

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



COMMITTEE	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE
DATE OF MEETING	4 NOVEMBER 2019
SUBJECT	EQUAL PAY AUDIT
LEAD OFFICER	BECCI JEFFERIES, HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING DEVELOPMENT
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A systematic equal pay audit was undertaken to review the effectiveness of policies and practices with regard to fair pay regardless of Gender, Ethnicity, Age, Disability and Contract (i.e. Part-time/Full-time).
- 1.2 Detail of the comparators, elements of pay etc can be found in the Equal Pay Report in Appendix A.
- 1.3 The audit has shown that in the areas of basic pay, overtime and merit payments employees are treated fairly regardless of their personal characteristics.
- 1.4 To ensure that the standards observed in this audit continue, enhancements to the current system have been introduced to incorporate better use of technology.
- 1.5 Four specific actions have been identified as a result of this audit, details of which can be found in the section 3.7.
- 1.6 The findings of the Equal Pay Audit reinforced the need for RBFRA to continue its work to address the representation of female and ethnic heritage employee groups within the service. Our Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Forum supports a comprehensive positive action plan to increase diversity in all our work areas. The recruitment of an EDI Coordinator has taken place to further this agenda.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Governance Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the contents of the report and the actions arising from the audit.

3. REPORT

In July 2015 the LGA commissioned an Equal Pay Audit to be undertaken on behalf of the UK Fire Services. The findings of this audit were reported to the Management committee on 31 July 2015. RBFRS pay policy statement (2019/20) highlighted a requirement to undertake a further equal pay review

As a result this audit was completed during 2019. A full break down of the methodology and the findings can be seen in Appendix A and key points are summarised below.

3.1 Basic Pay

Whilst the Gender Pay Gap identifies that men earn slightly more than women, the Equal Pay Audit shows that if we look at pay without allowances and other pay elements, the basic pay of women is slightly more than that of men. It is also noted that part-time workers and workers of ethnic heritage also have a higher average pay than their comparators.

When we looked at comparisons across the age of our workers, this distribution demonstrates that experience (internal or external) is rewarded.

3.2 Allowances

Additional Responsibility Allowances (ARA).

The RBFRS pays a number of allowances which are mainly paid to Grey Book staff. The audit showed that this pay element is paid in-line with the demographic make-up of the work force. However it is noted that women and those of ethnic heritage are underrepresented in operational areas and this supports the work we are doing on the EDI action plan.

Two areas were particularly identified in the audit (Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Uniform payments). Actions have been identified to address these issues.

3.3 Overtime

The audit considered both Grey Book and Green Book overtime. In the case of Grey Book overtime, the audit was focused on pre-arranged overtime, which is needed to provide specific skills to enable operational efficiency. The analysis shows that this pay type is relatively equally shared across all types of workers. Eligible employees are Wholetime Firefighters and Control. RDS

workers are not included in the calculations if they cover additional shifts, this would be shown as working hours rather than an overtime payment.

Green Book overtime is paid to a relatively small amount of people in specialist roles and there were no issues found.

3.5 Merit Payments

Merit payments were analysed as this is an area which is subject to Managers' discretion and whilst current evidence suggests that there is no unequal payment, we are seeking to improve our system to ensure that decisions are not effected by unconscious bias.

3.6 Spinal Column Starting Points

The audit identified that a number of new starters employed of the Green Book terms and conditions receive a starting salary above the lowest spinal column point because of their previous experience and knowledge and although the audit does not highlight any concerns we will seek to enhance our current checking system to remove any unconscious bias.

3.7 Conclusions

Overall, the equal pay audit did not highlight any significant issues but four recommendations have been made to support continuous improvement. The recommendations arising from the report are as follows:

1. Commence consultation process to remove the inequality of the uniform payment to TVFCS staff.
2. Review CPD application process.
3. Monitor Spinal Column starting points and reasons thereof to ensure elimination of any potential unconscious bias.
4. Continue to monitor Merit payments and reasons thereof to ensure the elimination of unconscious bias.

The Gender Pay Gap analysis also carried out this year has produced an action plan and these recommendations above have been incorporated into this action plan.

The audit outcomes will be shared with the EDI Forum.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Any financial implications arising as a result of the actions identified will be presented to SLT for agreement.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has issued '[Equal Pay: Statutory Code of Practice](#)' under section 14 of the Equality Act 2006 (as amended). This is focussed on gender pay discrimination under the Act and recommends that all employers carry out regular equal pay audits.

However it also recommends that methods used to identify and remedy unlawful gender pay discrimination can also be used to remedy unlawful pay discrimination on other grounds (such as race or disability).

The Equal Pay Audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 5-step model in EHRC's Statutory Code of Practice.

- 6.2 The Pay Policy Statement is approved by the Fire Authority each year.
- 6.3 The statutory Gender Pay Report is received in a separate annual report by the Audit and Governance Committee.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report looks specifically at equal pay and provides a breakdown of findings from the audit conducted in February across the category groups.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no significant risk management issues arising from the actions identified.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 Our findings will be shared with Thames Valley Collaboration Partners.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The Chief Fire Officer, Head of Finance and Procurement and Monitoring Officer were consulted during the preparation of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Equal Pay Audit 2015.
- 11.2 EHRC Equal Pay: Statutory Code of Practice.
- 11.3 RBFRS Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

11.4 RBFRS Positive Action Plan.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A - Equal Pay Audit 2019 report

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Jacky Manning, HR Manager 0118 938 4670

