



## Introduction

Regulations came into effect in 2017 that require organisations employing over 250 employees to carry out gender pay gap reporting. The two sets of Regulations introduced impose mandatory gender pay gap reporting on employers; the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 and the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Reporting) Regulations 2017. Both sets of Regulations are similar, however the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 apply to public sector employers, including fire authorities.

Gender pay gap information must be published within 'the period of 12-months beginning with the snapshot date' (Regulation 2(2)). The snapshot date for public sector employers is 31 March each year.

## What is the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap shows the difference between the average earnings of males and females, expressed as a percentage of male earnings, e.g. females earn 10 per cent less than males. The gender pay gap should not be confused with equal pay and this is explained in the next section. The gender pay gap is reported on both the mean (average) and median (mid-point) basis.

In the year to April 2018, the gender pay gap amongst all employees, covering all employment sectors fell slightly from 18.4 per cent in 2017 to 17.9 per cent. This means that, in the UK females earn on average 17.9 per cent less than males (Source: Office of National Statistics).

There are a number of factors contributing to the gender pay gap and these include:

- A higher proportion of males working in senior positions
- A higher proportion of females working in part-time roles (therefore normally earning less than their full-time colleagues)
- Skills gap, lack of training and development opportunities
- Occupational segregation
- Lack of role models
- Family, childcare and caring commitments
- Lack of opportunities for flexible working
- Attitude and culture
- Confidence



The gender pay gap for the Service has decreased by 2.75 per cent from 19.39 per cent in 2017 to 16.64 per cent in 2018. This reduction now takes the Service 1.26 per cent below the UK average gap, which is encouraging progress.

In 2018, the Service identified a number of key areas of activity to lower the gender pay gap. Several initiatives have been put in place, which are detailed in the action plan from page 11 of this report. The action plan covers short to medium term initiatives. Whilst the foundations for improvement have been laid through these initiatives, it may be several years before some have an impact on gender parity within pay.

As part of the ongoing review of the effectiveness of the action plan, routine monitoring of progress made against each initiative is undertaken. If appropriate, initiatives are refined to ensure they remain effective and that the outcomes are making a difference to the gender pay gap within the Service.

## **Different to equal pay**

Whilst both gender pay and equal pay deal with the disparity of pay females receive within the workplace, it is important to note that the gender pay gap is different to equal pay.

The principle of equal pay is that males and females who carry out the same job, similar jobs or work of equal value, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, should receive equal pay. Whereas the gender pay gap examines the difference in the average pay gap between males and females expressed as a percentage of male earnings and is not unlawful

Organisations which are fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 can still have a gender pay gap. This is often due to having more males in senior and highly paid positions and females in lower paid and part-time roles. The gender pay gap is a mechanism by which organisations can examine this data and take positive action to reduce the gender pay gap.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives (2016-2020)**

The Authority is fully committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and recognises that fairness and inclusion are fundamental to achieving the Authority's vision of making Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest place in which to live, work and travel. The Authority's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objective (2016-2020) are:

- 1. We aim to be an employer of choice, attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing staff from diverse backgrounds, to reflect the communities we serve*



- 2. We will provide a more diverse range of services to better protect the communities we serve*
- 3. Our employment offer will be inclusive and embrace flexibility to support improved diversity representation across the Service*
- 4. Our culture will engage and value diversity and difference to enhance our service offering to the public*

## **The reality of the gender pay gap**

Many of the issues driving pay gaps require a longer term view. It is expected therefore that the gender pay gap data is not going to be fully eliminated within the short to medium term.

The current limited gender diversity within the Fire Service is a national challenge. This is partly due to a lack of understanding about the role and skills required to be a firefighter. By embracing the need for change and consciously recognising this is a historically male-dominated organisation and actively seeking to dispel these myths will help break some of the barriers for females considering a career within the Fire Service.

By demonstrating an understanding of the factors contributing to the gender pay gap and committing to address the gap, it will ensure that over time the gap is reduced and eventually eliminated. In addition, the workforce will better reflect the diversity of the community. Meaningful embedded change takes time, however the Service's ultimate aim is to achieve gender pay parity across the organisation.

A workforce, which better reflects the diversity of the public, that is flexible, diverse and inclusive, will create a stronger, more enriched and well-informed organisation, able to meet the expectations for a modern fire and rescue service. The Service will attract, retain, develop and motivate talented people from all parts of the community.

## **Importance of recruitment and development**

Job applicants may look at an organisation's gender pay gap as part of their pre-selection process before choosing to work for an employer.

The Service did not undertake whole time firefighter recruitment for seven years from 2009 until the operational firefighter apprenticeship programme commenced. This has meant there was limited opportunity to increase workforce diversity within frontline operational roles.



The Service has taken positive action to attract and recruit more females into operational roles. In the longer term, this will assist with lowering the gender pay gap. The Service does not employ apprentices during their apprenticeship; they are employed on conclusion of the two-year apprenticeship programme and dependent on the needs of the Service at the time. An article in The Guardian acknowledged the challenge of lowering the gender pay gap "One challenge facing employers is the fact that some measures designed to lower the gender pay gap in the long term could increase the gap in the short term – such as hiring more younger women." (Source: Gender pay gap: companies under pressure to act in 2019. The Guardian 01 January 2019)

A structured approach to apprentice recruitment was introduced in 2016 with the aim of attracting a diverse pool of applicants; 25 per cent of operational apprentices recruited in cohort two in 2017 were female, compared to the previous year's nine per cent. Any impact of cohort one (2016 apprenticeship campaign) will be evidenced in the 2019 gender pay gap report.

As the Service nurtures these individuals and supports them through their development and for some, promotions through the ranks to more senior roles, the organisation will start to see the impact of this positive action and further reduce and eventually eliminate the gender pay gap.

In November 2016 and February 2017, the Strategic Management Board approved a pilot Aspiring Leaders Pathway (ALP). The pilot ALP was designed to deliver the first development centre-type process open to all employees. There was a notable success following the ALP in terms of numbers of female applicants (both operational and Support Services), who attended and were successful through the process. 2017/18 saw the first year since 2010 that female operational firefighters attended a promotion process and were successful in entering the development pool and securing supervisory management positions.

## **Terms and conditions**

The Authority's Pay Policy statement is reviewed and updated annually. Its purpose is to provide transparency to the pay policy adopted. The 2019/20 Pay Policy (approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 13 February 2019) sets out levels of and elements of remuneration.

The majority of staff are employed under contracts with either; the terms and conditions of the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services Scheme of Conditions of Service, 2004 "the Grey Book" incorporated; or with the provisions of the local terms and conditions of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority Scheme of Conditions of Service for Support Services staff.



Pay and allowances differ under each set of terms and conditions. A number of allowances and additional payments are available for operational employees, for example with the different duty systems, specialist roles, temporary promotions, opportunity to undertake additional hours through the bank system. Whilst some allowances are paid to Support Services staff, the majority are paid to operational staff, which is the largest group of employees, with the majority being males. This directly influences the gender pay gap.

## **Benchmarking**

With organisations being required to publish their gender pay gap data in the public domain (gov.uk website), this allows greater comparison with other organisations and the Office of National Statistics (ONS) figures. Greater transparency in pay will help to attract and retain talent and will provide the information to allow organisations to improve workplace practices, policies and procedures that will promote gender equality and ensure any remedial action is prioritised.

It was identified in the report to the Executive Committee on 14 March 2018 that there was a risk that Fire and Rescue Services may calculate data differently and therefore potentially widely different mean and median gender pay gaps will be reported. The benchmarking data seems to suggest this may have happened.

As detailed in Appendix 1, employer comparison data is provided covering 32 Fire and Rescue Services for 2017.

When compared to the 32 Fire and Rescue Services, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is ranked 27<sup>th</sup> with the mean gender pay gap of 19 per cent for 2017. The range is (-) 17.7 per cent to 25.8 per cent. A negative pay gap indicates that females earn more on average than males, and a positive pay gap indicates that males earn more on average than females.

Of the 32 Fire and Rescue Service, only four have reported bonus gender pay gap data. This confirms that bonus arrangements were not in operation within the majority of Fire and Rescue Services in 2017. This supports this Service's intention to review the use of merit awards and bonuses to determine whether monetary or non-monetary recognition awards are the best way forward and the review of current practices to ensure that modern mechanisms, which recognise achievements and are flexible, transparent and fit for purpose are in place. The Service's late 2017 Culture Survey also indicated that employees felt that the use of merit awards and bonus payments should be reviewed with more focus on non-monetary awards and recognition initiatives.



## What information must be reported

The gender pay gap calculations are drawn from specific data each year and based on full-pay relevant employees. To be included as a full-pay relevant employee, the employee must be:

- Employed on the snapshot date; 31 March each year
- Paid their usual full-pay in the pay period ending on the snapshot date

The table below details the total number of employees in scope for 2018, compared to 2017:

Year	Total number of employees in scope	Males	Females	Total
2018	Full-pay relevant employees	377	78	455
	Relevant employees	392	81	473
2017	Full-pay relevant employees	392	80	472
	Relevant employees	407	81	488

**Full-Pay Relevant Employees** - This is the number of employees who received their normal full-pay within the snapshot date. This informs the mean and median hourly pay gap calculations and the proportion of employees within the Quartile Pay Bands.

For 2018, the number has been reduced by 15 fewer males and two fewer females

**Relevant Employees** - This is the number of staff employed by the Service on the snapshot date. This informs the mean and median bonus pay gap calculations. The difference in number between relevant and full-pay relevant employees is due to 18 employees not receiving their usual full-pay within the pay period (for 2017 this was 16 employees).

For 2018, the number has been reduced by 15 males, however there has been no reduction to female numbers.

The gender split for employees shows that overall females continue to be under-represented within the Service. This is due to the under-representation of females in operational roles rather than in Support Services roles.

Below details the standard information to be disclosed by organisations as part of the gender pay gap reporting as detailed in Schedule 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

**Pay:** This is the ordinary pay received by each full-pay relevant employee in the pay period at the snapshot date. Ordinary pay includes basic pay, allowances, pay for leave and shift premium pay and calculated before deductions are made at source. This data examines:

- The difference in the mean hourly pay between male and female relevant



employees as a percentage of male pay

- The difference in the median hourly pay between male and female relevant employees as a percentage of male pay
- The proportion of male and female full-pay relevant employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands
- Ordinary pay does not include overtime, expenses, benefits in kind, arrears of pay, salary sacrifice schemes (such as childcare), tax credits or redundancy pay.

Ordinary pay, expressed as hourly pay, is used to calculate the mean and median gender pay gaps and the pay period informs the calculation for ordinary pay. For those employees who do not work a consistent working pattern, e.g. 37-hour week, our calculation has been averaged over a 12-week period as per Local Government Association, ACAS and Government Equalities Office guidance.

**Bonus:** Bonuses paid to full-pay relevant employees in the 12-month period ending on the snapshot date (31 March). Year on year bonuses will vary and a small movement could have a big impact on the data. This data examines:

- The difference in the mean bonus pay paid to male relevant employees and that paid to female relevant employees in the 12-months before the snapshot date
- The difference in the median bonus pay paid to male relevant employees and that paid to female relevant employees in the 12-months before the snapshot date
- The proportion of male relevant employees who were paid bonus pay and that paid to female relevant employees in the 12-months before the snapshot date



## Reportable data

In accordance with the Regulations, the Service is required to annually publish six pieces of prescribed data about the pay and bonuses of males and females within the organisation:

### 1. Mean hourly gender pay gap

The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay for male and female full-pay relevant employees, as a percentage.

The mean gap provides an overall indication of the size of the gap. A high mean indicates that the remuneration structure disadvantages female.

The mean (average) gender pay gap for 2018 is 16.64 per cent. This means that male employees earn £2.89 per hour more than females and therefore, on average, females earn 83 per cent when compared to male earnings.

Year	Male hourly pay £	Female hourly pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap %
2018	17.35	14.46	2.89	16.64
2017	18.10	14.59	3.51	19.39

*In comparison, for 2017 the mean (average) gender pay gap was 19.39 per cent. This meant that male employees earned £3.51 per hour more than females and therefore, on average, females earned 81 per cent when compared to male earnings as at 31 March 2017.*

### 2. Median hourly gender pay gap

The difference between the median hourly rate of pay for male and female full-pay relevant employees.

The median gap is typically a more representative figure. The median gender pay gap for 2018 is 11.75 per cent or £1.90 per hour. This means that on average, females earn 88 per cent when compared to male earnings.

Year	Male hourly pay £	Female hourly pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap %
2018	16.16	14.26	1.90	11.75
2017	15.74	14.07	1.67	10.61

*In comparison, for 2017 the median gender pay gap was 10.61 per cent or £1.67 per hour. This meant that on average, females earned 89 per cent when compared to male earnings as at 31 March 2017.*



### 3. Mean bonus gap

The difference between the mean bonus paid to male relevant employees and that paid to female relevant employees.

For 2018, the mean bonus gap is -38.79 per cent. This means that on average, males earn £91.44 less than females on bonus payments.

Year	Male bonus pay £	Female bonus pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap % *
2018	235.71	327.16	-91.44	-38.79
2017	230.04	354.01	-123.97	-53.89

*\* Negative pay gaps occur when females earn more on average, positive pay gaps are used when males earn more on average*

In comparison, for 2017 the mean bonus gap was -53.89 per cent. This meant that female employees received on average a bonus greater than £123.97 than males.

### 4. Median bonus gap

The difference between the median bonus paid to male relevant employees and that paid to female relevant employees.

The median bonus gap has been reduced to 25 per cent, which equates to £250. This translates as males earning on average £250 more in bonus payments than females.

Year	Male bonus pay £	Female bonus pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap %
2018	1000	750	250	25
2017	500	1000	-500	-100

In comparison, for 2017 the median bonus gap was 100 per cent or £500. This meant that female employees received a bonus equating to £500 more than male employees.

### 5. Bonus Proportions

The proportion of male and female employees who were paid a bonus during the relevant 12-month pay period:

Year	Gender	Number of employees	Proportion %
2018	Males	38	9.69
	Female	22	27.16
2017	Male	44	10.80
	Female	20	24.70



## 6. Quartile Pay Bands

The proportions of male and female full-pay relevant employees in the lower (L), lower middle (LM), upper middle (UM) and upper (U) quartiles and the equally distributed pay bands.

To determine quartiles, employees are ranked in order of their hourly rate of pay; from lowest to highest, and divided into four equal groups, according to the guidelines.

The distribution of males and females across the four quartiles is very similar to 2017, despite a reduction in employee numbers. The higher numbers of males are within the upper and upper middle quartiles and females continue to be over representative within the lower and lower middle quartiles.

For 2018:

Quartile	Male	% of total gender	Female	% of total gender	Total
Upper (U)	99	26.2	14	17.9	113
Upper Middle (UM)	104	27.5	10	12.8	114
Lower Middle (LM)	95	25.1	19	24.3	114
Lower (L)	79	21	35	44.9	114
Total	377		78		455

In comparison, for 2017:

Quartile	Male	% of total gender	Female	% of total gender	Total
Upper (U)	107	27	11	14	118
Upper Middle (UM)	105	27	13	16	118
Lower Middle (LM)	100	26	18	23	118
Lower (L)	80	20	38	48	118
Total	392		80		472



## Action Plan, on-going initiatives and progress made

Progress has been made against the action plan reported in the 2017 gender pay gap report; these remain a priority within the Service. Progress made against each initiative set out in the March 2018 report and further planned work for 2019 is detailed below.

The Service remains committed to eliminating the gender pay gap and includes action plans and progress made towards achieving this aim.

### 1. Develop the evidence base to determine where the Service can achieve the biggest improvements in closing the gender pay gap

#### Actioned and ongoing:

- Workforce data is collated, reviewed and reported, which ensure the Service is focused and able to make decisions to improve results, the data details:
  - The numbers of males and females within the organisation
  - The numbers of males and females at each level of the organisation
  - The proportion of males and females applying for roles and being recruited
  - The proportion of males and females applying for assessment processes and being promoted
- Structured groups, such as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group, are established and include managers, employees, trade union and staff representatives. These groups support and promote inclusion and engagement and increase dialogue about topical issues
- Continue to develop and improve monitoring systems to identify workforce protected characteristics, following the implementation of employee self-service and the introduction of the HR Information System in 2017
- Annual reports to the Fire Authority include workforce profiling with community demographics
- Our aim is to continue to improve diversity data and utilisation of the data across all parts of the existing workforce. For example, at various stages of the employee lifecycle and during recruitment processes to see why females and BME's are de-selected from the process. This data will be used to inform decisions
- Commenced a focus group programme to determine whether there are any structural barriers to female promotion opportunities

#### Action planned for 2019:

- We will extend our evidence-gathering to include data on the following additional areas:



- The numbers of males and females within each area of the organisation
- Analysis of fall-out rates during recruitment processes and exploration of alternate recruitment practices, which will include direct entry recruitment
- The proportion of males and females leaving the organisation and the reasons for leaving
- Analysis on training spend broken down on males and females

## **2. Improve community engagement, offering role models to positively market a career in the Fire Service**

### **Actioned and ongoing:**

- A female firefighter was seconded into a resourcing role to focus and support attraction of females into the Service. This positive engagement resulted in an increase on the number of successful female applicants into the Service
- Support to females who were unsuccessful during the selection process was provided, to prepare and encourage re-application
- Ongoing support to all applicants from Physical Training Instructors at their local station
- Continue to support the Networking Women in the Fire Service programme, hosted by the Fire Service College. In 2018 six places were funded and a waiting list created for 2019 applications

### **Action planned 2019:**

- Working alongside our Blue Light Partners, increase positive engagement within the community, attending local and regional events

## **3. Continue with a review of the recruitment processes to attract a more diverse workforce**

### **Actioned and ongoing:**

- The Service endorsed the submission of a pledge and was the first Fire and Rescue Service to be accepted by the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ADCN) in February 2018
- Recruitment processes continue to be reviewed and any learns taken and form recruitment strategies
- Applicant sifting processes has information on protected characteristics removed to eliminate the possibility of unconscious bias
- Recruitment plan created with a particular priority to attract and retain a diverse workforce by encouraging and actively promoting employment



applications from all groups within the community and in particular, black and minority ethnic (BME) and females

- Apprentice recruitment – structured approach to apprentice recruitment with the aim of attracting a diverse pool of applicants
- The Service hosted 'Have a go days' to encourage applicants and remove barriers to recruitment and the myths associated with the role. In addition, female specific 'Have a go days' were programmed to give females opportunities to attend and try out the strength and fitness tests in a 'safe environment', under close supervision and with guidance and advice from Instructors
- A three-month advertising campaign was commissioned, which targeted females into apprentice and on-call firefighter roles. Initial results indicated an increased number of female applicants
- A 'day in the life of a firefighter' advertising video has been created
- Attendance at career fairs by female firefighters to encourage more females into the Fire Service
- Unconscious bias training has been undertaken for the leadership group and Human Resources in order to improve self-awareness and an understanding of how experience shapes thought and personality
- A structured interview process is used in all recruitment and promotion activity. Structuring interviews so the same questions are asked to all candidates, in the same order, format and responses assessed using a standardised criteria in order to reduce unconscious bias in processes

## **Action planned 2019:**

- The current recruitment and selection procedure is under review – February 2019
- Unconscious bias training is scheduled for rolling out throughout the Service in 2019 and 2020 and will continue as part of the induction programme for new managers and all staff
- Target-specific advertising videos are being scoped and created

## **4. Review policies and procedures relating to flexible working**

### **Actioned and ongoing:**

- Policies and procedures support employees with responsibilities for both children and elderly parents with increased flexible working arrangements
- We actively encourage employees to consider using flexible working arrangements where appropriate
- We have developed a female support network and have a dedicated area on the intranet for topics more relevant to females
- The employee proposition is being reviewed continuously and a range of contracts used to support employees working more flexibly



## Action planned 2019:

- We are currently developing and updating a suite of procedures and guidance documents on flexible working. This is part of a national collaboration to produce a core template for all Fire and Rescue Services, with options for local adaptation to suit each Service's priorities

## **5. Invest in developing mentoring programmes for all employees and, in particular, female employees to help them progress to the next level of their career**

### Actioned and ongoing:

- A member of staff has been appointed to support first time/newly promoted managers through a thorough induction programme; running core management modules and individual coaching
- Coaching programme established and positively received and available to all employees
- Leadership training and opportunities for development, such as job shadowing and acting up/temporary promotion, so that individuals can experience the different roles in place

### Action planned 2019:

- As part of the evaluation of the programme to support first time/newly promoted managers, we will explore introducing this at the talent identification stage to encourage and support those seeking promotion
- We will explore opportunities for new female employees to be mentored by longer-serving females
- A series of focus groups are planned to determine if there are any perceived barriers to female career progression. These will help shape the Service's Employee Development Policy and Procedures, which are being updated during 2019

## **6. Create clear inclusive talent pipelines, aimed at achieving greater diversity at the senior levels in the organisation**

### Actioned and ongoing:

- We have launched a revised assessment and development process, which is inclusive of all employees. The outcomes have recently been evaluated and learns are being incorporated into the next process scheduled for April 2019
- Through employee engagement, active encouragement and support is provided to those seeking promotion



## **Action planned 2019:**

- Senior and department managers undertake annual succession planning. This translate into an action plan and forms part of the annual training needs analysis (TNA). Mentoring, coaching and specific needs captured from the focus groups will be included on the 2019-20 TNA
- Review the talent management strategy and processes to ensure all employees have fair access to learning and development opportunities
- An assessment process to determine potential for middle and senior management roles and determine individual development needs is being developed to be piloted from April 2019

## **7. Have development programmes in place to enable all employees to have the maximum opportunities to progress their career within the Service**

### **Actioned and ongoing:**

- A strategic review was commissioned of our approach to employee development, ranging from individual personal development through to career development and succession planning. An 18-month action plan is approved and regular updates provided to the Business Transformation Board
- Pilot leadership management apprenticeship programme introduced for existing employees successful in the ALP and to aid retention, succession planning and support individual personal development needs
- Trialled group tutoring for technical operational examination and will roll out a full support programme during 2019
- Inclusive leadership workshops held for the Strategic Management Board which is to be rolled out throughout the Service in 2019 and 2020

### **Action planned 2019:**

- The introduction of a revised leadership development programme focusing on core management modules and individual coaching. This modular and menu driven programme will include elements of the national leadership framework and local requirements

## **8. A review of bonus payments and allowances to be carried out**

### **Actioned and ongoing:**

- An annual review of senior management remuneration and annual report on the employee bonus scheme is carried out by an independent expert
- The Executive Committee agreed on 7 February 2018 to review the methodology used to carry out the Senior Management Team's annual



performance and remuneration review. An independent report to the Executive Committee on 6 February 2019 details the findings which will be built into this action plan accordingly where relevant

## **Action planned 2019:**

- The use of merit awards and bonuses to be reviewed to determine whether monetary or non-monetary recognition awards are the best way forward, reviewing current practices to ensure that modern mechanisms which recognise achievements and are flexible, transparent and fit for purpose are in place
- Annual reporting on all elements of pay beyond contractual pay to promote transparency, ensure policy is adhered to and consistent decision making. The most recent culture survey highlight consistency of application, fairness and clarity of additional payments as areas for the Strategic Management Board to consider