

Gender Pay Gap Report 2026

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report outlines Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Information Regulations 2017) and details its annual Gender Pay Gap figures for 2025 and the differences in average earnings between our male and female employees.

2 Recommendations

The Service Management Team is asked to note the contents of the 2026 report (for 2025 data) for publishing on the Service 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 2025 for all employees is 12.8%, there has been a slow decline over time.

The Service is 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.

4 Service Data 2025

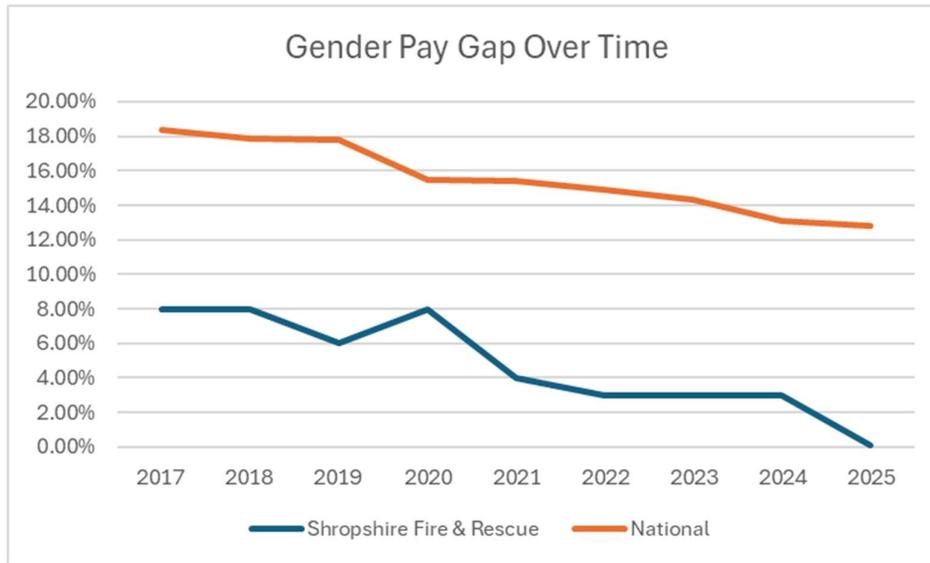
For the purposes of statutory reporting requirements SFRS are required to publish figures based on individual employee contracts of employment and takes into consideration the various terms and conditions of employment within the Service. The figures below are based on established contracted posts within the Service as of 31 March 2025. This includes operational, non-operational and Brigade Manager contracts.

Total Employees

Gender	Totals								
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Female	105	101	99	116	117	121	122	131	129
Male	610	557	551	536	548	520	506	490	497
Total	715	658	650	652	665	641	628	621	626

SFRS Mean and Median gender pay gap

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Mean (average)	8%	8%	6%	8%	4%	3%	3%	3%	0.61%
Median	11%	8%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%



	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
	2021	2021	2022	2022	2023	2023	2024	2024	2025	2025
Mean – Average Hourly Rate	14.68	15.31	14.99	15.47	16.04	16.54	17.03	17.54	17.97	18.08
Median	14.51	14.51	14.72	14.72	15.75	15.75	16.54	16.54	17.21	17.21

*2017-2020 Data in Appendix 1

	Gap					%				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Mean - Average Hourly Rate	0.63	0.48	0.51	0.51	0.11	4%	3%	3%	3%	0.61%
Median	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

*2017-2020 Data in appendices

UK Data shows that female workers earn on average 12.8%* 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. The Service’s gender pay gap is considerably lower than the national average, females remain less represented in the higher salary bands which is reflected in the Service’s overall data profile; however, this would be further reduced if secondees positions were included in this data. There are essentially more males occupying higher level positions within SFRS.

*[Gender pay gap in the UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

The under-representation of females in Fire and Rescue Service is well documented. With more males in the workforce, it is inevitable that differences in pay are exacerbated, this imbalance will continue until more women are in operational roles. Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service have seen an increase of women in senior level roles which has had a positive impact on the gender pay gap. 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 2025 shows that on average, across the Service, male employees earn 0.61% more than female employees, this equates to 11p per hour more, this is a significant reduction of 40p per hour compared to last year.

The data shows no increase to the High quartile figures which remain at 19%, however if secondee posts were included this figure would have increased. There is a slight decrease in the Mid (upper) quartile of 5% to 20%, a small increase of 3% to the Mid (lower) quartile to 7% and a small drop to the Low quartile of 1% to 36%.

The median pay gap for the Service this year has remained at 0% since 2021, 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 2025				
	High	Mid (Upper)	Mid (Lower)	Low
Female	19%	20%	7%	36%
Male	81%	80%	93%	64%

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

**See appendices for 2021-2022 Salary Quartile Bands.*

Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2025						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
1 High	£19.07 - £65.89	29	19%	127	81%	156
2 Mid Upper	£17.20 - £19.07	32	20%	125	80%	157
3 Mid Lower	£17.20	11	7%	145	93%	156
4 Lower	£12.77- £17.20	57	36%	100	64%	157
		129	21%	497	79%	626

Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2024						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
1 High	£18.34-£65.21	29	19%	126	81%	155
2 Mid Upper	£16.54 -£18.34	38	25%	117	75%	155
3 Mid Lower	£16.54	7	4%	149	96%	156
4 Lower	£7.49 -£16.54	57	37%	98	63%	155
		131	21%	490	79%	621

**See appendices for Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2021-2023*

In 2025, the salary quartile data shows no change in the high band, with male employees remaining at 81% and female employees at 19%. Inclusion of secondee posts would likely have increased the proportion of female employees in this band.

The 2025 mid-upper quartile data shows that 20% of employees in this band are female, representing a 5% decrease from 2024. These roles are primarily specialist support staff positions that attract mid-range salaries. SFRS recognises the continued under-representation of women in operational roles and is addressing this through enhanced recruitment processes, including targeted on-call and wholetime recruitment campaigns.

The 2025 lower quartile shows the highest proportion of female employees at 36%, largely reflecting the composition of our support staff roles. These positions typically offer lower entry-level pay than operational roles, where female representation remains lower. The higher proportion of part-time female employees in this quartile also suggests greater utilisation of the Service's family-friendly policies.

5 Commitment to reducing the Gender Pay Gap

The Service's gender pay gap continues to compare favourably with the national position and we remain committed to further reducing it. The Service recognises that this is a complex challenge, particularly given the enduring public stereotypes surrounding operational roles.

We are committed to building an inclusive workforce and increasing female representation at all levels of the organisation. SFRS upholds the principles of fairness, equality and inclusion, ensuring these are embedded throughout our practices. Our employment policies and procedures support inclusive recruitment and are subject to equality impact assessments to identify any differential impact on women or other protected groups.

The Service's ongoing Cultural Transformation Programme further strengthens this work by fostering a more inclusive, fair and supportive environment. Through employee engagement, leadership development and a renewed focus on values and behaviours, the programme helps remove barriers that may disproportionately impact women and other underrepresented groups, supporting progress in both recruitment and career development.

We continue to focus on attracting women into the Service through targeted positive-action awareness sessions. Improving workforce diversity remains a priority, and we are committed to recruiting and retaining a talented, diverse workforce that enhances our cultural competence and brings broader experience into the organisation.

New Initiatives that support reducing the Gender Pay Gap

Culture Transformation Programme

The Service has implemented a Service-wide Culture Transformation Programme, launched in 2025 and continuing into future years. Key elements include employee workshops, dedicated sessions with the Senior Management Team, support for middle managers, and the production of the *Shaping Our Culture Together – Learning Report*. The programme is informed by findings from the Independent Cultural Review and insights from recent staff surveys, ensuring that employee voices and lived experiences directly shape cultural improvements.

This programme plays a significant role in supporting efforts to reduce the gender pay gap by fostering a more inclusive, fair and positive working environment. It aims to better identify and address barriers to progression for under-represented groups, including women. Oversight of the programme sits with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group, with strong ongoing employee engagement. A new Culture Working Group is being established in 2026 to ensure wider employee involvement in shaping the Service's culture, priorities and future development.

The review of the EDI Steering Group's membership has now been completed, leading to the recommendation to create this separate Culture Working Group. This new group will maintain clear links with the EDI Steering Group while offering greater flexibility and enabling more focused attention on specific areas of cultural development, rather than the broader strategic priorities overseen at EDI Steering Group level.

The Service has continued to progress the areas of improvement identified in the HMI report. These actions include:

- Work to strengthen understanding of the Service's values and culture, including associated training requirements
- The Service has established a Recruitment Action Group to coordinate all recruitment activity, including positive-action initiatives, ensuring a consistent and focused approach across all teams.
- The Service is currently reviewing the on-call recruitment process, with a particular focus on point-of-entry assessments. A trial was undertaken at a number of on-call stations during 2025. The next phase of the trial, extending into 2026, will involve selected wholetime stations in order to obtain a more representative view across the Service.
- A review of the Service's promotion process was undertaken following an independent review. The review identified eight key recommendations, reflecting recurring themes highlighted during focus group discussions. The eight recommendations were thoroughly evaluated to determine their feasibility for integration into the promotion process. The objective of this review was to ensure that the process remains fair, transparent, and consistent for both candidates and the Service.

The trial was evaluated and participant feedback gathered. A paper is now being considered to implement the changes into current policy.

- The Voices Group has continued its work, attending EDI Steering Group. Additional representatives have been recruited to strengthen engagement, and the group continues to deliver a programme of wellbeing and inclusion focused activities that support employee voice across the Service.

Other new initiatives

The Service has been working with other emergency services to deliver our first joint events, including a Tri-Service away day and an online Tri-Service event with a guest speaker, providing an opportunity for women to come together in celebration of International Women's Day.

During 2025, the Service initiated a review of Brigade Manager roles to ensure alignment with corporate Head of Department posts. The review, conducted by West Midlands Employers included engagement and consultation with all Heads of Department. Following its conclusion, it was agreed that the Head of Department pay scale would be increased to reflect external benchmarking.

The Service is reviewing the on-call annual leave arrangements, including the flexibility of how this leave can be taken, and is also undertaking a review of the fitness policy, including current practices and processes.

The Service's Maternity Policy has been updated and agreed to include more favourable increased maternity payments.

The recruitment of a Health and Wellbeing Officer and a Health and Safety Manager will further support the Service's ongoing improvements and contribute to the continued reduction of the gender pay gap.

The Service is progressing work on the Preventing Sexual Harassment Action Plan and has completed the associated training. Defined workstreams are now underway, including risk-assessment activity informed by the findings of the previous Women's Safety Survey.

Training managers with performance management is supported through 'lite' sessions delivered to all supervisory managers and above, helping them understand the Service's brigade orders and policies relating to performance management, attendance management, and disciplinary and grievance procedures. These sessions support managers in developing a clear understanding of our internal processes.

A new programme of micro-videos is being implemented for 2026 which cover a range of topics.

6 Summary

Through our continued focus on equality, the 2025 results show that our gender pay gap has reduced to 0.61%, marking a significant improvement and demonstrating the positive impact of the actions taken.

While this progress is encouraging, this report also identifies the areas where further work is required to ensure sustained improvement. Looking ahead, we remain committed to advancing this progress through our Culture Transformation Programme, targeted recruitment strategies, and ongoing internal process reviews.

7 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

8 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

Any projects associated with this report will have their own EQIA completed.

10 Appendices

Appendix A

Salary Quartile Bands, Breakdown and Gender Pay Gap 2021 -2023

Appendix B

Ongoing Initiatives to Reduce the Gender Pay Gap

11 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Salary Quartile Bands 2021-2023

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

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 2021-2023

Salary Quartile Bands – Breakdown 2023						
	Hour Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
1 High	£17.47 - £65.21	25	16%	132	84%	25
2 Mid Upper	£15.75 - £17.47	30	19%	127	81%	30
3 Mid Lower	£15.75	13	8%	144	92%	13
4 Lower	£6.83- £15.75	54	34%	103	66%	54
		122	24%	506	81%	628

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	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
	2017	2017	2018	2018	2019	2019	2020	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 Reduce the Gender Pay Gap

Regular review of employee Equality Monitoring Data and its use within the Service, along with ongoing review of Career Path Gateway EDI data, to analyse and identify trends.

Employee confidential reporting line briefings are ongoing.

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

The People Strategy has been 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.

Welfare officer training has been delivered across the Service to ensure that those involved in workplace investigations are appropriately supported in terms of wellbeing. This training is offered to all supervisory managers and above, both operational and non-operational. Moving forward, the welfare officer training element has been incorporated into the wider Disciplinary and Grievance training programme.

Training Managers with Performance Management:

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

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

All training commenced rollout in 2025, with sessions continuing throughout 2026 to ensure all managers receive the appropriate development. This forms part of a rolling programme, which will be refreshed every three years.

The Women's Development Programme delivered through Women in the Fire Service continues to be a popular development opportunity for female employees across the Service. At present, three female employees are participating in the programme, which commenced in January 2025. Feedback from the 2025 cohort has been positive, and the Service has continued to promote the programme to all female employees, regardless of role or level, to encourage wider participation.

Springboard is a nationally recognised development programme specifically designed to support women's personal and professional growth. The programme is offered to employees each year as part of the Service's ongoing commitment to developing and empowering female staff.

The Service continues to offer places on the Women in the Fire Service Women's Development Weekend to all female employees. In 2025, the Service supported 3 places. Feedback from attendees has been very positive, and the Service remains committed to promoting this opportunity to female employees across all roles and levels.

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 2025 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.

The Service's programme of job evaluation is 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 has a health and wellbeing strategy and EDI strategy reviewed quarterly and supported at executive level, along with a dedicated employee health and wellbeing section accessed via our online portal includes support and advice on various related topics.