

Introduction

Regulations came into effect in 2017 that requires organisations employing over 250 employees to carry out gender pay gap reporting. The two sets of Regulations introduced 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.

According to the Office of National Statistics (Source: ONS - Gender pay gap in the UK: 2025), the gender pay gap continues to slowly decline and over the last decade has fallen by approximately a quarter amongst both full-time employees and all employees.

In 2025, the UK gender pay gap among all full-time employees decreased to 6.9 per cent, down from 7.1 per cent in 2024. The gender pay gap is higher for all employees than it is for full-time employee as females occupy more part-time roles, which have a lower salary.

Data from the Office of National Statistics (source: ONS - Annual Survey of Hours and Earning (ASHE)), as detailed below, shows the gender pay gap for median gross hourly earnings in the UK, April 2015 to April 2025. When comparing the gap over this ten-year period, it is evident that progress on closing the gender pay gap is slow and therefore likely to take years to eradicate.

Gender Pay Gap 2025



Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
All	19.3	18.2	18.4	17.8	17.4	14.9	15.1	14.4	14.2	13.1	12.8
Full-time	9.6	9.4	9.1	8.6	9	7.0	7.7	7.6	7.5	7.1	6.9

There are several factors contributing to the UK 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 is based on data at the snapshot date of 31 March 2025. For the Service in 2025 this has increased by 1.9 percentage points to 11.5 per cent (9.6 per cent in 2024) and has decreased by 7.9 percentage points from the first year of reporting (19.4 per cent in 2017). This is still positive and takes the Service 1.3 percentage points below the UK average gender pay gap of 12.8 per cent for 2025.

A number of key areas of activity have been identified, and the Service's plan on addressing pay gaps is detailed at the end of this report. Whilst the foundations for improvement have been laid through these initiatives, it is likely to be several years before there is any significant and sustained impact on parity within pay.

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. Equal pay is a legal obligation. 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.

Equal Pay Audit

An equal pay audit is the most effective way of checking the Service is complying with its equal pay obligations, ensuring it delivers a pay system free from bias. An equal pay audit involves comparing pay of employees doing equal work and has three main purposes:

- to identify any differences in pay between those doing equal work
- to investigate the causes of any differences in pay between those doing equal work, and
- to eliminate instances of unequal pay that cannot be justified

In 2020 an equal pay audit was undertaken within the Service. The snapshot date for the equal pay audit was 01 January 2020. The meaningful comparator data included base salary and 12-months' worth of allowance data for protected characteristics of gender, age, disability and ethnicity. For 2020, in addition to gender, analysis was also undertaken for additional protected characteristics of age, disability and ethnicity.

The equal pay audit confirmed the Service is achieving equitable pay between gender, and the other protected characteristics of age and race, however there was insufficient data on disability to be able to analyse effectively.

Following the Service's review of pay and allowances, an equal pay audit will be undertaken.

The reality of the gender pay gap

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.

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 potential applicants. By embracing the need for change and consciously recognising this is a historically male-dominated

organisation, and by actively seeking to dispel these myths, it will help to break some of the barriers for females considering a career within the Fire Service.

Since 2020 the economic impact of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic contributed to widening the UK national average gender pay gap and impacted on working arrangements within many organisations. Whilst the short-term impact of the pandemic increased the UK average gender pay gap, in the longer term it may have helped. For many, the pandemic has been a catalyst to positive changes within the workplace due to the requirements to embrace alternative ways of working.

During the pandemic the Service faced many challenges in continuing to support and protect the communities of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, in addition to maximising the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees. Following the pandemic, the Service has remained committed to harnessing the benefits of flexible working, which was largely created by the requirement for alternative working arrangements. By embracing more flexible and responsive ways of working, it will lead to greater equality and encourage a more diverse workforce.

The gender pay gap is generally caused by an underrepresentation of female employees in higher paid or senior roles. To lower the gap, attention must be paid to the recruitment, retention and development of females into these areas, and a range of strategies adopted to support this.

By demonstrating an understanding of the factors contributing to the gender pay gap and committing activity to address the gap, it will ensure 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, and we recognise this. The Service's aim is to achieve gender pay parity.

Many of the issues driving pay gaps requires a longer-term view. It has been recognised nationally that the gender pay gap is not going to be fully eliminated within the short to medium term.

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. To improve the Service's gender pay gap we need to address the attraction and retention of females within the Service and the career progression routes to the higher paid senior Operational and Support Services roles.

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

Terms and conditions

The Service's Pay Policy statement is reviewed and updated annually. Its purpose is to provide transparency to the pay policy adopted. The 2025/26 Pay Policy (approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 12 February 2025) sets out levels of and elements of remuneration for 2025/26 to which this report relates.

The majority of employees 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 & Milton Keynes Fire Authority Scheme of Conditions of Service for Support Services employees.

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 employees, the majority are paid to limited groups, with the majority being males. This directly influences the gender pay gap.

During 2022/3 the Fire Service saw a national pay dispute and threat of industrial action. This culminated in a pay settlement of seven per cent paid March 2023, backdated to July 2022, plus an additional five per cent payable from July 2023. The seven per cent increase to salary was reflected in the gender pay gap and due to this, 2023 saw the biggest increase to hourly pay since first reporting.

Culture review

In November 2022, Nazir Afzal OBE published the [Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade](#). This report highlighted that women, Black, Asian and minority ethnic, LGBTQ+ and neurodiverse employees experience poor treatment at work and do less well in their careers. Issues were also identified with leadership and employees fearing to speak out about abuse.

Following the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade there have been media reports into allegations at other Fire Services around the country. Reports on inappropriate behaviour within the Fire Service continues, and this will have a negative effect of diversifying the make-up of the workforce, as individuals will question whether the Fire Service is a sector in which they would want to work.

An organisation's culture is developed over a period of time and will influence experience and behaviour within the workplace. There are clear challenges within the Fire Service and a need to change and reshape the culture. By changing the culture and diversifying the workforce it will help encourage diverse perspectives, in an environment that supports the skills, experience and knowledge that everyone can bring to the workplace, therefore ensuring issues are eradicated. The Service needs to listen, learn and lead, and encourage and support individuals to speak up and challenge unacceptable behaviour. The Service needs to foster shared beliefs and an inclusive culture, governed by fairness. In an environment where employees feel safe, valued, able to bring their whole self to work, and encouraged to reach their potential.

A report from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) [Values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services](#), published March 2022, focused on the values and culture of all 44 Fire and Rescue Services in England and evidence collected through inspections since 2018. This report indicated that evidence had been repeatedly found in many of the 44 Fire and Rescue Services of poor culture and behaviour, reports of racist, homophobic, and misogynistic behaviour and allegations of bullying and harassment and a lack of fairness and diversity.

The Service welcomed the recommendations made within this report and continues to make improvements and to learn from best practice. The culture of this Service is taken extremely seriously, and we strive to make sure our employees and the public we serve are treated with the dignity and respect deserved.

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.

When compared to the 32 Fire Services, as detailed on [Compare employers' gender pay gaps for 2024-25 reporting year](#), Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is ranked 27th with a mean gender pay gap of 9.6 per cent for 2024-25. The range between the 32 Fire Services is (-) 16.64 per cent to 13.29 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 Services, only seven have reported bonus gender pay gap data. This indicates that bonus arrangements were not in operation within the majority of Fire Services in 2024.

The benchmarking data demonstrates widely different mean and median gender pay gaps within broadly similar organisations. To mitigate the risk associated with publishing improbable data, our data undergoes internal scrutiny and by providing contextual narrative, which is not a mandatory requirement, it supports the information provided within the report and highlights the activities we are engaging in to address gender imbalance.

Comparison data

Additional comparison data has been provided on Operational versus Support Services employees (Appendix three). This data also drills down into age and employment status. What this data shows is that whilst there are fewer females in Operational roles, gender disparity is greater within Support Services employees roles.

Mean pay gap

Support Services employees: For 2025, the mean hourly pay gap has increased to 17.7 per cent, from 14.6 per cent. This meant that for 2025, male employees earned £4.39 per hour more than females.

When looking at age, and those under the age of 40 and over the age of 40, the data shows that the majority of females are within the aged 40 and over group.

Gender Pay Gap 2025



For 2025, the mean hourly pay for this group increased from 7.9 per cent to 19.2 per cent. This will be due to the appointment of the Director of People and twice as many males in senior roles than females (Grade N and above). For 2025, the pay gap is still high for the group below the age of 40, at 14.7 per cent.

Operational employees: There has been a gradual decrease to the pay gap since first reporting, despite the increase in 2024. For 2025, the mean hourly pay gap was -2.8 per cent. This meant that for 2025, male employees earned £0.67 less per hour than females.

When looking at age, the split between those aged over and under 40 is similar for males, however for the few females in Operational roles, two-thirds are below the age of 40. The mean hourly pay gap for the group below the age of 40 was 1.8 per cent, which meant that within this group, for every £1 earned by males, females earned 98p. This is a decrease in the pay gap, where females earned 3.31 percent less than males in 2024. For those aged 40 and over, the hourly pay gap fell by 0.4 percentage points to 5.2 per cent, which meant that for every £1 earned by males, females earned 95p.

Median pay gap

Support Services employees: There has been increase to the pay gap over a six-year period, and for 2025 the median hourly pay gap was 13.0 per cent, from 6.8 per cent in 2019. This meant that for 2024, male employees earned £2.99 per hour more than females.

When looking at age, the data shows that the hourly pay gap for the group aged 40 and over increased from 2.1 per cent to 13.2 per cent in 2025, which meant that females earned 86.8p for every £1 earned by males within this group. In the group aged 40 and below, the hourly pay gap decreased from 7.6 per cent to 2.0 per cent in 2025, which meant that females earned 98p for every £1 earned by males within this group.

Operational employees: Whist the pay gap shows a gradual decrease in trend over the seven-year period, for 2025 the pay gap is 11.6 per cent, which is an increase by 4.1 percentage points from the previous year. This meant that for 2025, males earned £2.52 per hour more than females, whereas for 2023, females earned 5 pence more for every £1 earned by males.

Breaking the data down into age indicates there is a negative pay gap for those aged 40 and over (-6.2 per cent), which meant that for every £1 earned by females, males earned 93.8p. In the group aged 40 and below, the hourly pay gap increased from in 2025 to 28.5 per cent which meant that females earned

72p for every £1 earned by males in comparison to 2024 where the pay gap was 0.76 per cent.

Pay quartiles

Support Services employees: In 2025, 34 per cent of all females were in the lower quartile, compared to 15.0 per cent of males, whilst an average of 31 per cent of all males were in the upper quartile, compared to 21 per cent of females.

Operational employees: In 2024, 21 per cent of all females were in the lower middle quartile, whilst 17 per cent were in the upper quartile a decrease of 3.0 percentage points from 2024. Males were evenly distributed among the four quartiles, although there were fractionally fewer in the lower middle quartile. The highest number of all males were in the upper middle quartile, at 26.0 per cent.

Contributing factors

Several factors influenced the pay gap. Firstly, there are more males in senior leadership roles, particularly at Grade N and above, which typically attract higher pay. Secondly, a greater proportion of females work part-time compared to males (7 females for every 3 males), which impacts overall hourly earnings.

Although there has been a gradual shift since 2017/2018 with more females in management grades (J+), there are still more males in the highest-paid positions.

Whilst the number of female operational employees has increased in 2025, the highest proportions of females was in the lower quartile. Operational employees are more likely to move between quartiles due to temporary promotions as they develop into more senior roles. Operational employees are more likely to move between quartiles due to temporary promotions and as they develop into more senior roles. Approximately 38% of males and 62% of females remained in the same quartile in 2024/2025 as in 2023/2024, 17% of males and 21% of females moved up at least one quartile. More females than males moved down to a lower quartile in the last 12 months.

Aside from the Chief, the operational portion of the senior leadership team is entirely made up of males.

Gender Pay Gap 2025



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 2025 compared to the previous six years:

Year	Total number of employees in scope	Males	Females	Total
2025	Full-pay relevant employees	399	105	504
	Relevant employees	415	108	523
2024	Full-pay relevant employees	388	100	488
	Relevant employees	400	101	501
2023	Full-pay relevant employees	381	91	472
	Relevant employees	414	97	511
2022	Full-pay relevant employees	375	89	464
	Relevant employees	403	95	498
2021	Full-pay relevant employees	371	92	463
	Relevant employees	404	100	504
2020	Full-pay relevant employees	340	82	422
	Relevant employees	384	93	477
2019	Full-pay relevant employees	353	87	440
	Relevant employees	365	90	455
2018	Full-pay relevant employees	377	78	455
	Relevant employees	392	81	473

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 2025, the number of full-pay relevant employees increased by 2.84 percentage points for males (eleven males) and increased by 5.0 percentage points for females (five females) from the number of employees detailed for 2024.

Relevant Employees - This is the number of employees employed by the Service on the snapshot date. This informs the mean and median bonus pay gap calculations. For 2025 the number of relevant employees is higher than the full-pay relevant employees.

The difference in numbers between relevant and full-pay relevant employees is due to 19 employees not receiving their usual full-pay within the pay period (for 2024 this was 13 employees).

For 2025, the number of relevant employees increased by 3.75 percentage points for males (fifteen males) and increased by 6.94 percentage points for females (seven females) from the numbers of employees detailed for 2024.

The overall number of relevant employees has increased by 10.57 percentage points (fifty employees) since 2018. When compared to the gender specific data, the number of relevant employees has increased by 5.87 percentage points for males and 33.33 percentage points for females. For full-pay relevant employees, the overall number has increased by 10.77 percentage points (49 employees). When compared to the gender specific data, the number of full-pay relevant employees has increased by 5.84 percentage points for males and 34.62 percentage points for females.

The change in employee numbers will directly influence the reportable data and the gender pay gap.

Whilst the Service continues to increase the percentage of females employed, for 2025 the gender split for employees shows that overall females continue to be under-represented within the Service.

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 refers to the ordinary pay received by each full-pay relevant employee in the pay period at the snapshot date. Ordinary pay includes basic pay, allowances, paid 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

Gender Pay Gap 2025



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 employed by the Service:

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 females.

The mean (average) gender pay gap for 2025 is 11.5 per cent, this meant that male employees earned £2.77 per hour more than females. This is 1.9 percentage points higher than 2024. Male hourly pay has increased by 6.77 percentage points (£1.53) and female hourly pay has increased by 4.55 percentage points (£0.93). Whilst the hourly pay for females has steadily increased since 2018, it is still lower than the hourly rate of pay for males. Whilst for 2024 the gap between the hourly rate of pay was the smallest since first reporting, the pay gap between the hourly rate of pay for males and females has increased to and continues to be over two pounds.

Gender Pay Gap 2025



Since first reporting, the average hourly rate of pay for males has increased by 33.26 percentage points (£6.02) and for females increased by 46.3 percentage points (£6.76).

Year	Male hourly pay £	Female hourly pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap %
2025	24.12	21.35	2.77	11.5
2024	22.59	20.42	2.17	9.6
2023	21.92	19.32	2.59	11.8
2022	19.52	16.90	2.62	13.4
2021	18.87	16.27	2.60	13.8
2020	19.41	15.77	3.64	18.8
2019	18.18	15.43	2.75	15.1
2018	17.36	14.47	2.89	16.6
2017	18.10	14.59	3.51	19.4

In comparison, for 2024 the mean (average) gender pay gap was 9.6 per cent. This meant that male employees earned £2.17 per hour more than females.

2. Median hourly gender pay gap

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

The median (mid-point) gender pay gap for 2025 is 8.7 per cent. For 2025, male employees earned £1.89 per hour more than females. This is 1.2 percentage points higher than 2024.

The median hourly pay for males and females continues to increase, however the hourly rate of pay for females is still lower than the rate of pay for males.

Since first reporting, the average hourly rate of pay for males has increased by 38.8 percentage points (£6.10) and for females increased by 41.8 percentage points (£5.88).

Gender Pay Gap 2025



Year	Male hourly pay £	Female hourly pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap %
2025	21.84	19.95	1.89	8.7
2024	20.36	18.84	1.52	7.5
2023	19.96	18.27	1.69	8.46
2022	17.80	15.72	2.08	11.7
2021	16.93	15.40	1.53	9.0
2020	17.83	15.10	2.73	15.3
2019	16.55	14.83	1.72	10.4
2018	16.16	14.26	1.90	11.8
2017	15.74	14.07	1.67	10.6

In comparison, for 2024 the median gender pay gap was 7.5 per cent. This meant that male employees earned £1.52 per hour more than females during this year.

3. Mean bonus gap

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

For 2025, the mean bonus gap is again 100 per cent. This meant that males were the only employees to receive bonus payments during this reporting period.

Year	Male bonus pay £	Female bonus pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap % *
2025	1.81	0	1.81	100
2024	0.31	0	0.31	100
2023	2.50	0	2.50	100
2022	2.25	4.29	-2.04	-90.6
2021	0.93	0	0.93	100
2020	13.29	1.29	12.00	90.2
2019	83.81	167.89	-84.08	-100.3
2018	235.71	327.16	-91.45	-38.8
2017	230.04	354.01	-123.97	-53.9

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

Gender Pay Gap 2025



4. Median bonus gap

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

For 2025, the median bonus gap is again 100 per cent. This means that only male employees received a bonus payment for this reporting period.

Year	Male bonus pay £	Female bonus pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap %
2025	125	0	125	100
2024	125	0	125	100
2023	125	0	125	100
2022	125	408	-283	-226.4
2021	125	0	125	100
2020	125	120	5	4.0
2019	750	675	75	10
2018	1000	750	250	25
2017	500	1000	-500	-100

Gender Pay Gap 2025



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	%
2025	Males		6	1.45
	Females		0	0
2024	Males		1	0.25
	Females		0	0
2023	Males		2	0.48
	Females		0	0
2022	Males		5	1.2
	Females		1	1.1
2021	Males		3	0.74
	Females		0	0
2020	Males		7	1.82
	Females		1	1.08
2019	Males		32	8.8
	Females		18	20.0
2018	Males		38	9.7
	Female		22	27.2
2017	Male		44	10.8
	Female		20	24.7

In the 2025 reporting period, no bonus/merit award payments were made to employees, however Long Service Award payments continue to be included in the bonus payment calculations and was paid to six male employees within this reporting period.

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.

Gender Pay Gap 2025



For the seven consecutive year, the highest proportion of females is within the lower quartile, representing 42 per cent of the total female workforce, this is up from 39 per cent in 2024. In comparison, the percentage of the total male workforce in the lower quartile is 21 per cent, which is the lowest representation of males within the four quartiles and the same as 2024 at 21 per cent.

The highest proportion of males is within the upper quartile, representing 27 per cent of the total male workforce. In comparison, for females the upper quartile has 18 per cent of the total female workforce.

The equal highest proportion of males is within the upper middle quartile, representing 27 per cent and for females the second highest proportion is within the lower middle quartile at 22 per cent.

Size of the change to quartiles from 2024:

Quartile changes	% for males	Total for males	% for females	Total for females	Overall total
Up	15.8%	63	8.6%	9	72
Down	10.8%	43	3.8%	4	47
Same	65.4%	261	75.2%	79	340
Not full-pay relevant	8.0%	32	12.4%	13	45
Total full-pay relevant employees		399		105	504

Size of the change to quartiles from 2023:

Quartile changes	% for males	Total for males	% for females	Total for females	Overall total
Up	21.6	84	9.0	9	93
Down	16.8	65	5.0	5	40
Same	56.4	219	67.0	67	286
Not full-pay relevant	12.9	50	19.0	19	69
Total full-pay relevant employees	-	388	-	100	488

Gender Pay Gap 2025



Size of the change to quartiles from 2022:

Quartile changes	% for males	Total for males	% for females	Total for females	Overall total
Up	25	95	15	14	109
Down	8	32	2	2	34
Same	50	189	63	57	246
Not full-pay relevant	17	65	20	18	83
Total full-pay relevant employees	-	381	-	91	472

Size of the change to quartiles from 2021:

Quartile changes	% for males	Total for males	% for females	Total for females	Overall total
Up	18	69	13	12	81
Down	17	62	9.0	8.0	70
Same	54	202	70	62	264
Not full-pay relevant	11	42	8.0	7.0	49
Total full-pay relevant employees	-	375	-	89	464

The majority of male and female employees do not move between the quartile pay bands. For 2024, 56.4 per cent of males and 67 per cent of females remained in the same quartile, and for both male and female employees, more went up a quartile pay band, with fewer going down, which indicates there were more permanent promotions during the year.

For 2025

Quartile	Male	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Female	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Total quartile
Upper (U)	107	27	85	19	18	15	126
Upper Middle (UM)	107	27	85	19	18	15	126
Lower Middle (LM)	103	26	82	23	22	18	126
Lower (L)	82	21	65	44	42	35	126
Total	399			105			504

Gender Pay Gap 2025



For 2024

Quartile	Male	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Female	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Total quartile
Upper (U)	103	27	84	19	19	16	122
Upper Middle (UM)	105	27	86	17	17	14	122
Lower Middle (LM)	97	25	80	25	25	20	122
Lower (L)	83	21	68	39	39	32	122
Total	388	-	-	100	-	-	488

For 2023

Quartile	Male	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Female	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Total quartile
Upper (U)	104	27.3	88.1	14	15.4	11.9	118
Upper Middle (UM)	95	24.9	80.5	23	25.2	19.5	118
Lower Middle (LM)	97	25.5	82.2	21	23.1	17.8	118
Lower (L)	85	22.3	72.0	33	36.3	28.0	118
Total	381	-	-	91	-	-	472

For 2022

Quartile	Male	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Female	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Total quartile
Upper (U)	100	26.7	86.2	16	18.0	13.8	116
Upper Middle (UM)	98	26.1	84.5	18	20.2	15.5	116
Lower Middle (LM)	93	24.8	80.2	23	25.8	19.8	116
Lower (L)	84	22.4	72.4	32	36.0	27.6	116
Total	375	-	-	89	-	-	464

Gender Pay Gap 2025



For 2021

Quartile	Male	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Female	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Total quartile
Upper (U)	99	26.7	85.3	17	18.5	14.7	116
Upper Middle (UM)	100	27.0	86.2	16	17.4	13.8	116
Lower Middle (LM)	96	25.9	82.8	20	21.7	17.2	116
Lower (L)	76	20.5	66.1	39	42.4	33.9	115
Total	371	-	-	92	-	-	463

For 2020:

Quartile	Male	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Female	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Total quartile
Upper (U)	94	27.6	88.7	12	14.6	11.3	106
Upper Middle (UM)	90	26.5	85.7	15	18.3	14.3	105
Lower Middle (LM)	90	26.5	85.7	15	18.3	14.3	105
Lower (L)	66	19.4	62.3	40	48.8	37.7	106
Total	340	-	-	82	-	-	422

For 2019:

Quartile	Male	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Female	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Total quartile
Upper (U)	92	27.1	86.0	15	17.6	14.0	107
Upper Middle (UM)	92	27.1	86.8	14	16.5	13.2	106
Lower Middle (LM)	85	25.0	80.2	21	24.7	19.8	106
Lower (L)	71	20.8	67.0	35	41.2	33.0	106
Total	340	-	-	85	-	-	425

Gender Pay Gap 2025



For 2018:

Quartile	Male	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Female	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Total quartile
Upper (U)	99	26.3	87.6	14	17.9	12.4	113
Upper Middle (UM)	104	27.6	91.2	10	12.8	8.8	114
Lower Middle (LM)	95	25.2	83.3	19	24.4	16.7	114
Lower (L)	79	21.0	69.3	35	44.9	30.7	114
Total	377	-	-	78	-	-	455

For 2017:

Quartile	Male	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Female	% of total gender	% of total quartile	Total quartile
Upper (U)	107	27.3	90.7	11	13.8	9.3	118
Upper Middle (UM)	105	26.8	89.0	13	16.3	11.0	118
Lower Middle (LM)	100	25.5	84.7	18	22.5	15.3	118
Lower (L)	80	20.4	67.8	38	47.5	32.2	118
Total	392	-	-	80	-	-	472

The Service's plan on addressing pay gaps:

The Service is committed to addressing and reducing pay gaps and will strive to achieve a more representative workforce, by increasing diversity, improving inclusion, and tackling inequality within the workplace.

The Service is committed to:

Leading transformation: The Service will ensure that all employees are aware of the promise to the public and our people, our values and the behaviours expected within the workplace, ensuring actions and decisions align with the principles of integrity, compassion and respect. We strive to improve the Service's performance through building a diverse workforce and ensuring employees understand how the Service operates, to be as effective as possible within their role. This will be achieved through a commitment to:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion and the achievement of initiatives identified in the HMICFRS action plans and EDI objectives
- Taking the culture of the Service seriously, making improvements where appropriate and learning from best practice
- Ensuring the 2025-30 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) supports more detailed annual and departmental delivery plans, capturing the key elements of what success looks like for the Service and reaffirming our commitment to invest in improvements, reflecting our promise to provide an excellent, modern and agile Fire Service for the community
- Commitment to review Gender Pay Gap data quarterly to realign focus and monitor trends
- Transparent approaches to pay and reward
- Up to date and fit for purpose policies and procedures, that are clearly communicated, employees are aware of and trust their robustness, and managers are appropriately trained in their application
- Encouraging and supporting individuals to speak up and challenge unacceptable behaviour

Attracting talent: The Service is committed to ensuring its resourcing attracts, selects, and recruits the right calibre of people to deliver its corporate priorities, aligned to workforce planning requirements. The Service will ensure it retains the skills and capability needed and employs them productively to support its corporate objectives. We are committed to establishing the right working arrangements and conditions of employment for all employees. This will be achieved through a commitment to:

- Positive action and community engagement. To engage, encourage and support those from under-represented groups in seeing the Fire Service as an employer of choice
- Exploring flexible working opportunities on a case-by-case basis to support the recruitment and retention of under-represented groups
- Continually reviewing and updating recruitment processes. Using fair and transparent processes and ensuring any learns are fed into future recruitment activity
- Communication and branding. Ensuring processes and communication tools are appropriate for the audience and respect the importance of neutrality, fairness and valuing diversity
- Recognising and valuing difference, due to culture, race, ethnicity, personality, thinking styles, generation etc.
- A working environment which enables employees to feel safe, valued, able to bring their whole self to work, and encouraged to reach their potential

Supporting development: The Service strives to create a sustainable workforce through medium to long term strategic planning, treating employees as assets enabling the Service to plan for the future with regards to the workforce requirements. This will be achieved through a commitment to:

- Improving the breadth of diversity-related data available and the utilisation of this data, to identify inequalities, initiate activity and evaluate progress throughout the employment lifecycle
- Improving understanding and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion through training and education
- Regular systematic and rigorous strategic workforce and succession planning processes and horizon scanning of likely future external and internal challenges, to ensure the Service continues to meet workforce capacity requirements and build capability
- Encouraging all employees to reach their potential and encourage high performance and continuous improvement
- Supporting employees throughout their career, helping them to grow and excel in a dynamic and respectful environment
- Leadership and management development programmes to improve the effectiveness of existing managers as well as provide development opportunities and pathways for future managers and leaders
- Enhancing the skills, knowledge, and performance of employees through development tools, e.g. structured conversations, mentoring, coaching, 360-degree feedback