

# Gender Pay Gap Report

## Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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## 1 Executive Summary

This report outlines Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Information Regulations 2017) and details our annual Gender Pay Gap figures for 2023 and the differences in average earnings between our male and female employees.

## 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of the 2024 report (for 2023 data) for publishing on the Service's website and the Government website [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

## 3 Background

In April 2017, the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 came into force. This requires organisations, public, private and voluntary, with 250 or more employees to report and publish annual figures in relation to their gender pay gap.

The gender pay gap is an equality measure that identifies the difference in average earnings between women and men. Statistics generally show that on average, men occupy higher paid roles than women. It is important to note that the gender pay gap is not about women being paid less than men for doing the same role. Equal pay deals with pay differences between men and women who carry out the same or similar jobs, or jobs of equal value.

The overall UK average gender pay gap for all employees is determined by data received by the Office of National Statistics.

This is published annually on the Government website. The figure for 2023 for all employees is 14.3%, there has been a slow decline over time.

The Service is required to publish figures using 31 March as a reference date and based on the following:

**The mean gender pay gap** – The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees as a percentage.

**The median gender pay gap** – The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees as a percentage.

**The mean bonus gender pay gap** – The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees as a percentage.

**The median bonus gender pay gap** – The difference between the median bonus pay paid to female employees as a percentage.

**Bonus proportions** – The proportion of male and females receiving a bonus payment.

The Service does not offer a bonus scheme and therefore are not required to report on bonus percentage figures.

### Service Data 2023

For the purposes of statutory reporting requirements, the Service is required to publish figures based on individual employee contracts of employment and takes into consideration the various terms and conditions of employment within the Service. The figures below are based on established contracted posts within the Service as of 31 March 2023. This includes operational, non-operational and Brigade Manager contracts.

### Total Employees:

Gender	Totals						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Female	105	101	99	116	117	121	122
Male	610	557	551	536	548	520	506
Total	715	658	650	652	665	641	628

### SFRS Mean and Median gender pay gap

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Mean (average)	8%	8%	6%	8%	4%	3%	3%
Median	11%	8%	0	2%	0%	0%	0%

	<b>F 2020</b>	<b>M 2020</b>	<b>F 2021</b>	<b>M 2021</b>	<b>F 2022</b>	<b>M 2022</b>	<b>F 2023</b>	<b>M 2023</b>
Mean - Average Hourly Rate	13.94	15.10	14.68	15.31	14.99	15.47	16.04	16.54
Median	14.00	14.22	14.51	14.51	14.72	14.72	15.75	15.75

\*2017-2019 Data in Appendix 1

	<b>Gap</b>				<b>%</b>			
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Mean - Average Hourly Rate	1.16	0.63	0.48	0.51	8%	4%	3%	3%
Median	0.23	0	0	0	2%	0%	0%	0%

\*2017-2019 Data in appendices

UK Data shows that female workers earn on average 14.3% less than male workers and the gender pay gap exists due to female workers occupying lower paid and less senior roles in both public and private sector organisations. Although our gender pay gap is considerably lower than the national average, females are less represented in the higher salary bands which is reflected in the Service's overall data profile. There are essentially more males occupying higher level positions within SFRS.

The under-representation of females in the Fire and Rescue service is well documented. With more males in the workforce, it is inevitable that differences in pay are exacerbated, and this imbalance will continue until we see more women in operational and in senior level roles. Research shows that a more diverse and inclusive workforce helps organisations develop by bringing new skills, creativity and innovation. This report outlines initiatives that SFRS are involved in to help create that environment.

The above data for 2023 shows that overall male employees on average earn 3% more than female employee's in the Service, this is the same figure as last year. Male employees are on average earning 57p more per hour than female employee's which is a slight increase from our 2022 data, whereby male employees were earning 48p per hour more than females.

The data shows 34% of our employees in the lower quartile band are female a slight increase of 1%, 16% female remains the same for the higher salary band. There is an increase of 2% in our mid upper quartile to 19%, and a reduction to our mid lower of 1%.

Our median pay gap for the Service this year has remained at 0% for the last 3 years, indicating that there is no pay differential in our mid earners within the Service between male and female employees. This is a positive reflection of middle range earners and indicates what 'most' people earn.

Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2023				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	16%	19%	8%	34%
Male	84%	81%	92%	66%

Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2022				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	16%	17%	9%	33%
Male	84%	83%	91%	67%

*\*See appendices for 2017-2021 Salary Quartile Bands.*

Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2023						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
1 High	£17.47-£65.21	26	16%	132	84%	157
2 Mid Upper	£15.75 -£17.47	30	19%	127	81%	157
3 Mid Lower	£15.75	13	8%	144	92%	157
4 Lower	£6.85 -£15.75	54	34%	103	66%	157
		<b>122</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>641</b>

Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2022						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
1 High	£16.32 -£58.81	26	16%	134	84%	160
2 Mid Upper	£14.72-£16.32	27	17%	133	83%	160
3 Mid Lower	£14.72	14	9%	147	91%	161
4 Lower	£10.60 -£14.72	53	33%	107	67%	160
		<b>120</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>641</b>

*\*See appendices for Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2017-2021*

In 2023, the above salary quartile band tables indicates that 84% of our male employees were the highest earners in SFRS, the same figure as in 2022. Female high earners have also remained at 16%. The 2023 lower quartile figures indicates that this is our largest female percentage area of 34% and predominantly equates to our support staff employees. Operational roles offer higher rates of pay at entry point in comparison to our support staff posts. There is also a higher rate of part time females in this quartile, which indicates that females are more likely to take advantage of our family friendly policies.

The 2023 mid upper quartile band data indicates 19% are female, this is an increase of 2% from 2022, these are in support staff specialist roles attracting mid-range salaries for specialist skills. In the Service, it is recognised that females are under-represented in operational roles and the Service is

addressing this in its recruitment processes and in its 2024 On-call and Wholetime targeted recruitment campaigns.

### **Commitment to reducing the Gender Pay Gap**

The Service is committed to ensuring and achieving an inclusive workforce to encourage female representation at all levels of the organisation. SFRS is also committed to the principles of fairness, equality and inclusion and to ensure that these principles are embedded in our service. Inclusive employment policies and procedures are essential to the success of our recruitment processes and are subject to equality impact assessments to determine differential impact upon female and other protected characteristics. The Service focus is on attracting women into the Service by ensuring targeted positive action awareness sessions. Improving the diversity of the people we employ is important to SFRS and our priority is to recruit and retain a talented and diverse workforce to improve our cultural competence and attract broader experience.

### **New Initiatives that support reducing the Gender Pay Gap**

The Service have undertaken an Independent Cultural Review in 2023 with results due in early 2024 that will be shared with all employees.

Implementation of the National Fire Chief's Council Culture and Values report actions during 2023, these have now been implemented into our departmental plans.

To support employees the service introduced an employee confidential reporting line to report areas of concern.

The Service have developed a cultural statement of intent, focusing on a zero tolerance approach to unacceptable behaviours.

The Voices Group has now been in place for over 24 months, new initiatives f include: networking events for Women, BAME employees and Menopause support. Introduced the progress flag, trained Menopause champions, menopause nutrition course, connecting with national networks such as menopause, the Black Firefighters Network and the LGBT+ FirePride Network.

The Service is exploring a range of specific women development programmes in addition to the women in the fire service development weekend.

Internal Transfer Process was undertaken for on call employees for wholetime firefighter posts during 2023.

As part of Health and Wellbeing the Service introduced yoga sessions during 2023 and offered non-uniformed employees to be TRIM practitioners.

The Service's On-call Sustainability Review focuses on attraction and retention to future proof the service and adapt to progressive ways of working. From the results of the on-call sustainability survey a range of new contracts been recommended and under review.

The Service has reviewed how it allows green book employees to take their flexi leave and have put forward recommendations to change this to hours to make it more flexible and family friendly.

The Service are reviewing paid family, medical leave and fostering leave.

#### **4 Summary**

Through the Service's continual effort to address equality issues, 2023 results indicate that the gender pay gap remains at 3%.

Whilst acknowledging the progress made, the report outlines areas the Service is working on to address the gap through retention and attraction initiatives. We will continue to address this moving forward via our recruitment strategies and internal review of processes.

#### **5 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### **6 Legal Comment**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

#### **7 Appendices**

Appendix A – [Salary Quartile Bands 2017 - 2025](#)

Appendix B – [Ongoing Initiatives to Support the Reduction of the Gender Pay Gap](#)

#### **8 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.

## Salary Quartile Bands 2017-2021

<b>Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2021</b>				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	14%	16%	4%	36%
Male	86%	84%	96%	64%
<b>Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2020</b>				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	14%	15%	6%	36%
Male	86%	85%	94%	64%
<b>Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2019</b>				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	12%	14%	6%	29%
Male	88%	86%	94%	71%
<b>Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2018</b>				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	9%	13%	3%	33%
Male	91%	87%	97%	67%
<b>Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2017</b>				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	9%	10%	3%	36%
Male	91%	90%	97%	64%

## Salary Quartile banks – Breakdown 2017-2021

<b>Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2021</b>						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
1 High	£16.08-£58.81	24	14%	142	86%	166
2 Mid Upper	£14.51-£16.08	27	16%	139	84%	166
3 Mid Lower	£14.51	6	4%	161	96%	167
4 Lower	£6.45-£14.51	60	36%	106	64%	166
		<b>117</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>665</b>

<b>Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2020</b>						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
1 High	£15.77 - £56.81	23	14%	140	86%	163
2 Mid Upper	£14.22 - £15.77	25	15%	138	85%	163



3 Mid Lower	£14.22	9	6%	154	94%	163
4 Lower	£9.36 - £14.22	59	36%	104	64%	163
		<b>116</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>82.2%</b>	<b>652</b>
<b>Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2019</b>						
	<b>Hour Rate Range</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
1 High	£15.46 - £56.81	19	12%	144	88%	163
2 Mid Upper	£13.94 - £15.46	23	14%	139	86%	162
3 Mid Lower	£13.94	10	6%	153	94%	163
4 Lower	£9.17 - £13.94	47	29%	115	71%	162
		<b>99</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>84.8%</b>	<b>650</b>

<b>Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2018</b>						
	<b>Hour Rate Range</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
1 High	£15.15 - £55.69	14	8%	151	92%	165
2 Mid Upper	£13.67 - £15.15	22	13%	142	87%	164
3 Mid Lower	£13.67	9	5%	156	95%	165
4 Lower	£7.05 - £13.67	55	34%	109	66%	164
		<b>100</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>84.8%</b>	<b>658</b>

<b>Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2017</b>						
	<b>Hour Rate Range</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
1 High	£15.00 - £55.14	16	9%	163	91%	179
2 Mid Upper	£13.53 - £15.00	18	10%	160	90%	178
3 Mid Lower	£13.53	6	3%	173	97%	179
4 Lower	£4.00 - £13.53	65	36%	114	64%	179
		<b>105</b>	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>85.3%</b>	<b>715</b>

### Shropshire FRS Mean and Median gender pay gap

	<b>F 2017</b>	<b>M 2017</b>	<b>F 2018</b>	<b>M 2018</b>	<b>F 2019</b>	<b>M 2019</b>
Mean - Average Hourly Rate	13.04	14.10	13.03	14.21	13.67	14.61
Median	12.01	13.53	12.53	13.67	13.94	13.94

	<b>Gap</b>			<b>%</b>		
	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>

Mean - Average Hourly Rate	1.06	1.18	0.94	8%	8%	6%
Median	1.52	1.14	0	11%	8%	0%

## **Ongoing initiatives to support the reduction of the gender pay gap**

The Service's People Strategy sets out a clear focus and direction of how we are committed to developing our staff throughout their employment and how we aim to be deliberately developmental, inclusive and diverse and intentionally innovative to achieve an adaptable, flexible and resilient workforce and supporting health and wellbeing at work.

The Service's long-standing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group drives forward gender equality initiatives chaired by the CFO and invite Voices representatives to update on the work of this group.

The Service actively promotes campaigns and initiatives supporting, International Women's Day, White Ribbon, time to talk and has an ongoing calendar of events encouraging inclusivity.

The Service signed the White Ribbon Accreditation pledge to show our support both internally and externally to reducing violence towards women and has held its first steering group meeting and created an action plan. The Service is also continuing its work on Mental Health at Work Commitment action plan to support all our employees.

Continued annual programme of events are planned for firefighter taster days targeting Women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees. A number of specific taster sessions were held in 2023 for women as part of the service's positive action programme to achieve a workforce that is more reflective of our communities.

EDI training is ongoing, this includes EDI refresher training, Equality Impact Assessment Training and Dyslexia Awareness training as well as other role specific training as identified.

Staff survey will be launched in 2024, an action plan will then be created from these results.

The Service will continue a programme of job evaluation of non-operational roles and review every 5 years, unless significant changes have been made to the role. A new pay benchmarking process has been introduced for our ICT/Performance and Planning roles to recognise the technical skills and pay according to external market factors.

The buddy system is now embedded, which starts at the point of application for on call employees to help with attraction, engagement and retention.

The Service uses the National on-call recruitment campaign designed to encourage applications from diverse backgrounds.

The Service has a health and wellbeing strategy and EDI strategy reviewed quarterly and supported at executive level.

A dedicated employee health and wellbeing section accessed via our online portal includes support and advice on various related topics.

Our recruitment processes have been adapted to incorporate apprenticeship schemes for both operational and non-operational roles to encourage a different career pathway and attract diversity.

The Service continues to ensure that our policies support family and work life balance working practices offering flexible working opportunities. SFRS maternity and adoption leave policies offer individuals enhanced benefits and along with career break schemes, parental and paternity leave, builds our reputation as being an inclusive employer.

The flexible working policy has been updated to enable employees to request flexible working from day 1 of employment and allow 2 requests per year.

The Service actively seeks to improve employee benefits and communicate ways of offering a range of initiatives via the employee portal and have signed up to an employee benefit virtual platform 'Vivup' that provides information about cost saving opportunities to support day to day living. The service has an external benefits page on the website as an attraction tool.

The Service trialled agile working arrangements to support flexible working practices. This is a positive outcome reflecting the need to be progressive to attract a diverse workforce following the impact of the pandemic. The Service is currently developing a New Ways of Working policy to incorporate working from home arrangements.

The Service's career progression gateway assessment process is now ongoing and part of our promotion process along with a coaching mentoring and buddying strategy.

The Service continue to support attendance in the Women in the Fire Service's Development Programme which helps women to identify clear, practical and realistic steps to develop self-confidence in their professional and personal lives.

The Service supports the Armed Forces Covenant within its recruitment strategy, including Career Transition Partnership's.