

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	PC/22/3
MEETING	PEOPLE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	27 JANUARY 2022
SUBJECT OF REPORT	GENDER PAY GAP 2021
LEAD OFFICER	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 require local authority employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations every year showing how large the pay gap is between male and female employees.</p> <p>All employers should add a supporting narrative - a gender pay gap does not necessarily mean they have acted inappropriately or discriminatorily but this will need explaining. A narrative helps anyone reading the statement to understand the organisation's view of why a gender pay gap is present and what the organisation intends to do to close it.</p> <p>The latest iteration of the Service's gender pay gap indicates that on a positive note the gap is decreasing for the third year in a row, however the Service recognises that certain issues need to be addressed regarding recruitment and retention.</p> <p>The Service has a People Strategy which makes diversity & inclusion issues integral to its business plan and is committed to taking all appropriate actions to address gender pay gap issues.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	None
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	N/A
APPENDICES	A. Gender Pay Gap Report 2021
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	<p>Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Public Service Equality Duty 2011</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017</p>

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The gender pay gap shows the difference between the average (mean or median) earnings of men and women. This is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. Used to its full potential, gender pay gap reporting is a valuable tool for assessing levels of equality in the workplace, female and male participation, and how effectively talent is being maximised.
- 1.2. Causes of the gender pay gap are varied and overlapping. Some causes originate outside of the workplace, such as stereotypical representations of men and women, standards in careers advice and guidance for girls. Factors involving the workplace include:
 - fewer women working in certain more highly-paid professions or areas of an organisation, such as those involving science, technology, engineering and maths [STEM];
 - unsupportive and rigid corporate cultures;
 - lack of well-paid part-time/flexible work;
 - women remaining less likely to progress to senior levels in an organisation; and
 - constrained individual choice, unconscious bias or discrimination.
- 1.3. From a Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) context, historically the public perception is that the role of a Fire-fighter is mainly more suited to men. Although this is incorrect, the result is that the FRS is largely a male-dominated sector and therefore traditionally it has been a struggle for FRSs to recruit women and people from minority groups. Although the Service is doing a lot of work educating the public to change this perception, progress, regrettably is slow.
- 1.4. It should be noted that female staff were disproportionately affected regarding being excluded from the calculations as only 57% were included in the calculations compared to 78% of the male staff.
- 1.5. The key issues identified affecting the current Gender Pay Gap reflect the previous areas identified in the 2020 Annual Diversity report:
 - Female staff are under-represented in senior roles (Area Manager and Grade 10 or above) and representation has decreased in the Wholetime senior roles;
 - Female staff are under-represented in all uniformed roles other than in Control;
 - The female representation in the On Call workforce decreased from 71 to 68;
 - The majority of Green Book posts in the lowest two grades are held by female staff and the majority of the career progression posts, which start in the lower grades, are held by men;
 - Both 'all staff' and 'wholetime' gender pay gaps are above the national averages for all employees and fulltime employees; and
 - Occupational segregation remains a feature of the Fire and Rescue sector.

Noteworthy:

- Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (the Service) Pay Gap is slightly less than half of the national pay gap; and
- Although the coronavirus (COVID-19) has had a substantial impact on labour market hours worked and pay, it appears to have had little impact on the Service's gender pay gap due to pay protection of our staff and avoidance of furlough.

- 1.6. The Service is taking short, medium and long-term approaches to achieving a more diverse workforce to improve the way it delivers services to the community of Devon & Somerset. Whilst the Service continues to improve in this area, particularly in relation to starting implementation of a more flexible duty system for On Call staff, more flexible working arrangements and a sponsorship programme, this is not (yet) reflected in the gender pay gap figures.
- 1.7. To seek to address gender pay gap issues, the Service, amongst other things:
- gives careful consideration to the make-up of moderating and interview panels for every recruitment and promotion process;
 - Continuous to review recruitment and promotion processes, including adverse impact considerations;
 - Has increased arrangements for support networks including dedicated chairs, payment and administrative support;
 - Continuous implementation of a more flexible On Call duty system which will allow for more people to consider the role;
 - continuous to challenge the national fitness testing requirements and research the impact on different groups of staff;
 - has introduced psychological safety as a concept to increase employee engagement and retention through the 'Safe To' initiative; and
 - has completed a successful sponsorship programme for aspiring middle management women with 3 of 7 participants gaining promotion during the programme. A second cohort is planned for September 2022.
- 1.8. The above actions will also help to address the Ethnicity Pay Gap.
- 1.9. The Service is aware that more can be done and recognises that patterns of under-representation and differences in outcomes can be challenged through positive action programmes. Notwithstanding national drivers, the diversity of skills, knowledge, perspectives and experiences within the workforce will ensure the Service is better placed to identify and meet community needs.
- 1.10. Through positive action, the Service is raising the profile of females joining the fire and rescue service. Explicit Positive Action activity has been utilised in the recruitment of On Call and non-operational staff, using targeted social media, advertising on specific recruitment agencies and via the website. A healthy percentage (around 15%) of women expressing interest in becoming a Firefighter indicates that this approach is proving successful. Positive Action activities will continue and expand to include Ethnic Minority Background groups.

1.11. Further actions to address gender pay gap issues and increase diversity within the workforce will be developed through the new People Strategy which will run from 2022. This strategy will be developed with input from the Service's People Strategy Monitoring & Inclusion Steering Group, staff, trade unions and other stakeholders.

1.12. The next gender pay gap data point is set for 31 March 2022.

JOE HASSELL
Deputy Chief Fire Officer