



Gender Pay Gap Report 2022



Be Inclusive

About this report

In the UK all employers are legally obliged to pay men and women equally for work of equal value. However, for lots of reasons, there is in many organisations a difference between the average earnings of male and female employees. This is known as the gender pay gap.

This gap does not mean employers have breached equal pay provisions or that women are paid less to do the same job as men. It normally indicates that men are occupying higher-paying positions in the workplace than women.

All public, private and voluntary sector organisations with 250 or more employees must report annually on their gender pay gap. They must do so against six different measures, based on a snapshot of pay data on a set date identified within Schedule 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

1

Mean Gender Pay Gap

The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees.

2

Median Gender Pay Gap

The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees.

3

Median Bonus Gap

The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male relevant employees and that paid to female relevant employees.

4

Mean Bonus Gap

The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male relevant employees and that paid to female relevant employees.

5

Bonus Proportions

The proportions of male and female relevant employees who were paid bonus pay during the relevant period.

6

Quartile Pay Bands

The proportions of male and female full-pay relevant employees in the lower, lower-middle, upper-middle and upper quartile pay bands.

In accordance with the legislation, we have produced and published this report to show Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's gender pay gap as it stood on 31 March 2022. For comparison, we have provided data from the same date in 2021.

If you have any questions or comments relating to this report and its contents, please email equalities@cheshirefire.gov.uk

Our gender pay gap explained

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is an important business imperative for any employer, not least a humanitarian organisation like the fire and rescue service.

In 2020 we enshrined this commitment as one of our core values – to “be inclusive” – and are embedding the Core Code of Ethics for the Fire and Rescue Services in England in all that we do.

We know that embracing diversity of thought, of background and of life experience makes us a better employer and a better provider of public services. We work hard to create a culture where anyone, regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability or faith, can thrive and reach their full potential. In turn, this enables us to better understand and respond to the diverse needs of the communities we serve.

Like other fire and rescue services, we have a fair and gender-neutral approach to pay across all levels of our organisation. However, in common with the rest of our sector a clear gender pay gap persists. We believe there are three principal reasons:

1. More men than women across the operational workforce

Although more women than ever before are becoming firefighters, they remain outnumbered by men at all levels – including at higher paying, senior officer level. It will take time for the new generation of operational women to progress through the ranks and for average female earnings to increase.

2. Differences in operational and non-operational salaries

It is difficult to make direct comparisons between nationally negotiated firefighter and local government rates of pay, but there are non-operational pay grades that pay less than that of a trainee firefighter’s. These grades apply to office-based and community safety posts, which do not pay the same level of overtime or are eligible for other allowances. Many of these roles are undertaken by women and therefore bring down average female pay.

3. A smaller non-operational workforce

In any fire and rescue service, there are fewer non-operational roles – which traditionally attract more women – than firefighting or fire officer roles. In Cheshire, this was compounded by the transfer of many fire staff (a large number of whom were female, some in higher paying middle management roles) to a joint corporate services arrangement with Cheshire Police between 2016 and 2018. The phased return of some of these staff to our organisation’s payroll will have a positive impact on the gender pay gap in years to come.

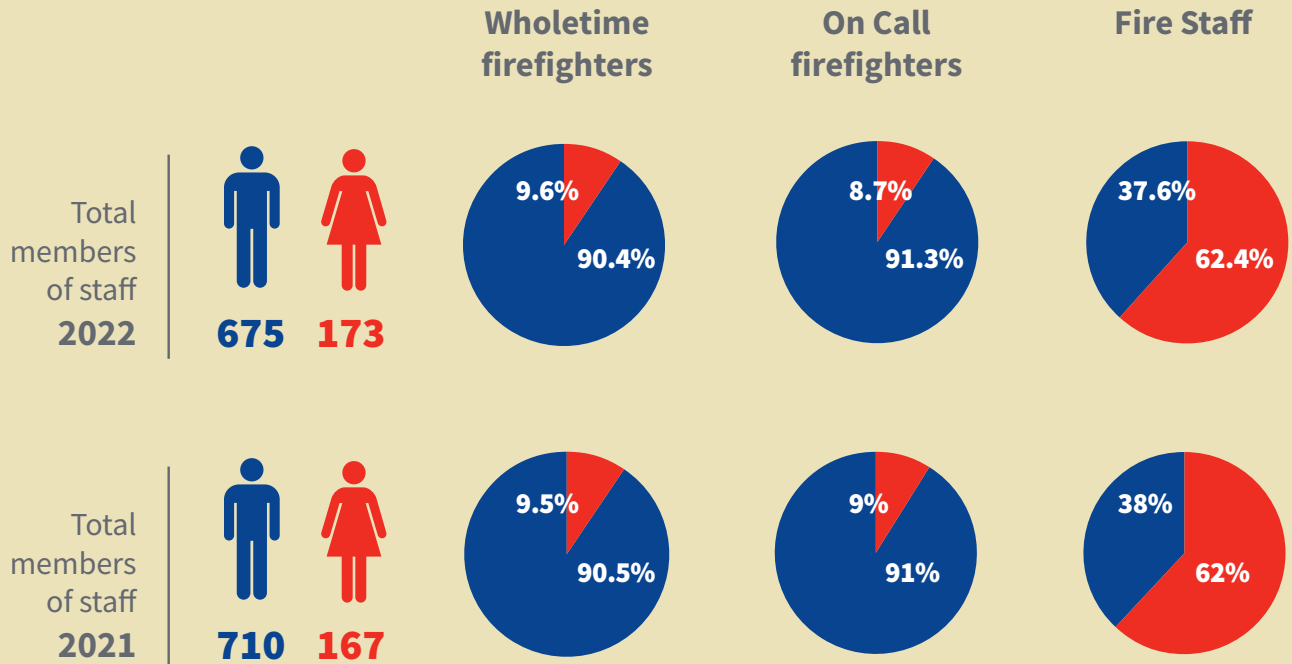


This year's data

Composition of our workforce

At 31 March 2022, we employed 848 staff, but in line with the government's gender pay gap guidance, we have counted only 822 staff in sections 1, 2 and 6 of our analysis because 26 members of staff were new starters and had not received a full month's pay by that date.

In accordance with the guidance, we have included all 848 staff in our analysis of bonus pay outlined in sections 3 to 5.











Overall, we continue to employ many more men than women. However, in spite of a reduction in the overall headcount from 877 on 31 March 2021 to 848 on 31 March 2022, the number of women in role has increased slightly and the proportion of female employees has been sustained. This is largely due to the transfer of the Communications and Engagement Department back into the organisation from joint corporate services and the fact that more men are leaving or retiring from the organisation.

Although there was little movement in the number of operational females during the period, the longer-term trend is encouraging. Since 2018 the recruitment of women into operational roles increased by 70%, which is the highest rate of increase in England outside the three large metropolitan fire and rescue services.



Analysis of earnings

Based on a snapshot of data available on March 31 2022, showing earnings of all staff, our gender pay gap is calculated as follows.

					
1 	Mean Hourly Rate	2022	£13.72	£16.91	18.9%
		2021	£13.50	£16.80	19.62%
2 	Median Hourly Rate	2022	£13.70	£15.09	9.14%
		2021	£12.85	£14.86	13.5%
3 	Proportion of Staff in receipt of a bonus	2022	24%	68%	
		2021	20%	67%	
4 	Mean Bonus	2022	£621.49	£648.98	-4.24%
		2021	£745.32	£676.73	-10.3%
5 	Median Bonus	2022	£417.48	£792	47.25%
		2021	£719.77	£775.50	7.18%

Between 2021 and 2022 the gender pay gap reduced from 19.62% to 18.9%. In 2019 the gap stood at 24.6%, so over the past four years it has closed by 23.1% in percentage terms. This reduction is encouraging and represents sustained progress as we continue to work hard to reduce and ultimately eliminate our gender pay gap.

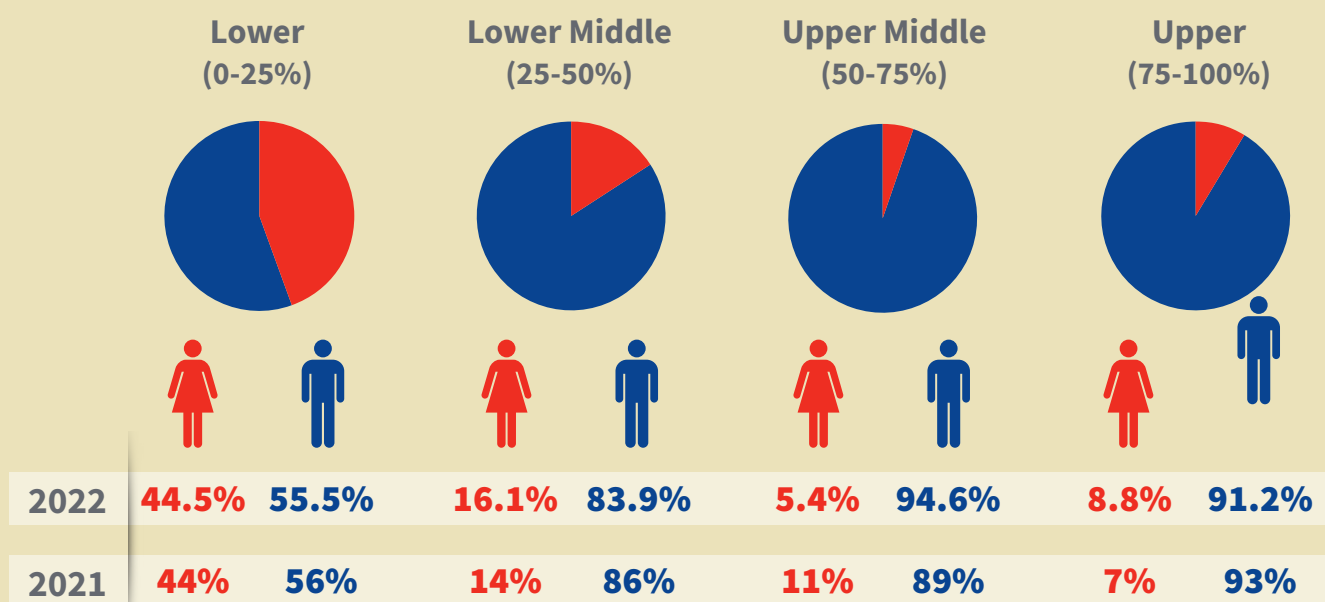
We expect to see an even greater reduction of the gap in our next report, which will include the salaries of women in the People and Organisational Development Department who transferred from Cheshire Police back to our Service in November 2022.

The difference in mean and median hourly rates between men and women reflects the continuing over-representation of men in operational roles and at senior levels.

This also explains why a greater proportion of men receive a bonus than women. Firefighters receive a continuous professional development (CPD) payment once they are competent in their role for five years. Many newer female operational staff will not yet be eligible for this. In addition, firefighters on certain duty systems have access to allowance and a bonus for completing training if they are on-call. These factors combined skew the overall reporting of bonuses in the favour of operational staff, 90% of whom are male.

The difference in the value of bonuses can be explained by the relatively small number of females eligible for operational bonuses. While female fire staff do receive some bonuses, typically these are recognition payments. The value of these affects the overall mean and median average bonuses for women.

6 Quartile Pay Bands 2022



Compared to 2021, there has been no significant change in the proportion of women in the lowest pay quartile and a slight increase in those in middle and upper quartiles.

The lower and upper middle quartiles are dominated by men because they include most operational roles. The number of women in the upper middle quartile has reduced, likely reflecting the fact that there were no further female promotions to watch and station manager-level during the year.

The increase in the number of women in the highest pay quartile is because of a market supplement applied to some roles in the Protection Team and the return of a female middle manager from joint corporate services.

There remains only one woman on the Service Leadership Team, although there are two female joint corporate service heads of department employed by Cheshire Police.

Closing the gender pay gap

Our People Strategy (2022-2025) and EDI Strategy (2021-2024) set out ambitious objectives aimed at building a fair and inclusive Service, that attracts more women at all levels and ensures they have the same opportunities to progress as their male colleagues.

In the last year we have:

- **created a new Attraction and Recruitment Working Group** to ensure that EDI underpins every stage of the workforce planning and recruitment process. As a result, inclusive materials have been produced for careers fairs and a new 'for Everyone' brand applied to all our recruitment communications to challenge the stereotype of what it means to work for the fire and rescue service
- **continued to eliminate barriers to joining the Service**, by running two taster days for people from underrepresented groups to try out physical assessments and learn about the interview process for wholetime firefighter positions. These were promoted to women through social media and female sports teams
- **encouraged 30 external applicants to sign up for the support of a buddy** from our Limitless women's network
- **invested in our female staff**, by recruiting three more women to our prestigious High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS), which aims to support talented and ambitious individuals to become station managers within seven years
- **continued to offer degree sponsorship programmes** to upskill and provide progression opportunities for all staff, providing an academic pathway for both operational and fire staff to gain a degree and ultimately apply for HPDS
- **launched the Wider Horizons programme**, comprising a career development toolkit, role directory and workshops to support fire staff – the majority of whom are women – in their career development within the Service
- **continued to promote the Step In programme**, to provide development for new supervisors and aspiring leaders. This programme complements the existing Step Up programme for existing supervisors and managers
- **supported female colleagues to attend the national Women in the Fire Service weekend** at the Fire Service College, Women in Fire Engineering and Asian Fire Services Association conferences and other external events to enable them to network, learn about latest practice and build their confidence
- **empowered the Limitless network to help keep our progressive female-friendly policies under review**, including our sector-leading maternity and adoption provision, and support work around fire and rescue service culture, menopause, domestic abuse, uniform and welfare facilities
- **started work to revitalise all our EDI staff networks**, including those for LGBT+, ethnically diverse or neurodiverse colleagues, so they have clear action plans, terms of reference and senior sponsors to help them provide the best support to all our staff.

One team, many SUPERPOWERS



We're officially the most LGBT+ inclusive emergency service and public sector employer in the UK. If you want to join a team that saves lives, protects lives and changes lives every day, we'd love to hear from you.

Follow us on social, or visit our website, for news and info about:

- on-call firefighter roles throughout Cheshire
- our next full-time firefighter recruitment in early 2023
- joining our award-winning prevention and protection teams
- rewarding non-uniformed roles in corporate services
- volunteering opportunities
- our cadet programme for 12 to 17-year-olds
- our Prince's Trust Team programme for 16 to 24-year-olds.



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