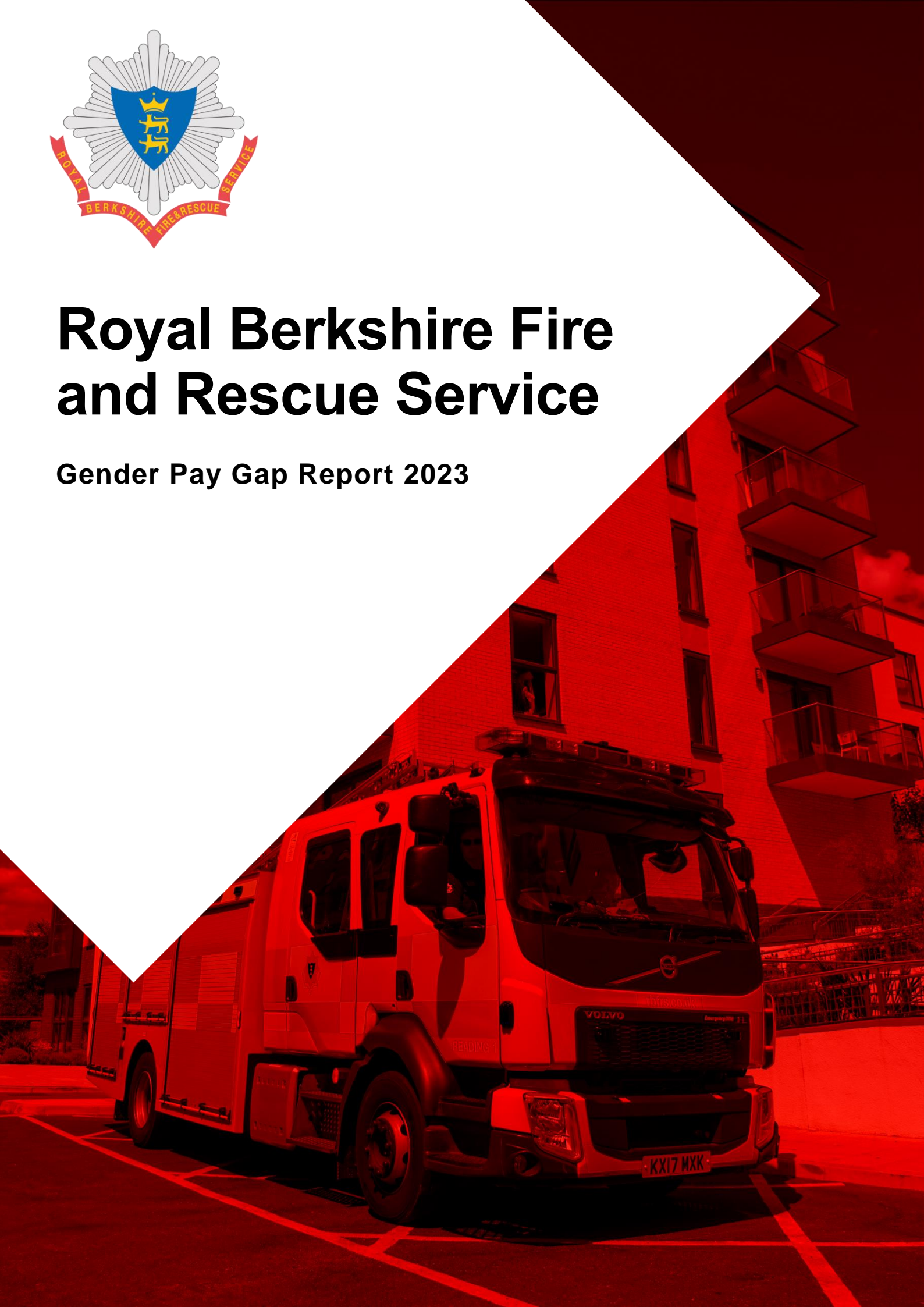




Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Gender Pay Gap Report 2023





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 according to specific calculation requirements 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 females are paid more than males.

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 that are not limited to the binary of male and female.

Our mean pay gap is -5.70% and our median pay gap is -2.32%. This shows on average for each £1 earned by males, females earn £1.05 according to the mean gender pay gap and £1.02 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 2022 was 8.3%.

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, care should be taken when considering the latest gender pay figures. It is important that, while the gender pay gap figures at RBFRS indicate a strong position and demonstrate we do not operate a pay system that disadvantages female staff, it is recognised that females are still significantly underrepresented in the operational workforce. The mean and median gap should therefore be considered in the context of these workforce demographics. The Service continues to work hard to attract a more diverse workforce through a positive action plan and recruitment opportunities.



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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 2022 the UK average Gender Pay Gap using Office for National Statistics Data shows the average median pay gap for all employees is 8.3% (please note, the national average mean pay gap figures are not published).

RBFRS reported the lowest average mean and the sixth lowest mean gender pay gap for our Fire Service family group in 2021-2022.

RBFRS' Pay and Bonus Gender Pay Gap

This Gender Pay Gap Report is based on data as at 31 March 2022. RBFRS employed 644 staff with 493 (77%) identifying as male and 150 (23%) identifying as 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 that are not limited to the binary of male and female.



	Mean		Median	
Year	2022	2023	2022	2023
Pay Gap	3.08%	-5.70%	9.91%	-2.32%
Bonus*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* RBFERS 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 **negative** pay gap shows that females earn 5.70% more than males based on a **mean** hourly rate of pay and 2.32% more than males on **median** hourly rates of pay. These figures do demonstrate a strong position in terms of pay, but it is important to consider them the context of the demographics of the workforce where female operational staff are underrepresented.

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 RBFERS. A high mean gender pay gap indicates that a payment system is operated that disadvantages women. At RBFERS, the median gender pay gap is considerably less than the most recently published national figures. This indicates that when comparing the median hourly rates when calculated using the nationally agreed method for the workforce as a whole, males earn on average slightly less than females.

The median is typically a more representative figure as the mean can be skewed by a handful of highly paid employees 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	2023	-19.80%	-5.49%



		2022	-5.57%	-2.25%
Lower Middle		2023	1.54%	1.59%
		2022	1.27%	0.55%
Upper Middle		2023	-0.19%	-0.79%
		2022	1.77%	-0.66%
Upper		2023	-2.78%	-0.46%
		2022	4.89%	2.57%

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 national median gender pay gap has decreased from 15.4% in 2021 to 8.3% in 2022.

The proportion of female employees in the workforce as a whole has decreased by one per cent since the last report, whilst the proportion of male employees has remained the same. It is therefore important that this is taken into account when considering the gender pay gap figures.



In the Lower quartile, both the mean and median pay gap has increased in comparison with last year in favour of females. There has been an increase in the proportion of females in the lower quartile this year, with NJC for Local Government Services (Green Book) grade three posts and competent Firefighters (Control) who are predominately female at the top end of the quartile. This quartile also contains 36 Apprentice Firefighters, 32 of which are male.

The Lower Middle quartile has the highest portion of males overall. It is also predominately made up of Firefighters and Crew Managers, who are also mostly male. Additional payments for specific skills are included in the hourly rate when calculating the Gender Pay Gap. This makes a difference to the overall mean and median in this quartile and in RBFRS as a whole, as such allowances are available to staff conditioned to Grey Book terms and conditions, the majority of which are male. In addition, whilst all employees received a pay award this year, those employed on NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (Grey Book) terms and conditions received a larger percentage increase as a result of national pay negotiations.

In the Upper Middle quartile, the proportion of females has decreased in comparison to last year however the majority of females in the quartile can be found at the top of the quartile in terms of the hourly rate which has had positive impact on the pay gap for females. This quartile is also impacted by the recruitment of a significant number of male apprentice Firefighters which sit in the Lower quartile. The bottom of the Upper Middle quartile is predominately competent Firefighters, of which the majority of male. The pay award has also impacted the pay gap this quarter.

The Upper quartile includes seven Heads of Service (six male and one female). The Upper quartile also contained four Directors (two male and two female). It contains a high proportion of higher earning employees conditioned to Green Book terms and conditions, the majority of which are female. There has also been an increase in the proportion of females in the upper quartile in comparison to last year due to recruitment activity and as a subsequent the movement across the quartiles.

It is recognised that women are still significantly underrepresented in the operational workforce accounting for 6.85% of this group as at 31 March 2023, despite a small increase in comparison to 6.5% as at 31 March 2022. The service continues to work hard to attract a more diverse workforce through the EDI Action Plan and positive action activities. RBFRS is confident that it is paying the same salary to roles of equivalent value to all staff. An equal pay audit was carried out in September 2022, which did not highlight any underlying causes for concern. A further equal pay audit will be carried out on quarter one of 2024.

The Service continues to work hard to attract a more diverse workforce, and is already undertaking actions to address the overall diversity within the workforce. Specifically in terms of increasing the representation of females in operational roles, this has included (but is not limited to):

- Implementation of a programme of positive action events including 'have a go' days that are specifically female focused. Evaluating these events to see how they translate to recruitment and where attendees reach within the recruitment process if not recruited.
- Expanding our equality monitoring processes and reviewing the data we gather to allow RBFRS to monitor the career progression of underrepresented groups within the service.






- Focusing on retention of female identifying staff by taking action to ensure our workplace is inclusive, including improving facilities particularly on fire stations, improving our female wellbeing package including menopause awareness and recognising events such as International Women's Day

In addition, since our last Gender Pay Gap Report there have been a number of cultural reviews undertaken nationally within in the Fire and Rescue Sector resulting in the publication of the Independent Cultural Review of London Fire Brigade and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) values and culture in the Fire and Rescue Services. RBFRS have a conducted gap analysis against the recommendations of both reports to determine key action points moving forward.

Specific actions to address the gender pay gap are contained in the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan which is appended to this report. A version of the plan will be published on the RBFRS website.

Wayne Bowcock
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
November 2023

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