W-202501-1645

CABINET OFFICE

The Hon. Member for Onchan, Ms Edge, to ask The Minister for the Cabinet Office:

What the median wage was in each of the last five financial years in a) the private sector, b) the public sector and c) the Island overall.

Question W-202501-1645 published on 16/05/2025; Answer published on 26/06/2025.

The Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr D Ashford):

The figures that have been requested here are published annually in the Isle of Man Earnings Survey Reports.

These figures are reproduced below with additional information that, it is hoped, will prove useful in their interpretation. For the purposes of this answer, the public sector includes those employed in the Education and Medical and Health sectors, employees of Local Authorities, and Members of the House of Keys and Legislative Council.

The table below shows median[1] earnings for full-time employees in the public sector, the private sector, and across the whole economy. As these figures are the product of a survey and hence subject to sample error, they also provide estimates of the corresponding lower margins of error (LME), upper margins of error (LME), and, in the case of the table, relative standard errors (RSE).

	Private Sector				Public Sector				Whole Economy			
Year	Median	LME	UME	RSE	Median	LME	UME	RSE	Median	LME	UME	RSE
2020	566	540	583	2%	739	688	758	2%	611	590	653	2%
2021	582	567	599	1%	714	675	732	2%	613	598	628	1%
2022	615	590	640	2%	774	734	807	2%	673	650	697	2%
2023	679	654	702	2%	797	764	828	2%	732	708	745	1%
2024	706	685	726	2%	902	863	949	2%	765	742	780	1%

The difference between median earnings in the public sector and private sector for any given year is itself a statistical estimate and hence carries its own margins of error, which are provided here:

Year	Difference	LME	UME	RSE
2020	173	131	214	12%
2021	132	93	160	13%
2022	159	118	207	13%
2023	118	72	160	20%
2024	196	156	254	12%

It should be noted that a comparison between the public sector and the entire private sector may not however be particularly useful. There is a greater degree of diversity in the work undertaken across the private sector and greater variance in pay available across the different economic sectors

[1] The median represents the middle value of the data; i.e. that which is greater than half of the rest of the values.

within it, with the result that such a comparison is not necessarily like-for-like. This latter aspect can be seen in the lower coefficient of variance (which measures dispersal) for the public sector than for the private sector—in 2024, the values of these were 56% (95% CI [48%, 67%]) and 69% (95% CI [60%, 86%]) respectively, suggesting greater variance of earnings in the private sector than in the public. As the Earnings Survey reports note:

‘The public and private sectors have workforces which are composed quite differently. Consequently, differences in weekly earnings do not reveal differences in rates of pay for comparable jobs. For example, many of the lowest paid occupations, such as bar and restaurant staff, hairdressers, elementary sales occupations and cashiers, exist primarily in the private sector.’