

Gender Pay Gap Report

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Simon Hardiman, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Kat Thomas on 01743 260222 or Natalie Parkinson 01743 260236.

1 Purpose of Report

This report outlines Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Information Regulations 2017) and details our annual Gender Pay Gap figures for 2022 and the differences in average earnings between our male and female employees.

2 Recommendations

The Service Management Team is asked to note the contents of the 2023 report (for 2022 data) for publishing on SFRS Website and the Government Website: 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 provisional figure for 2022 for all employees is 14.9%, there has been a slow decline over time.

SFRS are 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 2022

For the purposes of statutory reporting requirements, SFRS are 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 2022. This includes operational, non-operational and Brigade Manager contracts.

Total Employees:

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

SFRS Mean and Median gender pay gap

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

	F 2019	M 2019	F 2020	M 2020	F 2021	M 2021	F 2022	M 2022
Mean - Average Hourly Rate	13.67	14.61	13.94	15.10	14.68	15.31	14.99	15.47
Median	13.94	13.94	14.00	14.22	14.51	14.51	14.72	14.72

*2017-2018 Data in the Appendix

	Gap				%			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Mean - Average Hourly Rate	0.94	1.16	0.63	0.48	6%	8%	4%	3%
Median	0	0.23	0	0	0%	2%	0%	0%

*2017-2019 Data in Appendix

UK Data shows that female workers earn on average 14.9% 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 2022 shows that overall male employees on average earn 3% more than female employees in the Service. This is a reduction of 1% in our gender pay gap from the previous year's figure of 4%. Male employees are on average earning 48p more per hour than female employees which again is a significant decrease from our 2021 data, whereby male employees were earning 63p per hour more than females.

The data shows 33% of our employees in the lower quartile band are female, and 16% female are in the higher salary band. This is a decrease to our lower quartile and a slight increase to our upper quartile from 2021. There has also been a 1% increase in the female mid upper salary range from 2021 data to 17%.

The median pay gap for the Service this year has remained at 0% for the last 2 years, indicating that there is no pay differential in 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.

The data collected since the requirement to publish figures in 2017, has shown a steady increase in our overall female recruitment figures in the high, mid upper and mid lower quartile bands with a small reduction to our low quartile band.

Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2022				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	16%	17%	9%	33%
Male	84%	83%	91%	67%
Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2021				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	14%	16%	4%	36%
Male	86%	84%	96%	64%

*See appendix for 2017-2020 Salary Quartile Bands.

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
		120	19%	521	81%	641

Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2021						
	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
		117	18%	548	82%	665

*See appendix for Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2017-2020

In 2022, the above salary quartile band table indicates that 84% of our male employees were the highest earners in SFRS, a slight reduction to that in 2021. Female high earners have increased to 16%. The 2022 lower quartile figures indicates that this is our largest female percentage area of 33% 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 2022 mid upper quartile band data indicates 17% are female, which is an increase of 1% from 2021, these are in support staff specialist roles attracting mid-range salaries for specialist skills. In SFRS, it is recognised that females are under-represented in operational roles and SFRS are addressing this in our recruitment processes and in our 2023 On Call 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 the 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. SFRS focus 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 Voices Group has now been in place for over 12 months and has seen the introduction of the Service's first Women's Networking Event, Peri-menopause yoga, female safety survey, menopause talks and activities which all support our agenda for supporting our female employees.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) refresher training ensures our employees are aware of their responsibilities and the Service's responsibilities to supporting our employees.

The Service has signed the White Ribbon Accreditation pledge to show it's support both internally and externally to reducing violence towards women and is implementing a focused steering group to develop an action plan. The Service has also signed the Mental Health at Work Commitment to support all our employees.

Following the trial during the pandemic, virtual taster sessions specifically for women were held during 2022 and are now programmed in for 2023. We are committed to continue with a programme of positive action work focusing on targeted campaigns to achieve a workforce that is more reflective of our communities.

Equality Impact Assessment Training was held during 2022 and is continuing through 2023.

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 benefits virtual platform 'Vivup' that provides information about cost saving opportunities to support day to day living.

The Service's On Call sustainability review focuses on attraction and retention to future proof the service and adapt to progressive ways of working. The results of the On Call sustainability survey indicated that employees would like more flexibility to contracted hours which is currently being considered.

The maternity policy is being updated to incorporate the statutory requirement for additional leave for premature babies with enhanced payment for this period supporting our commitment to parental requirements for working parents.

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. Internal staff networking groups are actively encouraged to help inspire positive change and are encouraged to participate in the Service's EDI steering group. Working Group initiatives over the past 12 months are employee led and connect colleagues who have a common interest in sharing their experiences, supporting others and contributing to the Services understanding of issues arising from our equality groups.

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 has adapted to new ways of working and consulted with employees to gauge how best to support them, ensuring their health, safety and wellbeing. During the pandemic disruption to existing working arrangements to meet caring responsibilities has had a greater impact on females and our response has been empathetic working around revised workloads and flexible hours. Online conferencing arrangements have enabled participants to work at home with less disruption to work life balance. Benefits of these arrangements determined through consultation will be a key focus going forward. The Service is developing a new ways of working policy to incorporate working from home arrangements.

The Service is also reviewing the current flexi time scheme for working hours for its non-uniformed employees. This will take into consideration various new ways of working since the pandemic and to make job opportunities more attractive to potential new employees.

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. 6 women have attended in 2022 with a further 3 women signed up for the 2023 workshops.

Ongoing initiatives

The Service's People Strategy sets out a clear focus and direction of how it is committed to developing its 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 Chief Fire Officer and invite Voices representatives to update on the work of this group.

Continued annual programme of events are planned for firefighter taster days targeting Women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees.

The Service are near completion of its non-operational pay grading system. Roles have been evaluated in consultation with employees to ensure fair and competitive salaries based on role responsibilities.

This has had a positive impact on lower graded roles in the Service primarily occupied by female employees. The policy has now been reviewed and all posts will be evaluated every 5 years, unless significant changes have been made.

The buddy system is now in place, which starts at the point of application for On Call employees to help with attraction, engagement and retention. From all applications received, 125 requested a buddy to support them through the recruitment process.

The Service use 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.

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 its 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 Service's career progression gateway (CPG) assessment process has now successfully been embedded as part of our promotion process. The online virtual access and reduction in attendance time has encouraged more participants to undertake the process and we have seen an increase in female applicants since its introduction in 2020 with 100% pass rate, a 100% pass rate was again successfully achieved in the 2022 processes. This has resulted in an increase in females promoted within the uniformed service through the CPG promotion processes.

A coaching mentoring and buddying strategy is now embedded which offers coaching from external organisations supporting employees through their career paths. One female is currently engaged in an internal mentoring relationship and feedback and outcomes are having a positive difference.

The Service has pledged to support the Armed Forces Covenant within its recruitment strategy, including Career Transition Partnerships, establishing a tailored employment pathway for veterans, service leavers and supporting the employment of armed forces spouses and partners. Advertising job opportunities through the armed forces, friendly recruitment agencies and charities and recognising relevant military qualifications in the recruitment / application processes.

Summary

Through our continual effort to address equality issues, 2022 results indicate a decrease in our gender pay gap from 4% in 2021 to the current 3%. Whilst acknowledging the progress we have made, the report outlines areas we are 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.

4 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6 Initial Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

7 Appendix

Salary Quartile Bands 2017 – 2020

8 Background Papers

Government Website www.gov.uk

Salary Quartile Bands 2017-2020

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

Salary Quartile banks – Breakdown 2017-2020

Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2020						
	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
		116	17.8%	536	82.2%	652

Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2019						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
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
		99	15.2%	551	84.8%	650
Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2018						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
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
		100	15.2%	558	84.8%	658
Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2017						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
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
		105	14.7%	610	85.3%	715

	F 2017	M 2017	F 2018	M 2018
Mean - Average Hourly Rate	13.04	14.10	13.03	14.21
Median	12.01	13.53	12.53	13.67