

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's Gender Pay Gap 2021

Employers of more than 250 employees are required to calculate and publish information about the gender pay gap in their organisation (Equality Act 2010). The gender pay gap shows the difference between the average earnings of men and women. As a concept it is different from “equal pay” which deals with any pay differences between men and women who carry out the same or similar jobs or jobs of equal value.

Calculating, analysing, and reporting on the gender pay gap can provide a valuable measure of equality in the workplace. It varies by occupation, age group and working patterns. It highlights any difference in men's and women's participation in work of different types and levels and how effectively talent is being maximised.

The gender pay gap regulations require us to calculate several gender pay gap measures with reference to all employees. We have identified areas where, additionally, it is helpful to Ho explain or further explore this pay gap and so reference has also been made to the pay between separate groups of employees.

We believe that every employee has the right to be treated fairly and inclusively and with kindness, equality, dignity, and respect. We are committed to providing a supportive and inclusive working environment to promote this. We want to remove barriers to equal opportunity in recruiting and retaining staff, and in progression and development and we recognise the value of all our colleagues.

Being Inclusive continues to be one of our Service priorities and we constantly strive to create an environment and a culture where all our people feel safe, valued, heard, and can thrive. To attract and retain great people who can make an impact, we also work hard to attract and retain a workforce that is reflective of our communities. This helps us establish strong relationships and enables us to engage positively with all our community groups and ensure that we help to keep the people that live, work and travel in Essex safe.

We recognise the benefits that diversity of thought within our workforce brings to our Service, and in the partnership and collaborative work that we undertake. We know that by bringing together a range of experience and perspectives, we will be more creative, innovative and make more inclusive decisions. We are committed to continuous improvement and ensuring that our policies and practices support our equality, diversity and inclusion principles and objectives.

This year's report continues to reflect our continued efforts to eliminate bias and ensure fairness. We know from previous years that our On Call data skews our Gender Pay Gap given the irregular working hours that our On Call Firefighters work and the different pay elements that the roles attract, not all of which are not related to working hours, for example the retainer payment.

In 2017 & 2018, we calculated our Gender Pay Gap internally, gathering data from our HR and payroll systems, timesheets, and range of pay data, using Microsoft Excel to calculate the gap. In 2019, 2020 and 2021 Gender Pay Gap exercises, we have worked with Xpert HR to achieve enhanced data and reports that have helped us to improve our understanding and inform our approach

On-call firefighters, i.e., those who respond from home or primary employment or from the local vicinity of the Fire Station, are paid a 'Retainer' fee, which is 10% of the equivalent Wholetime Firefighters salary and is pro-rated for those Firefighters providing reduced availability. This retainer is paid for availability to attend emergency incidents occurring within agreed periods of the week. The Service does not include the Retainer as part of the calculation of On-call hourly pay. All other payments that On-call employees receive have been considered in the calculation of hourly pay.

Our gender pay gap relates mostly due to Occupational Segregation which is defined as the distribution of workers across and within occupations and is based upon demographic characteristics, most often gender, age, and ethnic background. Other influences include different terms and conditions of service for our On-Call Firefighters, Wholetime Firefighters and Support colleagues as well as the impact that length of service has, given the loyalty that many of our colleagues give to our Service.

Our 2021 calculations are based on a total of 1313 full pay relevant employees. The breakdown of our employees is detailed in the following tables:

Number of men	Number of women	Total
1061	252	1313

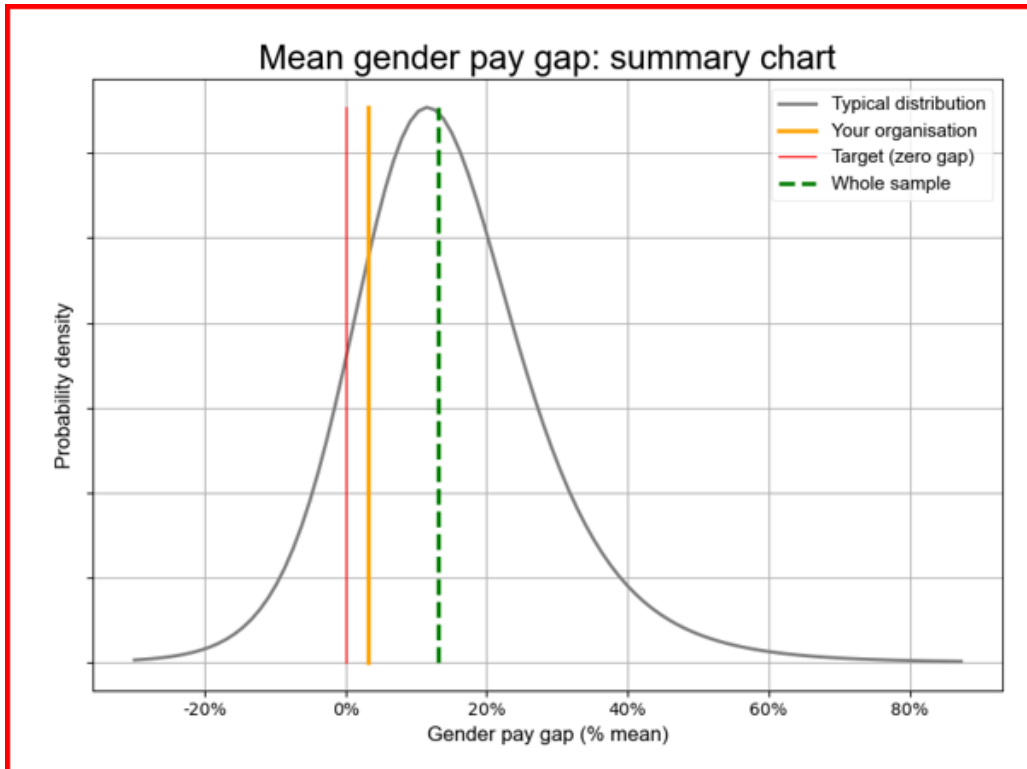
Workforce Category	% of men	% of women
Wholetime Firefighters	93.9%	6.1%
On Call Firefighters	99.0%	1.0%
Control	14.7%	85.3%
Support	47.1%	52.9%
Total Workforce	83.5%	16.5%

This profile clearly demonstrates that we employ a higher proportion of men overall. With more men in the workforce at all levels, combined with the underrepresentation of women in our operational roles, it is inevitable that we have a gender pay gap.

We will continue to take positive action in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate barriers for the attraction and progression of women to achieve greater gender balance in our Service. Based on a snapshot of data available on 31st March 2021 in relation to earnings of all employees, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's (ECFRS) calculations for the purposes of gender pay gap reporting are as follows. The mean gender pay gap for ECFRS is **3.1% (2.4% in 2020)**.

The monetary amounts behind this figure are:

- A mean male hourly rate of £18.72 (£17.33 in 2020)
- A mean female hourly rate of £18.14 (£16.92 in 2020)
- Or an absolute difference of £0.58 (£0.41 per hour in 2020)



The median gender pay gap for ECFRS is **8.4% (7.7% in 2020)**

The monetary amounts behind this figure are:

- A median male hourly rate of £17.33 (£16.16 in 2020)
- A median female hourly rate of £15.87 (£14.91 in 2020)
- Or an absolute difference of £1.46 per hour (£1.25 per hour in 2020)

The Mean Gender Pay Gap remains below the national average but has increased from 2.4% last year. The Median gap is higher than the mean gap and has increased from 7.7% last year. Adjustments to hourly rates over the past year include the agreed annual pay increase in line with the relevant terms of conditions for all roles.

The differences in green book and grey book conditions of service also have an impact as typically grey book terms and conditions have access to a wider range of allowances.

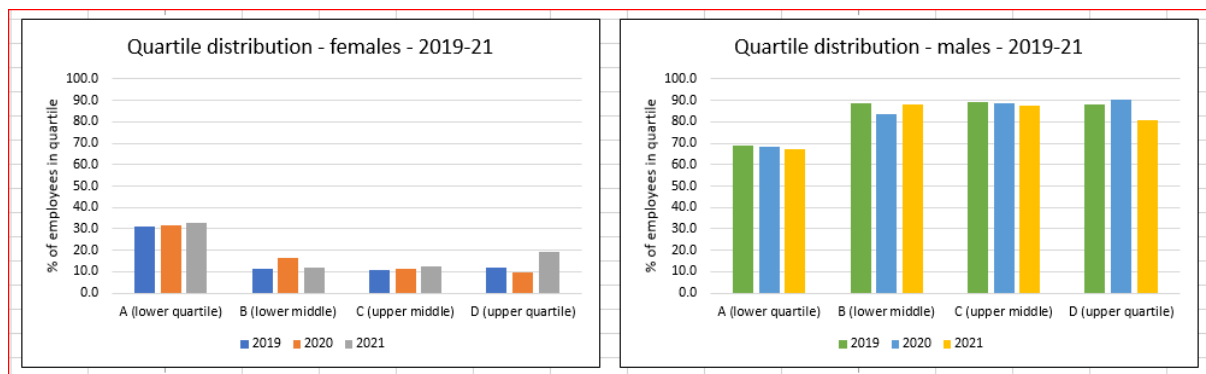
Our pay policy is based on a nationally negotiated pay scheme which applies to local government employees. For grey Book terms and conditions, there are 6 progressive role levels. Within the scales for support employees, there are between 4 and 5 different spinal column points or increments.

The Service follows directives from the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, which determines when Services have the budgetary remit to increase employees' salary.

It is important to note, that as employees in different types of roles are employed on different terms and conditions it is difficult to make like for like comparisons.

Pay Quartiles

Band	Description	Males	Females
D	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them in the upper quartile	80.5% (265)	19.5% (64)
C	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them in the upper middle quartile	87.5% (287)	12.5% (41)
B	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them in the lower middle quartile	88.1% (289)	11.9% (39)
A	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them in the lower quartile	67.1% (220)	32.9% (108)
All Bands	All employees	80.8% (1061)	19.2% (252)



The graphs show that the lower quartile, which is made up of lower pay rates, is heavily populated by women but that representation level changes significantly in the middle and upper quartiles where the pay rates are higher. We have however seen an increase in the representation of women in the middle and upper quartiles over the past 12 months which has contributed to the longer term reduction in our pay gap.

Closing the gender pay gap

We are committed to positive action to achieve a more diverse workforce and improve the gender balance in our Service so that we can reduce our gender pay gap.

We continue to focus on the achievement of our Public Sector Equality Duty objectives. We are also committed to continuing to deliver the action plan linked to our People Strategy. We will continue to take the following specific actions to improve our gender pay gap:

Attracting and retaining a more diverse workforce

- We will continue with a programme of positive action work which will be underpinned by a bold communications campaign that highlights the Service's commitment to achieving a workforce that is more reflective of our communities
- continue to engage with and support community groups, local sports teams, schools, and colleges to highlight careers within the service
- use social media to demonstrate that we are an Inclusive employer that values diversity
- continue to ensure that our policies are family friendly and that the Service makes continual improvement to be an inclusive employer

- continue to offer a range of apprenticeships to bring new talent into our Service
- introduce internships, this work was delayed due to Covid-19 but remains within our People strategy action plan
- promote our vacancies to the widest possible audience in accordance with our positive action approach.

Tackling the barriers to progression

- We will continue to work with our employee networks and forums to gain feedback and understand how we can bring about positive change based on feedback from colleagues
- continue to develop and expand our Women’s Forum so that it can continue to empower our colleagues and support professional and personal development via a range of learning and development opportunities, coaching and mentoring
- continue to work in collaboration with Essex Police and East of England Ambulance Service to host an annual event for International Women’s Day
- introduce an Inclusion & Diversity development plan that will include suggestions made by our networks and forums
- develop a diverse range of interview assessors to minimise the risk of bias and blind spots
- have representation from our Women’s Forum in our Inclusion & Diversity Action Group with other Networks and Forums to inform the strategic direction of our People Strategy and supporting Inclusion and Diversity activity to consider intersectionality and support women in a range of ways
- continue to explore collaborative opportunities with partners in our County and Region that will enable us to achieve our aim for gender balance, equality of opportunity and to improve our gender pay gap.

Supporting Fair, Kind and Inclusive culture

- We will embed our Service values, Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics in our policies and processes
- increase emphasis on reward and recognition via our internal awards programme to recognise exceptional performance from all parts of the Service
- continue to deliver Dignity in our Workplace training to promote a fair, kind and inclusive culture
- undertake People Impact Assessments on our policies, selection processes and progression and development opportunities
- provide dedicated Inclusion and Diversity awareness for new colleagues in their induction and for all colleagues via regular communication utilising all of our internal channels
- introduce the concept of Allies to all colleagues and provide a range of learning resources to educate and inform.

2020 Comparison data

Source: <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/compare-employers>

