

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Equal Pay Audit 2019





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Equal Pay Audit

Context

An Equal Pay Audit was carried out by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) as recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)'s Equal Pay: Statutory Code of Practice.

The Equal Pay Audit goes further than the statutory Gender Pay Gap report and gives clearer and more extensive information regarding how individuals are paid at RBFRS and how the individual pay elements are distributed across the various protected groups.

This report assesses 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).

The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's (RBFA) overall approach to determining the pay of its employees is to participate in national collective bargaining for firefighters and fire control staff (Grey Book) through the NJC for Local Government Services and Directors through NJC for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services.

The NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue services currently provides a nationally agreed competence based pay structure, which is set nationally. The National Joint Council for Local Government Services sets the framework for the pay and conditions of service for the Fire Authority's Green Book staff. RBFRS have ten grades and posts are allocated to a grade through a process of job evaluation. Staff are appointed to a spinal column point in the appropriate pay grade depending on experience and specific technical skills.

Method

We considered a range of different pay elements and selected reference periods which allowed us to compile a comprehensive range of data as detailed below.

- The 'snap shot' date for basic pay and allowances is pay period to 28 February 2019.
- The reference period for overtime payments, is 12 months starting 1 March 2018.

- Spinal Points and Merit Payments were measures over 24 months from 1 March 2017.

Tables detailing the staff in post at the time of the audit and demographic distribution can be found in Tables 1 and 2 at the end of this report.

Payroll information was provided by Dataplan.

Comparators

In order to assess whether workers with protected characteristics are treated equally we need to define meaningful comparators which are detailed below.

Comparators are as follows:

- Gender (comparator Men v Women)
- Contract type (comparator Full-time v Part-time – Green Book working less than 37 hrs per week and RDS)
- Disability (comparator Non-Disabled v Disabled)
- Ethnicity (comparator – white British employees compared with workers from different ethnic heritage)
- Age groups compared are 25 and under; 26 to 35; 36 to 45; 46 to 55; 56 to 65; 66 and over.

Elements of Pay

The audit considered a number of pay elements individually, giving us a clear and comprehensive picture of how people are rewarded within RBFRS and whether all groups were treated fairly in these respects. The elements considered were:

- Basic Pay
- Allowances
- Overtime
- Merit payments
- Spinal Column starting points.

Calculations

As Grey Book and Green Book employees work different hours per week and to take into account those working part-time, all salaries have been calculated as an hourly rate.

Results

Basic Pay

Basic pay is set nationally and therefore pay differences reflect this. In this area of pay, the concept of 'equal pay for equal value' is achieved within each contract type by an established method of job evaluation in both Grey Book and Green Book areas.

In the main, when considering the organisation as a whole, the audit has shown a positive result in this area with only a small differential between male and female workers with women earning slightly more per hour (1.47%) than men. This figure is derived by finding a mean average hourly rate for all male workers and a mean average hourly rate for all female workers. The male average is lower because Trainee Firefighters and Firefighters on development pay are paid at a lower rate and are mainly male.

Part-time workers earn on average 11.5% more per hour than Full-time employees.

This is reflective of the fact that a number of more senior roles (e.g. Fire Safety Officers) are filled by people on part-time contracts.

Employees of ethnic heritage were measured as a whole and compared with their white British colleagues (five individuals did not disclose their ethnic heritage and these individuals were included in white British statistics). Those of ethnic heritages' average basic pay was 9.1% higher than white British employees.

The age of the employee does have some effect on basic pay. Average hourly rates per age group are shown in the table below:

Age	Hourly Rate
25 and Under	£11.18
26 - 35	£13.75
36 - 45	£14.86
46 - 55	£16.73
56 - 65	£16.90
66 and over	£11.98

This distribution demonstrates that experience (internal or external) is rewarded. The 25 and under age group includes three apprentices who received a rate which

takes into account the requirement to undertake training and development whilst in post.

Non-disabled employees' average hourly rate is 5.6% more than disabled employees. In this case, it is important to remember that only 36 employees declare a disability and we are aware that individuals in this category under report. We offer support to all our employees regardless of protected characteristics so those needing assistance may not feel it is necessary to declare any disability they may have. However, it would be helpful for us to have a clearer view and will assess how we can encourage people to declare.

Allowances

Additional Responsibility Allowances (ARA).

The ARA category of payment is an additional payment made for skills or responsibilities that can be applied and maintained outside of the requirements of a person's role map but are within the job function of the organisation. These additional responsibilities support delivery of work of particular value to the Service. For the purposes of this study, training allowances and all other ARAs are reported as one total amount. Continual Professional Development (CPD), flexi-duty and detachment allowances are reported separately. Allowances are shown as an average amount per category.

ARAs are mainly paid to Grey Book staff and relate to the national conditions with amounts determined locally.

The analysis shows that in this area women received 75% lower allowance payments than men. Non-disabled and disabled employees receive a very similar level of these allowances with disabled employees receiving just 4% less. Employees from ethnic heritage receive 71.37% less than white British employees.

Age makes very little difference to the amount of allowances received except for in the 25 and under group, which received 97% less than the 26 to 35 age group. All Wholetime and Retained Duty System (RDS) Firefighters in this age group are trainees or in development, which means they are not eligible to receive ARAs.

The differences identified in 3.16 and 3.17 above are reflective of the imbalance of protected characteristic groups within operational roles. RBFRS has a comprehensive EDI and Positive Action Plan and works closely with the EDI Forum to consider actions which will have a long-term positive effect on minority representation.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

This allowance is paid to Grey Book and Control employees only. It can be claimed only when a Firefighter is competent and has five years' service. Other roles are required to have one years' service at competent level. Women and other minority groups are underrepresented in this area and women receive 74% less than men in this category.

Part-time employees receive 87% less CPD than Full-time employees. This can be explained by the fact that 57% of RDS Firefighters are on training and development rates.

Employees from ethnic heritage groups earn 71% less CPD than white British employees.

In contrast disabled employees receive 6.5% CPD more than non-disabled staff.

CPD is not paid to anyone in the lowest age group and those in the 26 to 35 age group receive only 19%. Again, this is explained by the requirement to have the requisite service before claiming.

Uniform

This allowance is only applicable to Control staff and 100% of this allowance is paid to women. This matter has been brought to the attention of the Thames Valley Control Group Manager and is currently being reviewed.

Flexi-duty payments.

This payment is made to all Flexible Duty Officers regardless of any protected characteristic.

Detachment payments.

These payments are made to Grey Book staff who are required to work at a station away from their 'home' station. Men receive 77% more than women, with Full-time employees receiving 100% of the payment due to the fact we do not have any Part-time employees working in the Wholetime duty system (RDS receive an hourly rate regardless of the reporting station). The age group receiving most of this allowance is 26 to 35 years. The next highest detachment payments go to 36 to 45 years age group. This may be explained by the fact that the newer employees may not yet have the required skills needed in detachment situations and these in the main fall within the younger age category. A significant number of those in the higher age groups hold higher ranks (Station Manager (B) to Chief Fire Officer) and are not therefore detached.

Grey Book Overtime

In this case, 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.

1. Women receive 11% of Grey Book overtime and make up 10% of the Grey Book workforce.
2. Part-time workers receive 0.1% of Grey Book overtime and make up 0.86% of the Grey Book workforce (This figure represents the Part-time workers in Thames Valley Fire Control Service).
3. Disabled employees receive 2.8% of this overtime and make up 4.5% of the workforce.
4. Disabled employees receive 2.8% of this overtime and make up 4.5% of the workforce
5. 3.4% of Grey Book overtime is worked by older workers who make up 4.1% of the workforce.
6. 1.8% of Grey Book overtime is worked by younger workers who make 1.5% of this workforce.

Green Book Overtime

A total of 38 people (25% of Green Book staff) worked overtime in the reference period. Workers in Transport/Fleet (all of whom are male) undertake contractual overtime and therefore the statistics are presented both including and excluding this work group as this distorts the ad hoc overtime data.

269 occasions of overtime are worked by women (32.7%), however 57.8% of Green Book workers are women. If Transport/Fleet workers are excluded, 78% of overtime is worked by women. HR and R&D, the workforce of which is mainly female, do most of this overtime to cover out of hours careers events and weekend recruitment activity.

96.9% of Green Book overtime is worked by white British employees who make up 83% of the Green Book workforce. 3.1% of Green Book overtime is worked by those of ethnic heritage who make up 17% of Green Book workers. If Transport/Fleet is excluded 92.7% is worked by white British employees.

Disabled employees, who make up 5.8% of Green Book workers, undertake 1.6% of Green Book overtime or 3.8% if Transport/Fleet is excluded.

11% of Green Book staff are Part-time and work 1% of Green Book overtime or 2.3% if Transport/Fleet is excluded. It is difficult to ascertain why this might be but it may be that Part-time employees have requested to work less hours and are therefore not keen to offer extra hours which would not attract an enhanced rate.

These differences are not at a significant level to suggest any equal pay issues.

Merit Payments

Merit payments are made to reward individuals who have taken on additional duties or performed exceptionally well. In this 24 month period 113 merit payments were made. It is open to both Green Book and Grey Book employees. All proposed payments are reviewed by HR to ensure that there is no obvious bias.

In general, all types of workers are in receipt of merit payments. The audit showed that 31% of all payments were made to women and 69% were made to men. This broadly coincides with the overall statistics in that men make up 77% of the total workforce. 95.6% of these payments were paid to white British employees (who make up 92.6% of the workforce) with only 4.4% being paid to those of ethnic heritage (who make up 7.4% of the workforce).

The percentage of merit payments made to Part-time employees (3.5%) was significantly less than that paid to Full-time employees. Part-time employees including RDS make up 13% of the workforce, however no merit payments were received by RDS workers.

Merit payments are evenly distributed over the age group categories.

No disabled employees received a merit payment, however this is not necessarily a true reflection as we are aware that some people have not formally declared their disability.

Average amounts of merit payment were fairly even across the various categories. Womens' average merit payment was £398.33, whilst that paid to men was £335.64. Those of ethnic heritage received an average payment of £462.00 versus white British employees received an average of £358.04.

Spinal Column Starting Points

In Green Book areas, there is an option to recognise experience or specific technical skills by offering a starting salary within the evaluated grade but above the bottom of the band. In the reference period, only seven individuals started at the top of the band, four of whom were previously agency workers working within the organisation and thus had relevant experience when taken on permanently. Many of those starting at the bottom of the band were Fire Safety Officers. This is because a specific career grade scheme is in place to encourage individuals with limited experience to join the service.

An analysis of starting points over 24 months can be seen in Table 3 at the end of this report.

Individuals who start at the top or middle of the band are spread fairly evenly across the categories of worker reviewed (Tables 3 and 4).

The variance among the age groups can probably be explained by the fact that the older age groups are likely to start with more experience from other industries, whilst those under 25 are probably starting their first job following college or university studies.

Action has been taken to record the justification for Spinal Column starting points for future analysis.

Conclusions

This audit has shown that in the areas of basic pay, overtime and merit payments employees are treated fairly regardless of their personal characteristics. Basic hourly pay for women is slightly higher (1.47%) than men. Part-time workers on average have a higher basic hourly rate than full-time workers and those of ethnic heritage receive a higher basic hourly rate than white British workers.

In the area of allowances, all allowances support the delivery of work of particular value to the Service and are mainly paid to operational personnel. Payments are in line with the demographic make-up of the Service, however the under representation of protected characteristics groups in operational roles is acknowledged and more work is being undertaken in this area through the Positive Action Plan and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

The audit shows that payments for Continual Professional Development are made mainly to white British men. It is not immediately clear why this should be as payment is made following application by an individual, further analysis is underway. This has been included in the recommendations section of the report.

Payments for additional uniform is paid exclusively to one work group (TVFCS workers). This is considered to be an area which needs to be reviewed as it is a potential inequality of pay.

Recommendations

The following actions are currently underway.

Action	Owner	Timescale	How Monitored
1. Commence consultation process to remove the inequality of the uniform payment to TVFCS staff	HR / GM (TVFCS)	Q4 2019	Proposal report to SLT followed by implementation plan as agreed
2. Review CPD application process	HR	31 Dec 2019	Proposal to be submitted to Head of HR and L&D and Head of Service Delivery.
3. Develop enhanced monitoring system for Spinal Column starting points and reasons thereof to ensure elimination of any potential unconscious bias.	HR	31 Oct 2019	Spreadsheet redesigned accessible on request and reviewed on a quarterly basis by HR Manager.
4. Develop enhanced monitoring system to monitor merit payments and reasons thereof to ensure the elimination of unconscious bias.	HR	31 Oct 2019	Data is entered into spreadsheet and reviewed on a quarterly basis by HR Manager.

Addendum

Table 1: Staff in post by job type

Job Type	Total
All employees receiving payment	615
Wholetime only	331
Retained only	67
Control only	38
Green Book only	152
Dual Contract Control + Green Book	1
Dual Contract W/T + Green Book	2
Dual Contract RDS + RDS	1
Dual Contract W/T + RDS	21
Dual Contract Green Book + RDS	2

Table 2: Distribution: *includes 5 individuals who were on career breaks or maternity and therefore not receiving payment.*

Category	Total
Total employees	
Gender	
Men	481
Women	139
Disability	
Disabled	47
Non-disabled	573
Contract Type	
Part-time	21
Full-time	599
Ethnic Heritage	
Asian or British Asian Indian	5
Asian or British Asian Pakistani	1
Asian or British Asian Other	3
Black or Black British African	5
Black or Black British Caribbean	4
Black or Black British Other	2
Chinese	2
Mixed White and Asian	2
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	2
Other	1
Other Mixed	5
Unknown	5
White British	565
White Irish	6

White Other	12
Age	
25 years and under	37
26 – 35	160
36 – 45	209
46 – 55	180
56 – 65	33
66 and Over	1

Table 3: Spinal Column Starting Points by Category excluding Age.

	Male	Female	F/T	P/T	Disabled	Non-Disabled	White British	Ethnic Heritage
Bottom	43%	38.5%	41%	37.5%	50%	40.3%	42.3%	31.6%
Mid	43.7%	53.8%	47.5%	62.5%	0	50.7%	44.2%	68.4%
Top	13.3%	7.7%	11.5%	0	50%	9%	13.5%	0

Table 4: Spinal Column Starting Points by Age

	Under 25	26 – 35	36 – 45	46 – 55	55 - 65
Bottom	83.3%	42.3%	33.3%	33.3%	25%
Mid	16.7%	53.8%	61.1%	40%	50%
Top	0	3.9%	5.6%	26.7%	25%

