



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Executive Committee, 20 March 2024

**Report title:** Gender Pay Gap Report 2023

**Lead Member:** Councillor Shade Adoh, Lead Member - People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance

**Report sponsor:** Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets

**Author and contact:** Faye Mansfield, HR Advisory and Development Manager

**Action:** Decision

## **Recommendations:**

1. The content of the gender pay gap report 2023 is noted and approved for submission to the Government website (gov.uk) as per reporting requirements.
  2. The ethnicity pay gap 2023, as detailed in Appendix four, is noted.
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## **Executive summary:**

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 that came into effect in 2017 requires public sector organisations with over 250 employees to carry out gender pay gap reporting. In accordance with the Regulations, the Authority is required to annually publish six pieces of prescribed data about the pay and bonuses of male and female workers within the organisation:

1. Mean gender pay gap in hourly pay
2. Median gender pay gap in hourly pay
3. Mean bonus gender pay gap
4. Median bonus gender pay gap
5. Proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment
6. Proportion of males and females in each pay quartile

This data must be published 'within the period of 12 months beginning with the snapshot date' (Regulation 2(2)). The snapshot date for public sector employers is 31 March each year.

The gender pay gap report, as detailed in Appendix one, details the Authority's gender pay gap as at 31 March 2023. The mean gender pay gap has decreased again in 2023 and is the lowest pay gap since first reporting in 2017, which is positive.

For 2023, the mean (average) gender pay gap has decreased from 13.4 per cent in 2022 to 11.8 per cent. The median (mid-point) gender pay gap has also decreased, from 11.7 per cent in 2022 to 8.46 per cent.

The gender pay gap is the difference between what males typically earn within the workplace, compared to what females earn, irrespective of role or seniority. It examines the difference in the average pay gap, expressed as a percentage of male earnings. A gender pay gap is not unlawful, it is essentially a reflection of a workforce profile.

In comparison, equal pay is a legal obligation and about unequal rewards for male and females carrying out the same job, similar job or work of equal value, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Organisations can have a gender pay gap without breaching equal pay provisions, and the Authority's gender pay gap is not as a result of any equal pay issues. There is a gender-neutral approach to pay across all levels and roles within the Authority.

From 2023 the ethnicity pay gap data has also been reported, as detailed in Appendix four. Interestingly, the ethnicity pay gap is similar to the gender pay gap. For 2023 the mean ethnicity pay gap is 11.9 per cent and the median ethnicity pay gap is 7.59 per cent.

In addition, for 2023 gender pay gap comparison data has been provided on Operational versus Support Services employees, as detailed in Appendix three. This data also drills down into age and employment status. What this data shows is that whilst there are fewer females in Operational roles, gender disparity is greater within Support Services employee roles.

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### **Financial implications:**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **Risk management:**

The Authority will comply with the Regulations requiring public sector employers with over 250 employees to publish their gender pay gap data before 30 March each year.

The six pieces of prescribed data within the report will be published on the Government's website (gov.uk) and the full report published on the Authority's external website for a period of three years. Annually publishing the data in line with the Regulations will help the Authority monitor the effectiveness of the actions in reducing the gender pay gap over time.

Benchmark data, as published on the Government's website, provides additional comparison data across Fire Services (see Appendix two). The benchmark data demonstrates widely different mean and median gender pay gaps within the same sector for the 2022 reporting period.

With regards to the ethnicity pay gap, due to the requirement to protect confidentiality, different ethnic groups have been combined and for 2023, the

categories include white British, other ethnic backgrounds and not known. Whilst it is acknowledged having fewer categories masks the variations between ethnic groups and provides pay gap data comparing the earnings of ethnic minority employees as a percentage of all white British employees, using the five-category breakdown, as defined in the 2021 Census of England and Wales, would result in many of the categories with insufficient numbers to be able to report the data.

To mitigate the risk associated with publishing improbable data, our data undergoes internal scrutiny and by providing contextual narrative, it supports the information provided within the report and highlights the activities we are engaging in to address pay gaps.

#### **Legal implications:**

Publishing the annual gender pay gap report ensures compliance with The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

Whilst the Regulations do not contain any provisions imposing a penalty for non-compliance, failure to disclose this data could result in enforcement action by the Equality and Human Rights Commission or challenge by way of judicial review.

Currently there is no legislative requirement for organisations to carry out ethnicity pay gap reporting. Whilst reporting is not mandatory, as part of our approach to improving inclusion and tackle inequality within the workplace, this data is being provided from 2023.

#### **Privacy and security implications:**

The report does not include any personally identifiable information.

#### **Duty to collaborate:**

All organisations employing over 250 employees have a requirement to carry out gender pay gap reporting. Collaborative actions to reduce pay gaps will be considered as part of existing Thames Valley collaboration work.

#### **Health and safety implications:**

There are no health and safety implications arising from this report.

#### **Environmental implications:**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

#### **Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications**

Whilst both gender pay and equal pay deal with the disparity of pay within the workplace, it is important to note that gender pay is different from equal pay. The presence of a gender pay gap does not mean the Authority is discriminating against groups of individuals. The Authority is confident this gap does not stem from paying male and female employees differently for the same or equivalent work, i.e. an equal pay issue.

The report has identified there are pay disparities within the workplace. Whilst we are committed to addressing and reducing pay gaps and achieving a more

representative workforce, figures are not expected to reduce significantly within the short to medium term, as the issues driving pay gaps requires a longer-term commitment.

Work is ongoing to improve the breadth of diversity-related data available and the utilisation of this data, to identify inequalities, initiate activity and evaluate progress throughout the employment lifecycle.

The Authority strives to increase diversity in all areas of the organisation. A particular continuing priority is attracting and retaining a more diverse workforce and having better representation of employees at all levels across the organisation.

### **Consultation and communication**

Additional to the Fire Authority, other employers, job applicants, trade unions, media and the public will continue to pay close attention to annually published gender pay gap data. Due to the high-profile nature of gender pay, it is important that employees are made aware of the gender pay gap report for this organisation before 30 March 2024. Following approval for publication, the gender pay gap report will be communicated to employees in accordance with usual practice.

Engaging with stakeholders is essential to ensure progress is made against the initiatives to lower pay gaps. We will increase engagement and buy-in to what we are trying to achieve and will ensure interventions are evaluated as appropriate.

Annual gender pay gap reports will be presented to the Joint Consultation Forum, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group, Performance Monitoring Board, Strategic Management Board and Executive Committee. From 2023, this report will also contain data on the ethnicity pay gap.

### **Background papers:**

[Link](#) to Fire Authority approved Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2023/24:

[Link](#) to Fire Authority approved Gender Pay Gap reports:

[The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties and Public Authorities\) Regulations 2017](#)

[Office of National Statistics. Gender pay gap in the UK 2022](#)

[Report your gender pay gap data\(gov.uk\)](#)

[Ethnicity pay gap reporting. Guidance for employers](#)

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Protective Marking</b>
1	Gender Pay Gap Report 2023	
2	Employer Comparison Data 2022	
3	Operational vs. Support Service Employees Comparison Data 2019 to 2023	

4	Ethnicity Pay Gap 2023	
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