

Women are effectively working for free because of a gender divide a report has claimed

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Business News – The Northern Echo

28th August 2015

A PAY divide means North-East female managers are working free hours every week, a report has warned.

A survey says women in full-time jobs across the region earn 24 per cent less than men, meaning they are effectively unpaid for 1 hour and 48 minutes each day.

According to the findings, revealed by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), the pay gap in the North-East widens as women get older, with those aged between 26 and 35 earning four per cent less than men.

However, the deficit grows to 19 per cent for women aged 36 to 45, and jumps to 39 per cent for those between 46 and 60, which the latter the equivalent of working 756 free hours.

The Government previously announced plans to force large firms to release data on the gender pay divide, and Sharyn Coleman, from the CMI's North-East, Yorkshire and Humber regional board, said it is imperative swift action is taken.

She said: "Working for free two hours a day is unacceptable.

"Having more women in senior executive roles will pave the way for others and ensure they're paid the same as their male colleagues at every stage of their careers.

"Transparency is a powerful driver for closing the gender pay gap.

"The Government's new reporting legislation is a welcome step forward and will be good news for business.

"Clearer employee data, improved recruitment and a reinvigorated focus on business culture will help unblock the talent pipeline and support more women to become senior managers and leaders."

Ms Coleman also pointed to analysis of the 2015 National Management Salary Survey, which highlights pay imbalances across the UK's professional workforce.

For North-East men and women of all ages and in all professional roles, the gender pay gap stands at £9,016, with men earning an average of £37,523, compared to women's £28,507.

Nationally, the pay gap increases to £14,943 for senior or director-level staff, with men earning an average of £138,699 and women £123,756.

Mark Crail, content director of salary specialist XpertHR, which worked with the CMI on the study of 72,000 managers, implored companies to take stronger action.

He added: "An entire generation has now worked its way through from school leaver to retirement since the first equal pay legislation came into effect in 1970.

"But the gender pay gap persists, and many employers still prefer not to know just how bad it is in their organisation, rather than getting to grips with the data and doing something about it."

Elaine Owen of Women In Business was invited to talk about the issue on BBC Radio Merseyside

She said, the gender pay gap persists and somehow people think it doesn't, we need to ensure that the message gets out there and something is done to rectify the situation.