



Bedfordshire
Fire and Rescue Service

Gender Pay Gap Report 2023

Introduction

In 2017 the UK Government introduced legislation that made it statutory for organisations with 250 or more employees to report on their gender pay gap by 30 March 2018 and annually thereafter. The gender pay gap shows the difference in average male and women's pay. Gender pay comparisons are different to equal pay, the latter is about pay differences between men and women carrying out the same jobs, similar jobs or jobs of equal value. Gender pay gap reporting was introduced to highlight the differences in the average earnings of men and women and encourage society and employers to address the pay inequalities that exist.

This is Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's report for the seventh snapshot date of 31 March 2023; I can confirm that the figures have been calculated using the methodologies contained in the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

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Interim Head of Human Resources

February 2024

1. What is the gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average earnings of men and women over a period of time, irrespective of their role or seniority. It captures any pay difference between men and women on a broad level. The gender pay gap is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings e.g. in 2023 women in Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service earned based on mean average 8.24% less than men.

2. What we are required to publish

The legislation requires employers to publish the following calculations for relevant employees:

Mean Gender Pay Gap	The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay that men and women receive. This is calculated by adding up all the hourly rates of pay and dividing this amount by the number of employees
Median Gender Pay Gap	The difference between the median hourly rate of pay for men and women. This is calculated by listing all the hourly rates of pay in numerical order, the median is the middle number in the list
Mean Bonus Gender Pay Gap	The difference between the mean bonus pay of men and women. This is calculated by adding up all bonuses and dividing this by the number of employees
Median Bonus Gender Pay Gap	The difference between the median bonus pay of men and women. This is calculated by listing all the bonuses in numerical order, the median is the middle number in the list
Proportion of men and women who received a bonus payment	The proportion of men who were paid any amount of bonus pay and the proportion of women who were paid any amount of bonus pay. Calculated by dividing the number of relevant employees who received a bonus by those who could have received a bonus
Proportion of men and women in each quartile pay band	The proportion of men and women in four quartile pay bands, (dividing the workforce into 4 equal parts). Calculated by placing hourly pay rates in numerical order and splitting the list into 4 equal sections and then calculating the number of males and females in each of the 4 sections
Occupational segregation	The smallest influence on gender pay (14%) - women tend to work in occupations that are female-dominated, but which have overall low pay and are low-skilled. Women are also less likely to progress to senior roles, they make up 40.3% of senior managers and 34.3% of FTSE 100 companies executives as at 11 January 2023.

3. Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service approach to pay

The Service is committed to the principles of equal opportunities and equal treatment for all employees. There is a transparent approach to pay, with a published annual pay statement considered and approved by the Fire Authority that sets out the Service approach to pay for all roles including the approach to senior pay. In addition, there is a published Pay Policy and Procedure accessible to all employees that describes in detail the pay, pension, allowances and expenses payable to any employee.

The Service has 3 sets of employee groups whose terms and conditions of employment are nationally negotiated through relevant joint councils that contain representatives from the employers' side and recognised trade unions.

Operational staff including Wholetime, Retained on-call staff and Control staff pay is nationally negotiated and the relevant salaries paid locally, any additional remuneration is subject to local negotiation and published in our Pay Policy. We also employ a number of individuals in support staff roles to support our operational service delivery. This employee group also have a nationally negotiated range of salaries that are applied following application of an analytical job evaluation system (Korn Ferry [Hay]). Salaries of strategic managers (our Chief Officers) in the Service are considered by the Fire Authority, using a combination of nationally determined salary levels and local pay arrangements as described in reports and the annual pay statement of the Fire Authority.

4. 2023 Workforce profile

Total workforce	Total	Female	Male
Number of full pay employees* on 31/03/2023	589	166	423
Number of Employees in Support Roles	180	113	67
Number of Employees in Operational Roles (inc Control)	409	53	356

The workforce profile above shows that our operational workforce is predominantly male, whereas women are employed in the majority of support roles.

*A full pay employee is any employee who is employed by Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service on the snapshot date (31 March of the given year) and who is paid their usual full basic pay during the relevant pay period. This definition means that any employee not in receipt of their 'full basic pay' for example because they are on unpaid leave or a career break on the snapshot date is not included in the figures. The definitions of employee and full pay used in the Regulations will account for any discrepancies if comparison is made to other employee data published by the Service. In addition employees who are employed on more than one contract with the Service, for example Wholetime firefighters who also provide Retained on-call firefighter cover, are only counted once in their primary role, with their total full pay (primary contract and retainer excluding fees) for all contracts included in the calculations.

5. Gender Pay Gap analysis 2023

Total workforce

	Female	Male	Gender Pay Gap
The Mean Hourly Rate	£16.30	£17.78	8.32%
The Median Hourly Rate	£14.95	£15.75	5.08%

Year on year comparison	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Mean Hourly Rate	11.55%	10.61%	12.70%	12.72%	6.19%	4.00%
Median Hourly Rate	8.21%	5.32%	8.32%	9.08%	0.00%	0.00%

The mean GPG has increased due to the TUPE transfer of a Group of predominately Female workers on minimum wage.

Continuous Professional Development Payment (Bonus)

Total	Female	Male	Gender Gap
204 payments made	24	180	76.47%
Mean	£632.65	£646.03	2.07%
Median	£694.00	£694.00	0.00%

The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) payment is being treated as a bonus for the purposes of Gender Pay Gap reporting, as recommended by the Local Government Association. A CPD payment is part of a national agreement that covers operational employees and control staff, it is designed to recognise and reward experienced employees who are able to demonstrate and provide evidence of continual professional development in several areas. The payment is retrospective and paid in a lump sum on an annual basis by September.

6. Pay quartile analysis

Quartiles	Salary range	Total No:	Female	Male	Female %	Male %
Lower	£9,550 - £26,975 pa	148	77	71	52.02%	47.98%
Lower Middle	£30,632 - £32,244 pa	147	21	126	14.28%	85.72%
Upper Middle	£32,244 - £39,330 pa	148	24	123	16.32%	83.68%
Upper	£39,974 - £156,390 pa	147	44	103	29.93%	70.07%

The Service gender median pay gap for 2023 is 5.08%, compared with the provisional UK Gender pay gap of 14.3%, taken from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings survey 2023 conducted by the Office for National Statistics. This represents an increase from the previous year's zero percentage and is primarily caused by the TUPE transfer of a group of lower paid female staff into the Service.

The Service has clear policies and pay structures in place to pay employees equally regardless of gender. The Service is confident that its gender pay gap does not stem from paying men and women unequally; rather it reflects the lack of women in operational firefighting and senior roles.

7. Closing the gender pay gap

The Service continues to employ a workforce that is highly skilled, agile, engaged, and safe in their diverse roles, whilst ensuring where possible, employees have opportunities, choice and pathways for promotion and development. We will continue working towards having a responsive and diverse workforce which integrates with partners across Bedfordshire. The Service is eager to ensure that all employees enjoy their role and have a fulfilling and rewarding career.

Increasing women's representation in the operational and senior roles of our organisation is key to improving and eliminating the gender pay gap that currently exists. We have successfully increased the percentage of women recruited to On-Call retained duty system roles in the Service overall, however there is still considerable work to be done to achieve a more representative operational workforce.

The Corporate Management Team and the Fire Authority measure and evaluate performance on improving diversity in different ways. This monitoring includes a regular review of progress and outcomes in relation to action plans.

In addition, there are specific performance indicators in place that measure women's representation in operational roles. The following measures for 2022-2023 were achieved, illustrating an improvement in five out of six areas.

- *For the period of April 2022- March 2023, 11.8 % of new entrants to the Retained Duty System/On-Call were women (an increase of 0.7% from 11.1% in 2021-22)*
- *For the period of April 2022- March 2023, 5.6% % of new entrants to the Wholetime operational duty system were women (a decrease of 6.9% from 12.5% in 2021-22)*
- *For the period of April 2022- March 2023, 47% of new entrants to the Service across all areas were women (an increase of 18.9% from 28.1% in 2021-22)*
- *As at 31st March 2023, 11.6% of Retained Duty System/On-Call operational staff were women (an increase of 0.8% from 10.8% the previous year)*
- *As at 31st March 2023, 6.5% of Wholetime operational staff were women (an increase of 0.1% from 6.4% the previous year)*
- *As at 31st March 2023, 27.9% of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service staff were women (an increase of 2.7% from 25.2% the previous year)*

Post COVID-19 restrictions, there has been a significant increase in face-to-face events, allowing greater interaction with our underrepresented groups - including women. These events have enabled us to increase our contact with potential female applicants, encouraging them to register their interest on the Service website and receive updates on career opportunities . This allows a tailored approach in our communications and direct engagement, actively encouraging applications. Vacancies have been posted on the "Women in the Fire Service" website to broaden the applicant pool with the intention of attracting more female candidates.

Applications for our 2023 Wholetime firefighter campaign opened at the end of June 2023. Various positive action initiatives were implemented between January 1st and 31st March 2023 prior to the advert opening. This included two 'Have a go' sessions held at Luton Fire Station and Kempston Fire Stations. These are where women and other underrepresented groups participate in operational firefighting activities to try them and gain insight into the role and the selection process. Additionally, women were targeted on a variety of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. Engagement continued with females via a tailored Instagram page called WIRE (Well-being, Inclusion, Recruitment and Engagement), where the number of female followers have increased.

The Recruitment Engagement Officer and the wider Recruitment Team attended careers events at schools and colleges across the county, throughout the year, promoting the Service as an employer of choice, engaging with approximately 3,200 pupils aged 7-18+. The Service was represented at a variety of community events such as; Bedford River Festival, The Asian Festival and The African Festival in Bedford, along with Ramadan events such as Eid in the Park in Luton. At all these events we specifically targeted our underrepresented groups which includes females.

The Service continues to focus on ensuring that we are attracting, developing and supporting diverse and talented individuals to join and progress through the Service, achieve their full potential and continue to make Bedfordshire safer.