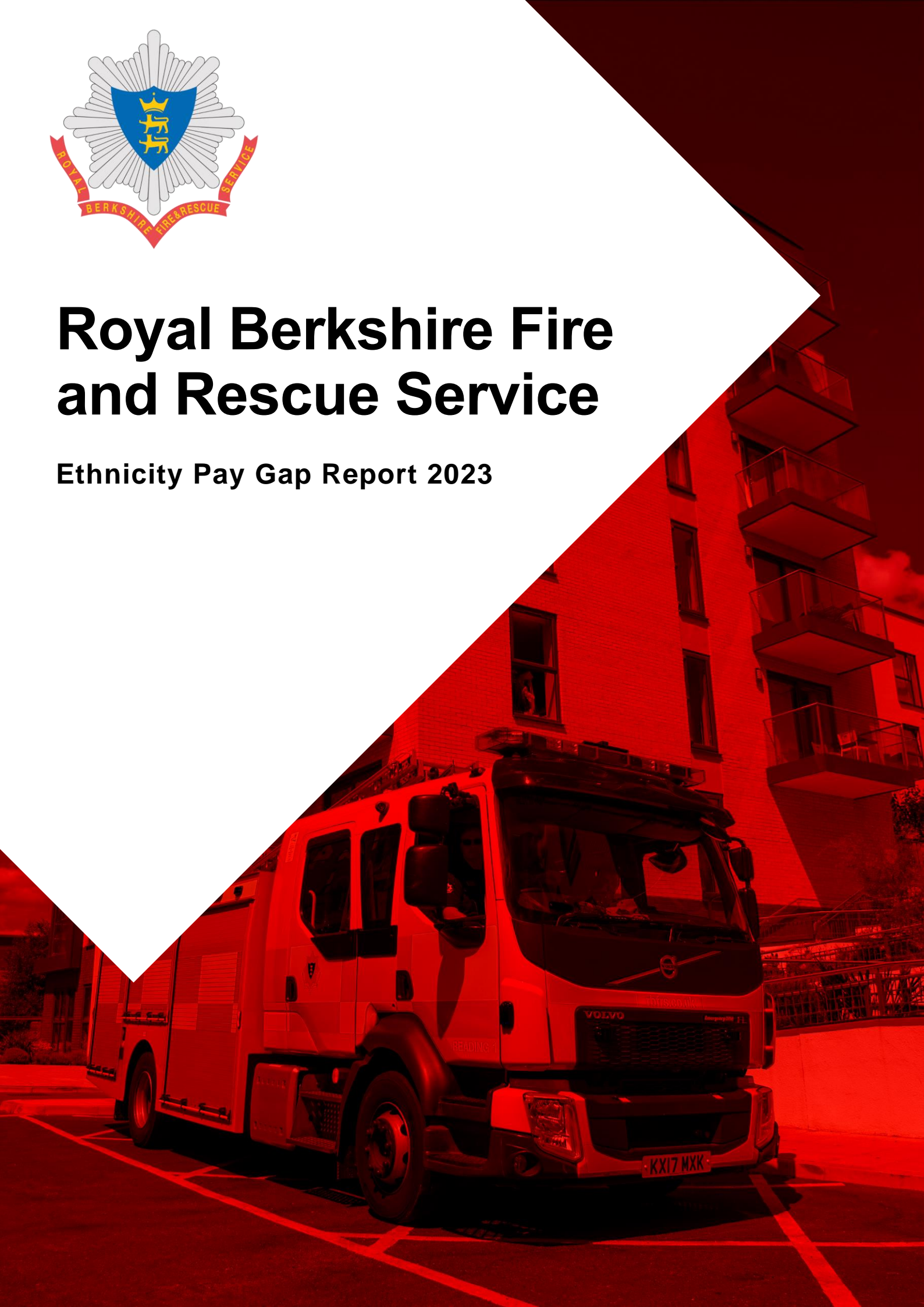




Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2023





Executive Summary

The ethnicity pay gap report for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) provides information on the pay gap that exists between white and ethnic minority staff within the Service. Currently there is no legislative requirement for organisations to publish their ethnicity pay gap but RBFRS has opted to publish this information voluntarily. The continued publication of this report is an important tool to help us achieve our ambition to fully embed a transparent, diverse and inclusive culture.

RBFRS follows the CIPD and Race Disparity Audit's recommendations in this report, referring to ethnic minority groups rather than BME/BAME (black and minority ethnic/black, Asian and minority ethnic) which highlights some groups and omits others.

The ethnicity pay gap is calculated using the mean and median average rates of hourly pay for white and ethnic minority staff, and this is also split into four quartile pay bands. A negative pay gap shows that ethnic minority staff are paid more than white staff.

Our mean pay gap is -11.12% and our median pay gap is -5.61%. This shows on average for each £1 earned by white staff, ethnic minority staff earn £1.11 according to the mean ethnicity pay gap and £1.05 for the median. The median gap is a more accurate measure of an ethnicity pay gap as it discounts very high or very low rates of pay that can skew the overall average.

The mean and median pay gap is also calculated for each of the quartile pay bands (lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper). Due to the various elements making up pay within the Fire Service, including allowances and payments for additional responsibilities, pay gaps across the quartiles can appear different from the overall pay gap. Each quartile is also impacted year on year by movement within the quartiles in terms of recruitment of new staff, pay increases and promotions.

While RBFRS is confident that it is paying the same salary to roles of equivalent value to all staff, care should be taken when considering the latest ethnicity pay figures. The ethnicity pay gap figures at RBFRS demonstrate we do not operate a pay system that disadvantages ethnic minority staff, but it is important to recognise that ethnic minority staff are still significantly underrepresented in the workforce. The ethnicity pay gap calculations consider pay only and not the overall demographics of the workforce.

RBFRS is taking action to address this including the development of an Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan, positive action activities and developing community engagement activities through our Local Safety Plans.



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Background

Currently organisations with more than 250 employees are required to publish their gender pay gap by law, but there is no requirement to publish their ethnicity pay gap. RBFRS has opted to publish these figures voluntarily. The method for calculating the ethnicity pay gap mirrors that of gender pay gap reporting and show how large the pay gap is between their white staff and staff from ethnic minority groups.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) report on the following:

Mean ethnicity pay gap	The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of white employees and that of ethnic minority employees as a percentage.
Median ethnicity pay gap	The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of white employees and that of ethnic minority employees as a percentage.
Mean bonus gap	The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to white employees and that paid to ethnic minority employees as a percentage.
Median bonus gap	The difference between the median bonus pay paid to white employees and that paid to ethnic minority employees as a percentage.
Bonus proportions	The proportions of white and ethnic minority relevant employees who were paid a bonus during the relevant period
Quartile pay bands	The proportions of white and ethnic minority employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands.

This is the third year that RBFRS has reported the ethnicity pay gap, and due to the reporting of ethnicity pay gap figures being voluntary rather than a legal requirement, there are no national average figures reported to benchmark RBFRS ethnicity pay gap.

The latest research available from the CIPD suggests that when analysing available national data for 2021, the average mean ethnicity pay gap was 8.1% and the average median ethnicity pay gap was 12.9%.

RBFRS' Pay and Bonus Ethnicity Pay Gap

This ethnicity pay gap report is based on data as at 31 March 2023. RBFRS employed 644 staff with 619 (96%) declaring their ethnicity as white and 25 (4%) declaring they are from an ethnic minority.



Due to the reporting requirements and provisions, RBFRS can only report the ethnicity pay gap for staff who declare their ethnicity.

RBFRS follows the CIPD and Race Disparity Audit’s recommendations in this report, referring to ethnic minority groups rather than BME/BAME (black and minority ethnic/black, Asian and minority ethnic) which highlights some groups and omits others.

The overall ethnicity pay gap for RBFRS is as follows:

	Mean		Median	
Year	2022	2023	2022	2023
Pay Gap	3.61%	-11.12%	9.91%	-5.61%
Bonus*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* RBFRS does not offer a bonus scheme therefore this measure has not been calculated. Additional Responsibility Allowances (ARAs) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) payments are included in ordinary pay. For clarity, ordinary pay is defined as basic pay, shift premium pay, pay for piecework, pay for leave and allowances.

A **negative** pay gap shows that white staff earn 11.12% less than staff declaring they are from an ethnic minority based on a **mean** hourly rate of pay and 5.61% less than staff declaring they are from an ethnic minority based on **median** hourly rates of pay. These figures do indicate a strong position in terms of pay, but it is important to consider them in the context of the demographics of the workforce where staff from ethnic minority groups are still underrepresented.

What do the mean and median ethnicity pay gap figures tell us?

The mean gives an overall indication of the size of the ethnicity pay gap in RBFRS. A high mean ethnicity pay gap would indicate a payment system that disadvantages ethnic minority groups – specifically when comparing the mean hourly rates when calculated using the nationally agreed methods for the workforce as a whole, staff identifying their ethnicity as white (white British, white Irish or white other) earn less on average than staff from ethnic minority groups.

The median is typically a more representative figure as the mean can be skewed by a handful of highly paid employees this can be seen more clearly when you compare quartile on quartile).

The quartile distribution detailed below. This is based on the actual hourly ordinary pay for all staff and gives an indication of how white and ethnic minority staff are distributed across the organisation, in addition to the mean and median pay gap in each of the quartiles.

Quartile Pay Bands

The proportion of white/ethnic minority staff in each quartile pay band is as follows:



Quartile		Year	Mean Pay Gap	Median Pay Gap
Lower		2023	-6.86%	-11.43%
		2022	-5.57%	-2.25%
Lower Middle		2023	-0.82%	-1.66%
		2022	1.27%	0.55%
Upper Middle		2023	2.91%	2.30%
		2022	1.72%	-0.66%
Upper		2023	2.10%	-2.25%
		2022	4.87%	2.57%



Commentary

The mean and median pay gap was calculated for each of the quartiles to give an indication of the range and distribution of white and ethnic minority pay. When broken down into the four quartiles, the ethnicity pay gap differs significantly from the overall ethnicity pay gap. This can in part be attributed to the scope for variation in hourly pay in each of the quartiles. In addition each quartile, contains a number of longer serving staff members, which sit in the upper, higher paid, part of each of the quartiles. Longer serving staff are more likely to have achieved competent status (for staff conditioned to the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (Grey Book)) or reached the top of their pay spine (staff conditioned to the NJC for Local Government Services (Green Book)). 62.5% of staff from ethnic minority groups have over five years' service. It should be noted that each quartile is also impacted year on year by movement within the quartiles in terms of recruitment of new staff, pay increases and promotions.

In the Lower quartile, five staff are from ethnic minority groups, in the Lower Middle three staff are from ethnic minority groups, in the Upper Middle quartile there are five staff from ethnic minority groups and in the Upper quartile there are eleven staff from ethnic minority groups. In each of these quartiles, staff from ethnic minority groups occupy a range of grades and roles, which will impact the overall mean and median pay gap of each of the quartiles.

In 2023 RBFRS recruited a significant amount of apprentice Firefighters, all of which were white. This has resulted in a movement within the quartiles with more staff from ethnic minority groups moving into the Upper quartile in comparison to last year. There is also a greater negative gap in both the mean and median in the Lower quartile due to the bottom of the quartile being predominately made up of On-Call (Retained) employees all of which are white. The middle of the Lower quartile is also made up predominantly of apprentice Firefighters, again all of which are white.

The Lower Middle quartile has a negative pay gap for both the mean and median in comparison to last year. Two of the three staff who are from an ethnic minority group are in the top of the Lower Middle quartile. The Upper Middle quartile has a greater positive pay gap in comparison to last year as the five staff from ethnic minority groups are in the bottom half of the quartile. Staff from ethnic minority groups are distributed evenly throughout the Upper quartile and this quartile has also been impacted by movement in the lower quartiles.

The proportion of staff from ethnic minority groups has remained the same when compared to last year. While the overall proportion and number of staff from ethnic minority groups across each of the quartiles is broadly consistent despite some movements this year (which could indicate there may be no mobility or progression concerns relating to ethnic minority groups), it is recognised that ethnic minority groups are still underrepresented in the workforce. The progression pathways will also differ for Grey and Green Book staff (whereas Grey Book staff have specific routes for promotion, Green Book departments are often relatively flat in their structure and offer less scope promotion). 67% of employees from an ethnic minority are Green Book staff. It is therefore important that the ethnicity pay gap figures are considered in the context of this demographic.



As a Service, we are confident that staff have equal access to promotion and development opportunities, but it is also acknowledged that culturally, barriers or biases may exist which are not evident from these figures, and that staff in ethnic minority groups may experience challenges regarding their career progression. RBFRS is taking action to identify any such trends and address this.

The Service is currently expanding our equality monitoring processes to take into account progression, development and promotion. This will allow career progression and development to be monitored across the Service, with any causes for concern targeted and addressed as appropriate.

Notwithstanding the known issues with underrepresentation amongst ethnic minority groups, RBFRS pays staff in accordance to nationally agreed terms and conditions and is satisfied that it is paying the same salary to roles of equivalent value across all staff groups. An equal pay audit was carried out in September 2022, the results of which did not indicate any underlying causes for concern. The next equal pay audit will take place in quarter one of 2024.

The Service continues to work hard to attract a more diverse workforce and has already taken actions to address the overall diversity within the RBFRS workforce. These include but are not limited to:

- Positive action activities and recruitment opportunities, including attendance at careers events and the hosting of 'Have a Go Days' at our stations
- An internship programme aimed at 16 and 17 year old residents of Berkshire from ethnic minority groups that are currently under-represented within the Service ran over the summer of 2023. This paid internship gave students an opportunity to develop workplace skills and discover opportunities available within RBFRS. The pilot scheme is scheduled to continue in Summer of 2024 following an evaluation with the eligibility criteria to be reviewed, potentially changing to allow those 18 years or over to apply.
- Identifying and developing community engagement activities through our Local Safety Plans including community inclusion advocates in each Hub.

In addition, since our last Ethnicity Pay Gap Report there have been a number of cultural reviews undertaken nationally within in the Fire and Rescue Sector resulting in the publication of the Independent Cultural Review of London Fire Brigade and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) values and culture in the Fire and Rescue Services. RBFRS have a conducted gap analysis against the recommendations of both reports to determine key action points moving forward.

Specific actions to address the ethnicity pay gap are contained in the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan which is appended to this report. A version of the plan will be published on the RBFRS website.

Wayne Bowcock
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
November 2023

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