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Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2024

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PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

Statement by the Chair of Avon Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer

Avon Fire Authority is committed to developing a culture which puts diversity, inclusion, cohesion, equality and equity, (DICE) at the heart of all our work. Gender and race/ethnicity equality and ensuring people are paid fairly for the work they do is a key aspect of this. In line with legislation, this is our sixth gender pay gap report. Since the introduction of the mandatory requirement for private and public sector organisations to calculate and publish a gender pay gap report, there have been calls for pay transparency to be extended to other areas affected by inequality and a lack of diversity. To continue with last year's report format, we have combined the results of our gender pay gap and ethnicity pay gap analyses into one report as a measure of good practice and transparency and demonstrating how Avon Fire and Rescue Service (AF&RS) meets the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity.

The gender pay gap in AF&RS this year is calculated as -1.98% in favour of female staff, which is a reduction of 1.4% points in comparison to the pay gap in 2023, which was 3.37%. The pay data on 31st March 2024, was analysed using the hourly rate mean (average). The average hourly pay rate for female staff is £17.90 and for men £17.56 (35 pence differential, which equates to -1.98%).

The primary reasons for the variation in the pay gap between March 2023 and March 2024 are due to changes at Middle & Senior Manager level. These include an interim male Treasurer being in post in March 2023, prior to the substantive appointment of the female Statutory Finance Officer in May 2023, the appointment of a female Direct Entry Station Manager in November 2023 and the temporary promotion of a female to Station Manager in May 2023. There has also been additional female staff appointments in uniform and support roles and across a range of salary quartiles. Women in the Service currently represent just 22% of employees and consequently relatively minor changes in numbers can lead to exacerbated fluctuations.

It is encouraging to see a reduction in the pay gap between male and female staff this year and that it remains significantly lower than the national mean average. Survey data by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), published in November 2023 which covers the wider UK population regardless of the size of the company, shows the gender pay gap declining slowly over time to [7.7% in April 2023](#).

There are no significant changes to the ethnicity pay gap in AF&RS this year. The pay gap between White British and ethnic minority employees is 5.0%, which shows a small decline compared to the pay gap reported on 31st March 2023 which was 5.4%.

Currently it is a statutory requirement for employers with at least 250 employees to measure and report gender pay gaps, however ethnicity pay reporting remains a voluntary option for employers in the UK. Ethnicity pay gap reporting has been part of

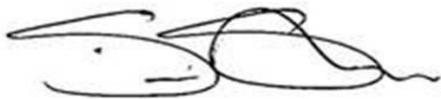
governmental discussions and consultations over the past eight years, however little action has been taken for it to become mandatory.

AF&RS will continue collect, analyse and publish its ethnicity pay gap results for transparency and best practice. This will aide our work in identifying and understanding any ethnicity related disparities and inequalities that exist in our workforce. This will help us to implement relevant interventions and initiatives such as Positive Action; to improve the representation of ethnic minority staff at all levels of the organisation and ensure we achieve a reduced year on year pay gap.

We know that we have much more work to do to ensure our organisation is truly inclusive for all staff, in particular women and ethnic minority staff so that we can achieve full gender and ethnicity pay parity. We confirm that AF&RS has prepared this gender and ethnicity pay gap report based on the pay data for the 'snapshot date' of 31 March 2024 in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.



Councillor Ben Nutland
Chair to the Fire Authority



Simon Shilton
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Dated: 25 July 2024

Introduction

Avon Fire Authority as a public sector employer with more than 250 staff is required by law to publish gender pay gap information under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017. Having a gender pay gap is different to equal pay. Equal pay deals with the differences between men and women who carry out the same or similar jobs, or work of equal value.

The gender pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between all men and women in a workforce. It compares hourly rates of pay and any bonuses staff may receive by gender, highlighting any areas of imbalance. If a workforce has a particularly high gender pay gap this can indicate there may be several issues to deal with, and the individual calculations may help to identify what those issues are.

The ethnicity pay gap is calculated as the difference between the average hourly earnings of White British ethnicity group and other ethnic groups as a proportion of average hourly earnings of White British earnings.

The AF&RS Workforce

In terms of pay and conditions AF&RS employees are broadly split into two main groups, generally referred to as uniformed and non-uniformed. Uniformed staff are wholtime firefighters (who work full time in that role), on call firefighters (who work part time and respond via a pager system) and control staff (who co-ordinate AF&RS work from our control room). Pay and conditions for uniformed staff are negotiated nationally.

Non-uniformed staff are those who provide specialised functions, such as Human Resources, Finance and Technical Services. They are non-operational, generally working a 37-hour week. Their conditions of service are negotiated locally, and their salaries are determined through the Hay Job Evaluation System.

Methodology and calculations

The information for gender and ethnicity is provided from Firewatch by the Corporate Performance Unit. This is then combined with the Employee Pay report provided by Payroll (I-Trent) to produce a salary report by gender. It is further amended to provide FTE hourly rates.

The report excludes all Fire Authority members and those employees on “zero hours” contracts such as those who volunteer for the Staff Engagement Network and Reserve firefighters.

All staff who are on secondary contracts as on-call firefighters are treated as separate employees. The full listing is then sorted in descending order and the mean and median are then calculated for each gender and ethnicity.

AF&RS gender pay gap data on the snapshot date of 31 March 2024

Total number of staff

AF&RS all staff		
Gender	Employees	%
Male	729	77.7%
Female	209	22.3%
Total	938	

Mean and median calculations

	Women	Men	Gap £	Gap %
Average hourly rate of pay	17.90	17.56	£0.35	-1.98%
Median hourly rate of pay	16.54	16.54	£0.00	0.00%

The mean average gender pay gap is 1.98%

The median gender pay gap is 0%

These are the gender pay gaps at AF&RS on the snapshot date of 31 March 2024.

Salary quartile bands

Salary quartile calculations show the proportions of male and female employees in four quartile pay bands, which is done by dividing the workforce into four equal parts.

The table below shows the salary quartile breakdown for all staff. The distribution of men and women in each quartile is heavily weighted in favour of men. This is because the calculation looks at the entire workforce, which includes the mainly male operational workforce.

Salary Quartile Bands – All Staff						
	Hourly Rate Range	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total
Quartile 4 (Highest paid)	£18.34- £75.01	65	27.7%	170	72.3%	235
Quartile 3 (Mid-Upper)	£16.54 - £18.34	38	16.2%	196	83.8%	234
Quartile 2 (Mid-Lower)	£16.54 - £16.54	19	8.1%	215	91.9%	234
Quartile 1 (Lowest paid)	£10.90 - £16.54	87	37.0%	148	63.0%	235
Total		209		729		938

AF&RS ethnicity pay gap data on the snapshot date of 31 March 2024

Ethnicity Pay Gap - All Staff					
	White British	White Minority Ethnic	Unknown / not stated	Ethnic Minority	Average all minority groups
Count	785	21	105	28	
Average (Mean)	17.75	16.93	17.10	16.86	16.96
Mean Ethnicity Pay Gap - White British to others		0.81	0.64	0.89	0.78
% Average pay gap		4.6%	3.6%	5.0%	4.4%

The ethnicity pay gap has shown a minor reduction from 5.4% as reported in 2023, to 5.0% as of the snapshot date of 31st March 2024. The combination of overall low percentages of ethnic minority staff in our workforce, complexities in gathering data due to a greater breakdown of classifications (18+1), provide challenges in measuring and analysing accurate ethnicity data to provide meaningful insights. As with the gender pay gap, minor changes in numbers can lead to exacerbated fluctuations.

Next steps

There is always more that we can do to further decrease the gender and ethnicity pay gaps annually, however we remain positive that our continuous work addressing pay disparities, and advancing equality of opportunity will ensure that women and ethnic minority staff at AF&RS are not disadvantaged compared to their male and White colleagues on the issue of pay.

We are committed to continuously improving gender and ethnicity equality in the Service primarily as it is morally the right thing to do but to also ensure we are living by our Service values and fulfilling our Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED). We will continue the drive for successful outcomes against objectives in the People Services Strategy and our Continuous Improvement Register.

We recognise that there is more work to do to improve how women are treated within our organisation and increase the aspirations and support for our ethnic minority staff to access development and promotion opportunities.

We will ensure that we continue to use positive action and other similar initiatives to embed a high standard of equality and equity by removing all barriers to access of opportunity for all. We will also continue working closely with women and other underrepresented staff groups across AF&RS and work collaboratively with our external partners to share best practice and improve our organisational culture and processes.