

Gender Pay Gap Report

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report outlines Shropshire Fire & Rescue Services obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Information Regulations 2017) and details our annual Gender Pay Gap figures for 2024 and the differences in average earnings between our male and female employees.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- a) note the contents of the 2025 report (for 2024 data) for publishing on SFRS Website and the Government Website gov.co.uk www.gov.uk

3 Background

In April 2017, the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 came into force. This requires organisations, public, private and voluntary, with 250 or more employees to report and publish annual figures in relation to their gender pay gap.

The gender pay gap is an equality measure that identifies the difference in average earnings between women and men. Statistics generally show that on average, men occupy higher paid roles than women. It is important to note that the gender pay gap is not about women being paid less than men for doing the same role. Equal pay deals with pay differences between men and women who carry out the same or similar jobs, or jobs of equal value.

The overall UK average gender pay gap for all employees is determined by data received by the Office of National Statistics. This is published annually on the government website. The figure for 2024 for all employees is 13.1%, there has been a slow decline over time.

SFRS are required to publish figures using 31 March as a reference date and based on the following:

The mean gender pay gap – The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees as a percentage.

The median gender pay gap – The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees as a percentage.

The mean bonus gender pay gap – The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees as a percentage.

The median bonus gender pay gap – The difference between the median bonus pay paid to female employees as a percentage.

Bonus proportions – The proportion of male and females receiving a bonus payment

The Service does not offer a bonus scheme and therefore are not required to report on bonus percentage figures.

Service Data 2024

For the purposes of statutory reporting requirements SFRS are required to publish figures based on individual employee contracts of employment and takes into consideration the various terms and conditions of employment within the Service. The figures below are based on established contracted posts within the Service as of 31 March 2024. This includes operational, non-operational and Brigade Manager contracts.

Total Employees:

Gender	Totals							
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Female	105	101	99	116	117	121	122	131
Male	610	557	551	536	548	520	506	490
Total	715	658	650	652	665	641	628	621

SFRS Mean and Median gender pay gap

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Mean (average)	8%	8%	6%	8%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Median	11%	8%	0	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%

	F 2021	M 2021	F 2022	M 2022	F 2023	M 2023	F 2024	M 2024
Mean - Average Hourly Rate	14.68	15.31	14.99	15.47	16.04	16.54	17.03	17.54
Median	14.51	14.51	14.72	14.72	15.75	15.75	16.54	16.54

*2017-2020 Data in Appendix A

	Gap				%			
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2021	2022	2023	2024

Mean - Average Hourly Rate	0.63	0.48	0.51	0.51	4%	3%	3%	3%
Median	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

*2017-2020 Data in appendices

UK Data shows that female workers earn on average 13.1% less than male workers and the gender pay gap exists due to female workers occupying lower paid and less senior roles in both public and private sector organisations. Although our gender pay gap is considerably lower than the national average, females are less represented in the higher salary bands which is reflected in the Service's overall data profile. There are essentially more males occupying higher level positions within SFRS.

The under-representation of females in the Fire and Rescue service is well documented. With more males in the workforce, it is inevitable that differences in pay are exacerbated, and this imbalance will continue until we see more women in operational and in senior level roles. Research shows that a more diverse and inclusive workforce helps organisations develop by bringing new skills, creativity and innovation. This report outlines initiatives that SFRS are involved in to help create that environment.

The above data for 2024 shows that overall male employees on average earn 3% more than female employee's in the Service, this is the same figure as the last 2 years. Male employees are on average earning 51p more per hour than female employee's which is the same as our 2023 data.

The data shows an increase to the High quartile of 3% to 19%, and a more substantial increase to the Mid (upper) quartile of 6% to 25%, a decrease of 4% to the Mid (lower) quartile to 4% and an increase to the Low quartile of 3% to 37%.

Our median pay gap for the Service this year has remained at 0% for the last 3 years, indicating that there is no pay differential in our mid earners within the service between male and female employees. This is a positive reflection of middle range earners and indicates what 'most' people earn.

Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2024				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	19%	25%	4%	37%
Male	81%	75%	96%	63%

Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2023				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	16%	19%	8%	34%
Male	84%	81%	92%	66%

*See appendices for 2021-2022 Salary Quartile Bands.

Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2024						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
1 High	£18.34-£65.21	29	19%	126	81%	157

2 Mid Upper	£16.54 -£18.34	38	25%	117	75%	157
3 Mid Lower	£16.54	7	4%	149	96%	157
4 Lower	£7.49 -£16.54	57	37%	98	63%	157
		131	21%	490	79%	621

Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2023						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
1 High	£17.47-£65.21	26	16%	132	84%	157
2 Mid Upper	£15.75 -£17.47	30	19%	127	81%	157
3 Mid Lower	£15.75	13	8%	144	92%	157
4 Lower	£6.85 -£15.75	54	34%	103	66%	157
		122	15%	506	85%	641

** See appendices for Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2021-2022*

In 2024, the above salary quartile band tables indicates that 81% of our male employees were the highest earners in SFRS, a decrease to our 2023 figure of 3%. Female high earners have increased to 19%. The 2024 lower quartile figures indicates that this is our largest female percentage area of 37% and predominantly equates to our support staff employees. Operational roles offer higher rates of pay at entry point in comparison to our support staff posts. There is also a higher rate of part time females in this quartile, which indicates that females are more likely to take advantage of our family friendly policies.

The 2024 mid upper quartile band data indicate 25% are female, this is an increase of 6% from 2023, these are in support staff specialist roles attracting mid-range salaries for specialist skills. In SFRS it is recognised that females are under-represented in operational roles and SFRS are addressing this in our recruitment processes and in our future on call and wholtime targeted recruitment campaigns.

Commitment to reducing the Gender Pay Gap

Whilst the Services gender pay gap compares favourably with the national pay gap, we are committed to doing everything we can to reduce this. We know that this is a difficult task particularly as operational roles still hold many stereotypes in the public domain.

The Service is committed to ensuring and achieving an inclusive workforce to encourage female representation at all levels of the organisation. SFRS is also committed to the principles of fairness, equality and inclusion and to ensure that these principles are embedded in our service. Inclusive employment policies and procedures are essential to the success of our recruitment processes and are subject to equality impact assessments to determine differential impact upon female and other protected characteristics. SFRS focus on attracting women into the service by ensuring targeted positive action awareness sessions. Improving the diversity of the people we employ is important to SFRS and our priority is to recruit and retain a talented and diverse workforce to improve our cultural competence and attract broader experience.

New Initiatives that support reducing the Gender Pay Gap

The Service have been working to complete areas of improvement as identified in the HMI report. These actions include:

- Work around understanding the Services values and culture, including training requirements.
- Review of positive action campaign requirements will be taking place, in addition to the ongoing campaigns for firefighters.
- The Service are currently reviewing the on-call recruitment process, concentrating on point of entry assessments.
- Further to a recent promotion review the Service are currently trialling the recommendations for that review including assessments, independent panel members and utilising non-operational employees as observers for these processes to ensure fairness, transparency and consistency.
- A programme of work has taken place to update and improve employee Equality Monitoring Data, with regular reports on progress. This has resulted in better quality data for the Service to use to analyse its workforce and their future needs. The Service has also amended the Career Path Gateway process that is used for candidates entering the promotion process to include EDI data, this will be used to analyse those entering this pathway. The Service are also reviewing other areas in the Service for data collection improvements.
- The Voices Group held a planning event with the Voces reps, where they reviewed the running and effectiveness of the group and made recommendations for future improvements. The result of this has been shared at the EDI steering group and work is ongoing to use this feedback. Events have included a Health and Wellbeing Day, Mental Health information, Menopause Support Sessions, getting active sessions including circuits, running and walking groups.

A review is being undertaken on the membership of the EDI Steering Group, to make this more inclusive.

The Service has completed a detailed briefing document and gap analysis of the new Sexual Harassment Duty to ensure compliance with the Equality Act, and an ongoing action plan has been created.

Maternity policy has been updated and is currently out for consultation and this has been updated to include more favourable increased maternity payments.

Training Managers on Welfare Support training

In line with the 2024 HMICFRS Standards of Behaviour report, welfare officer training has been launched across the Service to ensure that those involved in workplace investigations are appropriately supported in terms of wellbeing. This is offered to all supervisory managers and above (both operational and non-operational).

Training Managers in Performance Management

In line with the 2024 HMICFRS Standards of Behaviour report, training has been introduced across the Service to support managers in dealing with underperformance in a more consistent, fair and transparent way. The training sessions launched are:

- Critical Conversations – this is mandatory for all supervisory managers and above.
- Conducting Effective Workplace Investigations – this is mandatory for Station Managers and above (and non-operational equivalent).
- Charing Hearings – this is mandatory for Station Managers and above (and non-operational equivalent).
- Chairing Appeal Hearings – this is mandatory for Group Managers and above (and non-operational equivalent).

Women's Development

The Women's Development Programme through Women in the Fire Service continues to be a popular choice for development with females in Service. At present there are three females on this programme that commenced in January 2025.

Springboard

The Service commissioned Springboard in late summer 2024. Springboard is a nationally recognised programme specifically aimed at supporting women's personal and professional development. 11 delegates from across Control, On-Call and Support Services attended the programme, which concluded in December 2024. Feedback has been positive from delegates with commitment to action following the programme. A follow up workshop has been planned for July 2025.

The People Strategy is currently being updated for 2025-27 this includes specific objectives which link to improving the gender pay gap, structural review of the Service, links to the including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and EDI plan.

4 Summary

Through our continual effort to address equality issues, 2024 results indicate that our gender pay gap remains at 3%. Whilst acknowledging the progress we have made, the report outlines areas we are working on to address the gap through retention and attraction initiatives. We will continue to address this moving forward via our recruitment strategies and internal review of processes.

5 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7 Appendices

Appendix A – Salary Quartile Bands

Appendix B - Ongoing initiatives to support the reduction of the gender pay gap

8 Background Papers

There are no background papers to this report.

Salary Quartile Bands 2021-2022

Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2022				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	16%	17%	9%	33%
Male	84%	83%	91%	67%

Salary Quartile Bands – Overview 2021				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	14%	16%	4%	36%
Male	86%	84%	96%	64%

Salary Quartile bands – Breakdown 2021-2022

Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2022						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
1 High	£16.32 -£58.81	26	16%	134	84%	160
2 Mid Upper	£14.72-£16.32	27	17%	133	83%	160
3 Mid Lower	£14.72	14	9%	147	91%	161
4 Lower	£10.60 -£14.72	53	33%	107	67%	160
		120	19%	521	81%	641

Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2021						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
1 High	£16.08-£58.81	24	14%	142	86%	166
2 Mid Upper	£14.51-£16.08	27	16%	139	84%	166
3 Mid Lower	£14.51	6	4%	161	96%	167
4 Lower	£6.45-£14.51	60	36%	106	64%	166
		117	18%	548	82%	665

SFRS Mean and Median gender pay gap

	F 2017	M 2017	F 2018	M 2018	F 2019	M 2019	F 2020	M 2020
Mean - Average Hourly Rate	13.04	14.10	13.03	14.21	13.67	14.61	13.94	15.10
Median	12.01	13.53	12.53	13.67	13.94	13.94	14.00	14.22
	Gap				%			
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2017	2018	2019	2020
Mean - Average Hourly Rate	1.06	1.18	0.94	1.16	8%	8%	6%	8%
Median	1.52	1.14	0	0.23	11%	8%	0%	2%

Ongoing Initiatives to Support the Reduction of the Gender Pay Gap

The results of the Independent Cultural Review were published February 2024 with work ongoing,

The National Fire Chief's Council Culture and Values report actions were implemented during 2024, these have now been implemented into our departmental plans.

The employee confidential reporting line is now embedded, and briefings are ongoing.

The Service's long-standing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group drives forward gender equality initiatives chaired by the CFO and invite Voices representatives to update on the work of this group.

The Service actively promotes campaigns and initiatives supporting, International Women's Day, time to talk and has an ongoing calendar of events encouraging inclusivity.

The Service is continuing its work on Mental Health at Work Commitment action plan to support all our employees.

Continued annual programme of events are planned for firefighter taster days targeting Women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees. A number of specific taster sessions were held in 2024 for women as part of the service's positive action programme to achieve a workforce that is more reflective of our communities.

EDI training is ongoing, this includes EDI refresher training, Equality Impact Assessment Training and Dyslexia Awareness training as well as other role specific training as identified.

Staff survey launched in April 2024, as planned. The actions from this survey have been incorporated into a wider piece of work around culture.

The Service completed the programme of job evaluation of non-operational roles and is now ongoing.

The buddy system is now embedded, which starts at the point of application for on call employees to help with attraction, engagement and retention.

The Service uses the national on-call recruitment campaign designed to encourage applications from diverse backgrounds.

The Service has a health and wellbeing strategy and EDI strategy reviewed quarterly and supported at executive level.

A dedicated employee health and wellbeing section accessed via our online portal includes support and advice on various related topics.

The Service continue to support attendance in the Women in the Fire Service's Development Programme which helps women to identify clear, practical and realistic steps to develop self-confidence in their professional and personal lives.