

# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>23 JANUARY 2022</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>EQUAL PAY AUDIT 2022</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>BECCI JEFFERIES, HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR NOTE</b>

## 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 type (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 The actions identified in the previous audit have been updated and any further actions identified have been added to the report. Details can be found in section 3.7.
- 1.5 The findings of the equal pay audit reinforced the need for RBFRS to continue its work to address the representation of female and ethnic minority employee groups within the service.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

The Audit and Governance Committee:

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

### **3. REPORT**

3.1 The equal pay audit was completed in September 2022. A full break down of the methodology and findings can be found in Appendix A, but the key points are summarised below.

#### **3.2 Basic Pay**

Whilst the Gender Pay Gap Report identifies that males earn slightly more than females, the equal pay audit shows that if we consider pay without allowances and other pay elements, the basic pay of females is slightly more than males.

The Ethnicity Pay Gap Report identifies that white employees earn slightly more than those from an ethnic minority. The equal pay audit shows that the basic pay of ethnic minority staff is higher than white employees.

Part time workers have a higher than average pay of those working full time.

When looking at age comparators across the ages of our workers, it is evident that experience (internal or external are rewarded).

#### **3.3 Allowances**

RBFRS pays a number of allowances which are mainly paid to Grey Book staff. The audit showed that allowances paid to males is higher than that of females and those paid to white staff are higher than those in ethnic minority groups.

Allowances are available to all eligible staff based in the role they undertake. However it is recognised that the differences identified in the audit are reflective of the imbalance of protected characteristic groups within operational roles (particularly in terms of gender and ethnicity).

#### **3.4 Overtime**

The audit considered both Grey Book and Green Book overtime. In the case of Grey Book overtime, the audit was focussed on pre-arranged overtime which is needed to provide specific skills to enable operational efficiency. The analysis showed that this pay type is relatively equally shared across all types of workers. Eligible employees are Wholetime Firefighters and Control. On-Call (RDS) employees are not included in the calculations if they cover additional shifts as this will be recorded as working hours rather than overtime payment. The audit shows that this pay element is paid in line with the demographic make-up of the workforce.

Green Book overtime is paid to a relatively small amount of individuals in specialist roles for performing specific duties and there were no issues found. It is also recognised that overtime for specific Green Book roles is also paid to staff undertaking specific contractual duties.

### **3.5 Merit Payments**

Merit payments were analysed as this is an area which is subject to managers' discretion and whilst evidence suggests there is no unequal payment, the system has been improved, following an action identified as a result of the last audit to ensure merit payments are monitored to ensure consistency of approach and to eliminate any potential for unconscious bias.

The payment of merit payments are broadly reflective of the make-up of the workforce.

### **3.6 Spinal Column Starting Points**

The audit identified a number of new starters employed on Green Book terms and conditions received a starting salary above the lowest spinal point because of their previous experience and knowledge and although the audit does not highlight any concerns we have enhanced our current system of scrutiny and continue to monitor spinal column starting points.

### **3.7 Conclusions**

Overall, the equal pay audit did not highlight any significant issues but the following actions will continue to be carried out:

1. Ongoing monitoring of the Spinal Column starting points
2. Ongoing monitoring of merit payments
3. Initiatives to address underrepresentation of females and ethnic minority groups through the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan.
4. Review of detachment payments

The Gender Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports also identify recommendations to address the Gender and Ethnicity Pay gap within the Service.

The audit outcomes will be shared with the EDI Forum and Steering Group.

## **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 None

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

recommends that the 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 and disability)

6.2 The equal pay audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 5 step model in EHRC's Statutory Code of Practice.

6.3 The Pay Policy Statement is approved by the Fire Authority each year.

6.4 The statutory Gender Pay Gap Report and voluntarily published Ethnicity Pay Gap Report is received in a separate annual report by the Audit and Governance Committee.

## **7. EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 This report looks specifically at equal pay and provides a breakdown of findings from the audit conducted in September 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 None

## **10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 Monitoring Officer

10.2 Chief Fire Officer

10.3 Head of Finance and Procurement

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Equal Pay Audit 2019

11.2 Gender Pay Gap Report 2021 and 2022

11.3 Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2021 and 2022

## **12. APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix A – Equal Pay Audit 2022

## **13. CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Lucy Greenway  
Senior HR Adviser  
07585 991 606