creative talent, but we firmly believe that can come from anywhere. Placement creative teams get 3 month paid contracts where they'll be put on the same briefs and get the same opportunities as everyone else in the department. **Many of our creatives were hired off the back of their time in The Den** and have gone on to make some of the agency's most successful work.

## Partnerships

We continued our Partnership with Back2Businessship who run an incredible returners programme supporting women re-entering the workforce after extended career breaks due to caregiving responsibilities. This year we were their official headline sponsor and partner, we also hosted the 30 strong cohort at VCCP and we contributed to the programme with our own speaker, Peter Gasston, discussing the impact of AI in our industry.

# Retaining our people

**Our people and our culture are our biggest assets; we continue to strive to create a culture and environment where everyone can thrive and do their best work. Thrive is our employer brand which means to flourish and grow which is what we want everyone at VCCP to do.**

**To support all employees, particularly those in entry-level positions, we have implemented various initiatives aimed at nurturing their talents, fostering their success and ensuring they feel at home at VCCP.**

## Career development

At VCCP, we believe that career development isn't one-size-fits-all—it's a journey as unique as the individuals who shape our business. That's why we invest in a wide range of initiatives designed to support our people at every stage of their careers. From entry-level programs and Black talent initiatives to specialist coaching in leadership, AI, and maternity returners, we're committed to providing the tools, training, and mentorship that empower our people to grow and thrive. Whether it's upskilling future managers or helping specialists carve out their next step, our approach ensures that everyone has access to meaningful development opportunities.

We continue to drive an inclusive and confident community amongst our entry level talent via our training programme **"Bear Essentials"**. The programme empowers our junior talent to own their careers and build up their soft skills with monthly training modules on presenting, difficult conversations, assertiveness & confidence, managing resilience and more.

We also want to ensure we create a positive experience for Black talent at VCCP and show that we are committed to helping our brilliant Black talent rise into leadership roles. This is why we took part in the inaugural **BRiM Sponsorship Programme**, a cross-industry programme for mid-senior level Black talent designed to support them developing into future leaders. There were a total of 7 VCCP employees who took part in this pilot programme - all of whom were paired with a member of the VCCP c-suite who have become their internal champions. As well as having an internal senior sponsor at VCCP, the participants also took part in numerous training and

mentoring sessions with peers across the industry to support their development on the programme. We are looking forward to continuing this relationship with BRiM and ensuring these development opportunities are available to Black talent across the industry.

Throughout 2024 we hosted 2,800 hours of training, introducing several key training initiatives to strengthen our teams:

## Manager training

Designed for new managers with up to a year of line management experience, this program builds the core skills needed to lead effectively. From situational leadership and delegation to giving feedback and navigating difficult conversations, it equips managers with practical tools for success. A key focus is on inclusive leadership—helping managers support neurodivergent team members, lead across generations, and recognising unconscious biases. In 2024 alone, we trained over 100 managers across the group.

## AI training

As AI evolves so has our training offering in this space. We want to ensure AI is accessible and understood by everyone in our business. With this in mind, spearheaded by our Managing Partner & Head of Social and Innovation, Alex Dalman, our incredible ai creative agency, faith team rolled out another five training modules including an introduction into ComfyUI, Generative Audio, Leonardo AI & Gen-AI.

## Career coaching

We've increased our career coaching support with three dedicated coaches, ensuring even more personalised guidance for employees at every level. This expansion has allowed us to help our people navigate their career paths with more confidence and clarity. To date, we have coached over 100 female employees across the group, empowering them to take the next step in their careers.

# Retaining our people

## Championing inclusion through our policies

VCCP recognises the importance of supporting employees throughout their various life stages, and helping them to continue to build their careers.

Our wellbeing team continues to promote a culture of wellbeing throughout VCCP. We are proud to have been awarded the IPA's People First Promise which demonstrates our commitment to the positive mental health and wellbeing of our people. As part of our wellbeing strategy we have a Women's health pillar, which has a dedicated team driving initiatives to improve the experiences of women within VCCP. We launched a women's health survey last year to understand how we can support women through all stages of their reproductive health in the workplace. Off the back of this we are now rolling out menopause training for all employees and we are also pleased to be able to offer menopause coaching. The aim of these initiatives is to increase understanding of reproductive health and to foster a culture of empathy and understanding. We continue to partner with **Henpicked** to become an accredited menopause-friendly employer.

## Support for parents and carers

We have strengthened our parental leave provisions and introduced a range of new family and care policies to provide greater flexibility and support for those balancing work and caregiving responsibilities. Our new Carers Leave policy offers five days of fully paid leave per year for those with caring responsibilities. The Neonatal policy provides 12 weeks of full pay and leave for parents whose child requires neonatal care. To further support employees exploring fertility treatment options, we are introducing fertility loans to provide financial assistance.

In addition to these new policies, we continue to offer back-to-work coaching for all parents returning from leave and our Parents and Carers initiative provides a space for connection and shared experiences across the Group.

## And finally...

We remain committed to closing the gender pay gap and fostering an inclusive workplace where all individuals have equal opportunities for growth and advancement. Through our ongoing initiatives we are confident in our ability to drive positive change and create a more equitable and diverse environment for everyone to thrive.

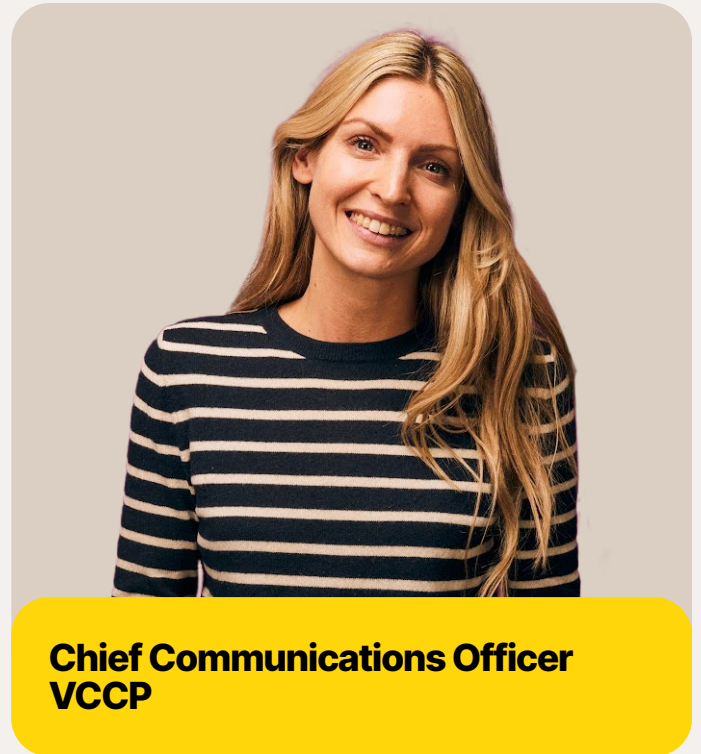
But don't just take it from us. Here's what some of our brilliant colleagues have to say.



# Georgia Wright

**When I joined VCCP over four years ago, I was the sole member of the PR department. Since then, I have been given the opportunity to grow within the business, expanding my role and building a team around me. The company has supported my development at every stage, ensuring that I have access to the right resources and opportunities to thrive. This support has been particularly significant now as a mother, balancing my professional ambitions with the demands of raising a young child.**

Both during my pregnancy and afterwards, I was offered maternity coaching, which was invaluable in preparing me for the transition both before and after maternity leave. This guidance helped me navigate the challenges of balancing motherhood and work, making my return to the office smoother and more manageable. VCCP's commitment to supporting working parents was clear not just in words but in action, ensuring that I felt confident and included as I re-entered my role.



**Chief Communications Officer  
VCCP**

One of the most pivotal moments in my career was being promoted upon my return from maternity leave. This demonstrated to me that my contributions and potential were recognised regardless of my time away from the office. I was also selected for the company's Future Leaders Program, which played a crucial role in equipping me with the skills and confidence needed to take on a more senior role. Throughout my journey, I have been surrounded by inspiring female role models who have shown me what strong leadership looks like and reinforced my belief that success and motherhood can go hand in hand.

The culture at VCCP has empowered me to shape my own path and build a team that reflects my vision. The company's approach to career progression and gender equality has ensured that I never felt limited in my ambitions due to my responsibilities as a mother. My experience is a testament to the fact that when businesses actively support women at every stage of their careers, the result is stronger teams, greater innovation, and a more inclusive workplace for all.



# Izi Hutchinson

## **It's a little strange to think that I'm still in my first job in advertising.**

Since starting back in 2015, I have grown so much (unfortunately not in height) but in confidence and determination. VCCP has been my home and each day I continue to learn so much about myself, advertising and working life.

It's a very special company where no day is the same, you're continuously challenged and hard work is appreciated more than anything. I work in a high care and high intensity environment and this is what gets the best out of me. I think because of this, it has meant the last 10 years have flown by but I have not felt I have stood still; I've continuously pushed myself and my ambition has been encouraged.

## **It's all about great work**

I've worked on such a range of clients. I had this one day where I had a morning meeting about the texture and shape of jelly baby, followed by a briefing call with the British Red Cross on Ukraine and then a PPM on McLaren 720s. When commuting back home that day, I reflected that there aren't too many industries where that can happen!

I started my journey on easyJet (it makes me chuckle when people still call me iziJet around the office) and during that time I worked on some of my favourite campaigns - Why Not? and Imagine. Following that I worked on Nationwide with an incredible core team and now I lead The National Lottery UK business. It's been so varied and I've loved the accounts I've worked on but most importantly I've loved the people who I have worked with on those pieces of business.

I still get such a buzz seeing work I've helped manage out in the real world and hope that feeling never goes.



**Senior Account Director  
and Deputy lead of The Table**

## **Homegrown talent**

I'm about to reach my 10 year anniversary here at VCCP and it's been such a pleasure over the last 4 years to run (with Alistair) The Table which is our entry-level scheme within the Group. It has grown so much over the last few years and we're seeing more people than ever before wanting to join our fantastic agency.

Within The Table it's been such a joy to see such amazing talent grow and strengthen the global network. They are the future of VCCP and it is looking bright with those superstars that are coming through. To play just a small part in their careers is so rewarding and each year it brings me so much joy and energy reviewing and interviewing all the people wanting to start their careers at VCCP.

I was very touched and excited when VCCP encouraged me to apply for WACL in 2024 and I was delighted to be awarded one of their talent awards through the work I have done on The Table. WACL has opened up a whole new world in terms of inspiring women and it's been incredible to be part of this as well as learning so much about how to lead the future generation with my LSE course that I completed after getting the talent grant.

I'm just about to go on maternity leave and very excited about the next challenge in my life. No doubt my new client will be equally demanding and no day will be the same.

# Lesley Ann Okantey

**I joined VCCP nearly three years ago as a temp. Coming from a heavily arts and performance background, the role initially felt like a step outside my creative world—a solid temp job but nothing long-term.**

**But in just three months, I was fully immersed. I was surprised by how many opportunities there were to improve and evolve processes. You'd expect a business environment to be rigid, but VCCP thrives on adaptability and fresh thinking.**

When I interviewed for the permanent role, I sat across from some of the most influential leaders in the business. It was, hands down, one of the best interviews I've ever had. The goal was clear: bring your energy and expertise to VCCP. And that's exactly what I did.

I have the privilege of leading an exceptional team—one that understands the standard of work we represent. While we may not be traditionally "creative," everything we do is a performance, a form of art and theatre. So, we do it with flair, precision, and style.



**Front of House Manager  
VCCP**

In my time here, I've watched 95% of my team grow and be promoted into incredible roles across the agency. I've also had the opportunity to be part of the DE&I collective, championing initiatives that matter deeply to me and other ethnicities within the business. On top of that, I've been given platforms to perform for the company and host events, enhancing workplace experiences for our entire team.

VCCP is unlike any other company I've ever encountered. I'm beyond grateful for the trust I've received from senior stakeholders—not just to perform on stage but to show up and deliver for this company every single day.

# Claire Young

**I've been fortunate to spend nine amazing years at VCCP. From starting as Head of Creative Services and Creative Production in the VCCP Creative department, and now as CEO of Girl&Bear, our Global Content Creation studio. The incredible support I've received here has truly enabled me to grow, both personally and professionally.**

Throughout my time at VCCP, I've had the privilege of contributing to various areas of the business. From co-leading a group-wide integration improvement project that introduced key updates to our ways of working, many of which are core to how we work today, to co-leading the creation and implementation of an updated employer brand strategy where we worked to update our wellbeing and inclusive policies.

Founding Girl&Bear, and becoming its CEO, has been a tremendous achievement, made possible by the progressive and entrepreneurial nature of VCCP. Not long after I joined, I saw an opportunity to elevate the way we made and produced work for clients and to expand and elevate our production capabilities. That vision has blossomed into a thriving business, and today, Girl&Bear comprises 177 talented people in London, with additional offices in Czechia and Spain.

Girl&Bear exists thanks to the founders and leaders at VCCP who believed in my vision and supported me in building the business.



**CEO  
Girl&Bear**

One of the things I love most about both VCCP and Girl&Bear is the entrepreneurial yet kind spirit that encourages everyone to reach their full potential in their own way. It's this spirit of kindness, support, growth, and empowerment that has made my journey so rewarding, and I'm so excited to continue the adventure with such an inspiring bunch of people. I honestly think with the right attitude, ambition, and passion there isn't much you can't achieve at VCCP!

## Gender Pay Gap Report April 2024

I confirm the accuracy of the information in this report.

*Nicola Longhurst*

**Nicola Longhurst,**  
**Chief People Officer at VCCP**

