**Background**

All public, private and voluntary sector organisations with 250 or more employees must report annually on their GPG. 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.

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average (mean or median) earnings of men and women across a workforce. This should not be confused with equal pay which instead deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. Quartile information is derived from listing all the hourly pay rates in numerical order and dividing equally into four providing four pay bands with A being the lowest.

Three of the six required measures in relation to bonus payments are not applicable to ESFRS. The definition of who counts as an employee is set out in the regulations and follows the ‘extended’ definition in the Equality Act 2010.

Gender pay gap calculations are based on a snapshot date - for public sector organisations this is 31st March each year with the submission deadline to report and publish by 30th March the following year.

**Submission Data**

Below are the three measures for submission to the Government Equalities Office based on the 2024 snapshot date.

1. The mean gender pay gap is **8.57%**,

2. The median gender pay gap is **15.08%**,

3. The percentage of males and females in each pay quartile band is:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Band** | **Description** | **Females** | **Males** |
| A | Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them **at or below the lower quartile** | 38.17% | 61.83% |
| B | Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the lower quartile but **at or below the median (Lower middle)** | 11.83% | 88.17% |
| C | Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them **above the median but at or below the upper quartile (Upper middle)** | 16.13% | 83.87% |
| D | Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them **above the upper quartile** | 16.58% | 83.42% |

**Commentary:**

The mean gender pay gap has decreased by 5.01 % meanwhile the median has increased by 2.88% in comparison to the previous year.

The quartile data calculations shows that ESFRS has more males than females at every level of the service. The highest proportion of females continues to be in lower quartile (Band A).

The most significant changes in quartile data on the previous year are an increase of females in the upper quartile (Band D) by 2.75% and a reduction of females in the upper middle quartile (Band C) of 1.86%. In 2021 there had been an increase in female representation in both these upper quartiles.

The above graph shows 2023 pay gap data with the previous four years. The mean pay gap continues to track downwards for the fourth year in a row. Conversely, the median has spiked again as it did in 2020 also.

**ESFRS Work Groups:**

The below graph represents the percentage pay gap data broken down into the 3 main work groups within the Service.

Understanding the breakdown within our work groups allows better insight into where positive action or new initiatives could most benefit in trying to close the gap.

The graphs below illustrate the percentage headcount split of males and females by rank or job family for both Operational and Support employees.

**How we continue to support reducing the gap**

The Authority’s People Strategy 2021 – 2025 sets out key Equality, Diversity and Inclusion priorities and Organisational Development priorities for the Service. Progress is monitored through the People Services Strategic Group;

* The service continues to invest in an Inclusion Lead post to support development of this activity including supporting colleagues to engage in employee networks and equality impact analysis to improve as an employer and a service provider.
* Our E-recruitment platform has now been in place for 2 years and continues to allow us to capture better data to learn from and adapt our processes to be more inclusive. We have invested in an additional package which provides better accessibility for potential candidates.
* Local and national networks are enabled and supported by the organisation (ESFRS Gender Inclusion Network and Women in the Fire Service UK).
* Part time working options are available to employees and where possible part time and flexible working is offered. 2023 data shows that (excluding On-Call firefighters) 29.4% of total female staff were working part time compared with 5% for male staff.
* Fire Cadets continues to be a diverse group in regards to sex and may influence and engage young people (aged 13 – 17) to consider a career in the fire service who may not have previously, including young women and girls
* Developing a feeling of inclusivity and belonging among our workforce underpins the activities set out in our Employee Engagement Plan.
* We continue to engage with meaningful organisations like our membership with Women in the Fire Service (WFS) and being part of the Lewes FC sistership.
* We have started to review our whole suite of family related policies which allows opportunity to improve the work place for women with particular focus on primary carers and the responsibilities that go with it.
* We have been working with an external consultant to review our Service to set ourselves up for the future. This work will include crucial options to improve career pathways and development opportunities.
* We are exploring new opportunities to interact and learn from external parties within our communities in regards to inclusivity.