

Gender pay gap down to 5% in Netherlands, reveals new national survey

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Gender pay gap has halved in two years

Amsterdam is taking strides in its efforts towards an equal working environment, with the gender pay gap decreasing over the last years, being 8% in 2019, and falling to 5% in 2021. The National Salary Survey carried out by Intermediair and Nyenrode Business University also reveals that, whilst although men are still more likely to receive a pay rise than women (56% of men versus 52% of women), this gap too is decreasing. In 2019, the difference in pay rises was double this rate.

Another finding was that the higher the education level, the greater the difference in salary between men and women, to the disadvantage of women. The gender pay gap is smallest among people who are less educated and who work in local government, education, and healthcare.

Sharita Boon, Commercial Director of DPG Recruitment at Intermediair, says: "The fact that the gender pay gap is smaller this year than it was two years ago, shows that it is an important issue for more and more companies, and that gender equality policies are actually being implemented."

Another interesting finding is that many workers are on the hunt for a new job with higher pay. One-third of workers are open to a new job. Nearly a quarter of women (23%) are actively looking for a job, a 5% increase from 2019. Of the men, nearly 1 in 5 are actively job hunting. The main reason is for higher salary: 1 in 5 workers are not satisfied with their current salary.

Jaap van Muijen, Professor of organizational psychology at Nyenrode Business University, says: "The main reason for changing jobs is still money. That's very understandable in this day and age. The job market is tight, there are plenty of jobs, and employers are doing everything they can to recruit new people. For employees, that means they can ask for more money. This is also necessary, because life is getting more expensive. Think of the inflated housing market, spiking energy prices, and the rising costs of groceries."

The increased pressures of job hunting is a development that employers need to consider, adds Boon: "We see that the number of applicants is tremendously low. The demand for new workers is huge: employees are almost snatched from their office chairs by competitors, so to say. If you, as an employer, want to retain your employees, you have to pay them well."

Another result found was that the pandemic led to less financial pressures but more emotional and physical complaints. The impact the pandemic had on working people in the Netherlands was evident from the survey: 72% of salaried workers report experiencing effects from the COVID-19 measures. These include emotional pressure or physical complaints. In both cases, the higher the education level, the more pressure and complaints people experienced. Overall, relatively few workers experienced additional financial pressures due to the COVID-19 crisis (11%).

One final area that the survey looked into was the effect of working from home on productivity. The current urgent advice for employees is to work from home at least half the time. 58% of respondents say

they have a good workspace at home. More men than women have their own workspace at home, and more older people than younger people have a home office. Having your own space to work from home increases the chances of being more productive by as much as 83%. Nearly a third (30%) of respondents said that working from home had a negative effect on productivity, but also nearly a third (30%) actually became more productive.

Van Muijen says: "It is clear that we will continue working from home more for the time being, if not forever. This means it is also important to create the most optimal work environment at home, to ensure the highest productivity. Many employers already have dedicated policies. Those who haven't, will have to develop these policies quickly. I think that compensation for a home office and for working from home in general will also soon be added to the standard benefits package."