

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2021



Executive Summary

The ethnicity pay gap report for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) provides information on the pay gap that exists between White and Ethnic Minority staff within the Service. Currently there is no legislative requirement for organisations to publish their ethnicity pay gap but RBFRS has opted to publish this information voluntarily.

The ethnicity pay gap is calculated using the mean and median average rates of hourly pay for White and Ethnic Minority staff, and this is also split into four quartile pay bands. A positive pay gap shows that White staff are paid more than Ethnic Minority staff.

Our mean pay gap is 1.74% and our median pay gap is 9.63%. This shows on average for each £1 earned by White staff, Ethnic Minority staff earn 98p according to the mean ethnicity pay gap and 90p for the median. The median gap is a more accurate measure of an ethnicity pay gap as it discounts very high or very low rates of pay that can skew the overall average.

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, pay gaps across the quartiles can appear different from the overall pay gap.

While the overall proportion and number of staff from Ethnic Minority staff across each of the quartiles is broadly consistent, it is recognised that Ethnic Minorities are underrepresented in the workforce. RBFRS is taking action to address this including the development of a positive action plan and developing community engagement activities through our Local Safety Plans.

Background

Currently organisations with more than 250 employees are required to publish their gender pay gap by law, but there is no requirement to publish their ethnicity pay gap. RBFRS has therefore opted to publish these figures for 2021 voluntarily. The method for calculating the ethnicity pay gap mirrors that of gender pay gap reporting and show how large the pay gap is between their White and Ethnic Minority employees.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) report on the following:

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

This is the first time that RBFRS has reported the ethnicity pay gap, and due to the reporting of ethnicity pay gap figures being voluntary rather than a legal requirement, there are no national average figures reported to benchmark RBFRS ethnicity pay gap. However annual figures published by the Home Office in November 2021 relating to Fire and Rescue Service workforce diversity data suggests that across all Fire Services 5.3% of staff were from an Ethnic Minority.

RBFRS' Pay and Bonus Ethnicity Pay Gap

This ethnicity pay gap report is based on data as at 31 March 2021. RBFRS employed 644 staff with 612 (95%) being White and 28 (4%) being Ethnic Minority. Four staff (1%) have not disclosed their ethnicity.

Due to the reporting requirements and provisions, RBFRS can only report the ethnicity pay gap for staff who declare their ethnicity.

RBFRS follows the CIPD and Race Disparity Audit’s recommendations in this report, referring to ‘Ethnic Minorities’ rather than BME/BAME (black and minority ethnic/black, Asian and minority ethnic) which highlights some groups and omits others.

The overall ethnicity pay gap for RBFRS is as follows:

	Mean	Median
Year	2021	2021
Pay Gap	1.74%	9.63%
Bonus*	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 White staff earn 1.74% more than Ethnic Minorities based on a **mean** hourly rate of pay and 9.63% more than Ethnic Minorities based on **median** hourly rates of pay.

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

The mean gives an overall indication of the size of the ethnicity pay gap in RBFRS. A high mean ethnicity pay gap would indicate a payment system that disadvantages Ethnic Minorities. This indicates that when comparing the mean hourly rates for the workforce as a whole, White staff earn on average more than Ethnic Minorities.

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 White and Ethnic Minority staff 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 White/Ethnic Minority staff in each quartile pay band is as follows:

Quartile		Mean Pay Gap	Median Pay Gap
Lower	<p>A pie chart representing the Lower quartile. The chart is divided into two segments: a large blue segment for 'White' at 95% and a smaller dark blue segment for 'Ethnic Minority' at 5%.</p>	4.27%	0%
Lower Middle	<p>A pie chart representing the Lower Middle quartile. The chart is divided into two segments: a large blue segment for 'White' at 97% and a smaller dark blue segment for 'Ethnic Minority' at 3%.</p>	2.94%	3.89%
Upper Middle	<p>A pie chart representing the Upper Middle quartile. The chart is divided into two segments: a large blue segment for 'White' at 96% and a smaller dark blue segment for 'Ethnic Minority' at 4%.</p>	2.83%	4.02%
Upper	<p>A pie chart representing the Upper quartile. The chart is divided into two segments: a large blue segment for 'White' at 94% and a smaller dark blue segment for 'Ethnic Minority' at 6%.</p>	-9.64%	1.43%

Commentary

The mean and median pay gap was calculated for each of the quartiles to give an indication of the range and distribution of White and Ethnic Minority pay. The figures above differ from the overall ethnicity pay gap for RBFRS due to the scope for variation in hourly pay.

In the lower quartile, seven staff are from Ethnic Minorities, in the lower middle five staff are from Ethnic Minorities, in the upper middle quartile there are six staff from Ethnic Minorities and in the upper quartile there are ten staff from Ethnic Minorities. In each of these quartiles, staff from Ethnic Minorities are represented across a range of grades and roles.

While the overall proportion and number of staff from Ethnic Minority staff across each of the quartiles is broadly consistent (which indicates there may not be mobility or progression concerns relating to Ethnic Minority staff), it is recognised that Ethnic Minorities are still underrepresented in the workforce. It is also acknowledged that culturally, barriers may exist which are not evident from these figures, and that staff in Ethnic Minority groups may experience challenges regarding their career progression due to their protected characteristics. RBFRS is taking action to identify any such trends and address this.

Notwithstanding the known issues with underrepresentation amongst Ethnic Minority groups, RBFRS pays staff in accordance to nationally agreed terms and conditions, and is satisfied that it is paying the same salary to roles of equivalent value across all staff groups.

The Service continues to work hard to attract a more diverse workforce and has already taken actions to address the overall diversity within the RBFRS workforce. These include but are not limited to:

- A positive action plan and recruitment opportunities, including attendance at careers events and the hosting of Have a Go Days at our stations. These activities have however this has continued to be hindered by the reduction in activities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Chairman's Internship which is aimed at 16 to 18 year old residents of Berkshire from ethnic backgrounds that are currently under-represented in the Service. This is a paid internship that gives students an opportunity to develop workplace skills and discover opportunities available within RBFRS.
- Identifying and developing community engagement activities through our Local Safety Plans

An Ethnicity Action Plan is being developed and this will be incorporated into our existing Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

Wayne Bowcock
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
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