

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Gender Pay Gap Report 2021



Executive Summary

The gender pay gap report for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) provides information on the pay gap that exists between males and females within the Service. The pay gap is calculated using the mean and median average rates of hourly pay for males and females and this is also split into four quartile pay bands. A positive pay gap shows that males are paid more than females.

Our mean pay gap is 0.78% and our median pay gap is 9.63%. This shows on average for each £1 earned by males, females earn 99p according to the mean gender pay gap and 90p for the median. The median gap is a more accurate measure of a gender pay gap as it discounts very high or very low rates of pay that can skew the overall average. The national median gender pay gap for 2020 was 15.5%.

The mean and median pay gap is also calculated for each of the quartile pay bands (lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper). Due to the various elements making up pay within the Fire Service, including allowances and payments for additional responsibilities, these quartiles can be very fluid and pay gaps across the quartiles can appear different from the overall pay gap. Each quartile is also impacted year on year by movement within the quartiles in terms of recruitment of new staff, pay increases and promotions.

While RBFRS is confident that it is paying the same salary to roles of equivalent value to all staff, it is recognised that women are significantly underrepresented in the operational workforce, and the Service continues to work hard to attract a more diverse workforce through a positive action plan and recruitment opportunities.

Background

Gender pay gap reporting requires employers with more than 250 employees to publish statutory calculations every year showing how large the pay gap is between their male and female employees. The method for calculating this information is published on the UK government website gov.uk.

RBFRS are required to report on the following:

Mean gender pay gap	The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees as a percentage.
Median gender pay gap	The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees as a percentage.
Mean bonus gap	The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees as a percentage.
Median bonus gap	The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees as a percentage.
Bonus proportions	The proportions of male and female relevant employees who were paid a bonus during the relevant period
Quartile pay bands	The proportions of male and female employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands.

In 2020 the UK average Gender Pay Gap using Office for National Statistics Data shows the average median pay gap for all employees is 15.5% (please note, the national average mean pay gap figures are not published).

RBFRS reported the lowest average median and the third lowest mean gender pay gap for our Fire Service family group in 2020.

RBFRS' Pay and Bonus Gender Pay Gap

This Gender Pay Gap Report is based on data as at 31 March 2021. RBFRS employed 644 staff with 486 (75.4%) being male and 157 (24.4%) being female, this does not include one member of staff who do not identify as male or female.

Due to national reporting requirements and provisions, RBFRS can only report the Gender Pay Gap for staff who identify as either male or female. RBFRS have, and continue to use, internal reporting mechanisms which take into account all gender identities and expressions and is not limited to the binary of male and female.

	Mean		Median	
Year	2020	2021	2020	2021
Pay Gap	9.17%	0.78%	1.51%	9.63%
Bonus*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* RBFRS does not offer a bonus scheme therefore this measure has not been calculated. Additional Responsibility Allowances (ARAs) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) payments are included in ordinary pay. For clarity, ordinary pay is defined as basic pay, shift premium pay, pay for piecework, pay for leave and allowances.

A **positive** pay gap shows that males earn 0.78% more than females based on a **mean** hourly rate of pay and 9.63% more than females on **median** hourly rates of pay.

What do the mean and median gender pay gap figures tell us?

The mean gives an overall indication of the size of the gender pay gap in RBFRS. A high mean gender pay gap indicates that a payment system is operated that disadvantages women. At RBFRS, the median gender pay gap is considerably less than the most recently published national figures. This indicates that when comparing the median hourly rates for the workforce as a whole, males earn on average slightly more than females.

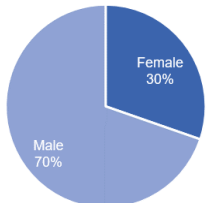
The median is typically a more representative figure as the mean can be skewed by a handful of highly paid employees. The median value for RBFRS across all staff is higher than the mean, suggesting there is some skewing throughout the organisation (this can be seen more clearly when you compare quartile on quartile).

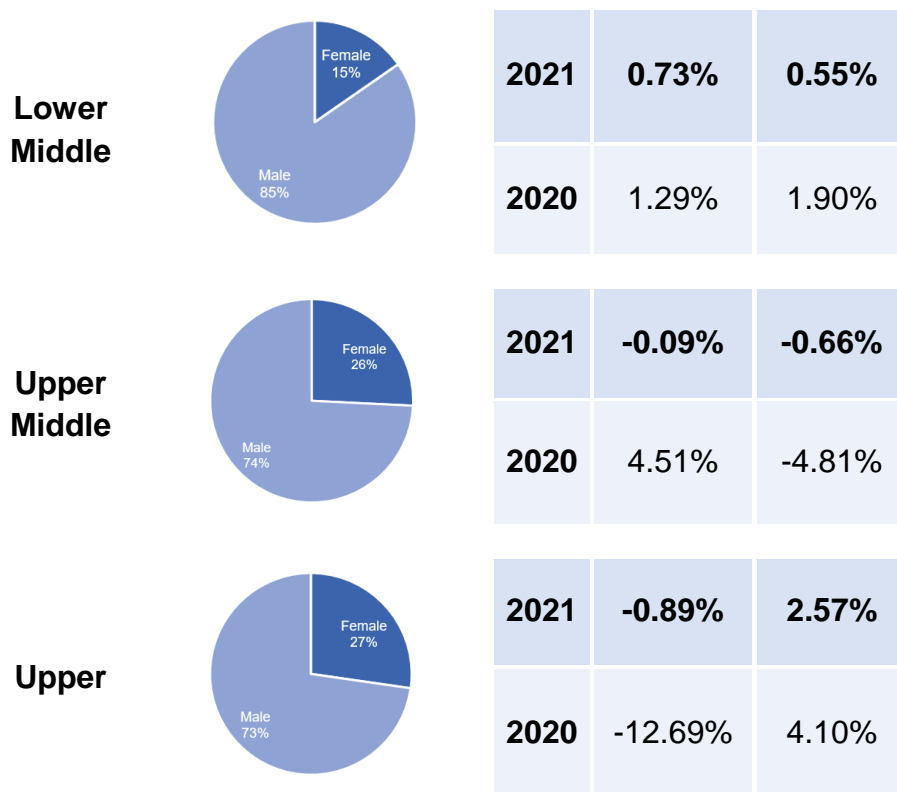
The quartile distribution detailed below (which is based on the actual hourly ordinary pay for all staff) gives an indication of how males and females are distributed across the organisation, in addition to the mean and median pay gap in each of the quartiles.

Quartile Pay Bands

The proportion of males/females in each quartile pay band is as follows:

Quartile	Year	Mean Pay Gap	Median Pay Gap
Lower	2021	-3.95%	-2.25%
	2020	-3.09%	-4.94%





Commentary

The mean and median pay gap was calculated for each of the quartiles to give an indication of the range and distribution of male and female pay. The figures above differ from the overall gender pay gap for RBFRS due to the scope for variation in hourly pay. This is as a result of the large range of roles and grades in the upper middle and upper quartiles compared to the smaller ranges in the lower quartiles.

The proportion of female employees in the workforce as a whole has increased by three per cent since the last report.

In the Lower quartile one apprentice in post is female and appears at the lower end of the band, whilst the top end of the quartile is made up of competent Firefighters who are mostly male. The ratio of females in the lower quartile has increased by nine per cent, with the higher earning staff being mostly female which accounts for the negative pay gap for the mean and median.

In the Lower Middle quartile, additional payments for specific skills are included in the hourly rate. Most additional payments are made for skills associated with the role of Firefighters who are mainly male. This makes a difference to the overall mean and median in this quartile and in RBFRS as a whole. The majority of Firefighters and Crew Managers in this quartile are male. They are employed on the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Service (Grey Book) which attract additional allowances that are not available to staff conditioned to the to the NJC for Local Government Services (Green Book), the majority of which are female.

In the Upper Middle quartile, the bottom is made up of Watch Managers who are exclusively male, whilst the top of the quartile is made up of Grade 4 and Grade 5 Green Book employees who are mainly female. The mean average pay gap for this quartile has decreased this year due to a higher proportion of females in this quartile.

The Upper quartile includes nine Heads of Service (six male and three female) and five Directors (three male and two female). It contains a high proportion of higher earning employees conditioned to the NJC for Local Government Services (Green Book), the majority of which are female.

It is recognised that women are still significantly underrepresented in the operational workforce accounting for 6.5% of this group as at 31 March 2021 and this represents a slight increase from 6.2% in 2020. The service continues to work hard to attract a more diverse workforce through a positive action plan and recruitment opportunities, however this has continued to be hindered by the reduction in activities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. RBFRS is confident that it is paying the same salary to roles of equivalent value to all staff.

An action plan has been developed to help the organisation to address the gap, which is appended to this report.

Wayne Bowcock
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
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