



# Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Equal Pay Audit 2022





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# Equal Pay Audit 2022

## Context

An equal pay audit was carried out by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) as recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)'s Equal Pay: Statutory Code of Practice.

The equal pay audit goes further than the statutory Gender Pay Gap or Ethnicity Pay Gap reports by providing more extensive information on how individuals are paid at RBFRS and how the individual pay elements are distributed across the various protected groups.

This report assesses the effectiveness of policies and practices with regard to fair pay regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, disability and contract type (i.e. part-time/full-time).

RBFRS' overall approach to determining the pay of its employees is to participate in national collective bargaining for firefighters and fire control staff (Grey Book) through the NJC for Local Government Services and Directors through NJC for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services.

The NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue services currently provides a nationally agreed competence based pay structure, which is set nationally. The National Joint Council for Local Government Services sets the framework for the pay and conditions of service for the Fire Authority's Green Book staff. RBFRS have ten grades and posts are allocated to a grade through a process of job evaluation. Staff are appointed to a spinal column point in the appropriate pay grade depending on experience and specific technical skills.

## Method

A range of different pay elements were considered over a range of selected reference periods were used which allowed a comprehensive range of data (as detailed below) to be compiled.

- » The 'snap shot' date for basic pay and allowances is the March pay period ending 31 March 2022.
- » The reference period for overtime payments was 12 months from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.
- » The reference period for Spinal Column starting points and merit payments was 24 months from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2022.

Tables detailing the staff in post at the time of the audit and demographic distribution can be found in Tables 1 and 2 at the end of this report.

Payroll information was provided by Dataplan.

# Comparators

In order to assess whether workers with protected characteristics are treated equally meaningful comparators needed to be defined. These comparators are as follows:

- » Gender - comparator male v female\*
- » Contract type - comparator full-time v part-time (part-time includes Green Book working less than 37 hrs per week and On-Call (RDS))
- » Disability - comparator no declared disability v declared disability
- » Ethnicity - comparator white British v ethnic minority\*\*
- » Age groups compared are 25 and under; 26 to 35; 36 to 45; 46 to 55; 56 to 65; 66 and over.

\* Due to the recommendations outlined in the Equal Pay Statutory Code of Practice RBFRS uses the gender comparators of staff who identify as either male or female. RBFRS have, and continue to use, internal reporting mechanisms which take into account all gender identities and expressions which are not limited to the binary of male and female.

\*\* RBFRS can only report on ethnicity where staff declare their ethnicity. RBFRS follows the CIPD and Race Disparity Audit's recommendations in this audit, referring to 'ethnic minorities' rather than BME/BAME (black and minority ethnic/black, Asian and minority ethnic) which highlights some groups and omits others.

# Elements of Pay

The audit considered a number of pay elements individually, to provide a clear and comprehensive picture of how people are rewarded within RBFRS and whether all groups were treated fairly in these respects. The elements considered were:

- » Basic Pay
- » Allowances
- » Overtime
- » Merit payments
- » Spinal Column starting points.

# Calculations

As Grey Book and Green Book employees work different hours per week and to take into account those working part-time, all salaries have been calculated as an hourly rate based on the monthly pay data for 31 March 2022.

## Results

### Basic Pay

Basic pay is set nationally and therefore pay differences reflect this. In this area of pay, the concept of 'equal pay for equal value' is achieved within each contract type by an established method of job evaluation in both Grey Book and Green Book areas.

In the main, when considering the organisation as a whole, the audit has shown only a small differential between male and female workers with females earning £15.79 per hour and males earning £15.52 per hour. This figure is derived by finding a mean average hourly rate for all male workers and a mean average hourly rate for all female workers. The male average is lower because Trainee Firefighters and Firefighters on development pay are paid at a lower rate and identify as male.

Part-time workers earn on average 19.4% more per hour than full-time employees. This is reflective of the fact that a number of more senior roles (i.e. those Grade 5 and above) filled by staff on part-time contracts.

Employees who declared they were from ethnic minority groups were measured as a whole and compared with their white British colleagues. Staff who have not shared information regarding their ethnicity were not included for the purpose of the equal pay calculations. Basic pay of individuals from ethnic minority groups was 5.3% higher than white British employees.

The age of the employee does have some effect on basic pay. Average hourly rates per age group are shown in the table below:

Age	Hourly Rate
25 and Under	£10.37
26 - 35	£13.34
36 - 45	£16.52
46 - 55	£17.94
56 - 65	£15.08



This distribution demonstrates that experience (internal or external) is rewarded. The 25 and under age group includes apprentices who received a rate which takes into account the requirement to undertake training and development whilst in post. The mean hourly rate for those on the 56-65 age group is lower as this group contains a wide variety of roles and staff groups from across the service which skews the mean average – i.e. there are a number of both higher and lower paid roles in this group.

Employees who have not shared information regarding a disability or long-term health condition have an average hourly rate that is 0.95% more than employees who have shared information regarding a disability. In this case, it is important to remember that only 36 employees have declared a disability (as this is an entirely personal choice) and it is recognised that there may be other individuals who have a disability but do not declare it. This may be due to a number of factors but it should be noted that as a Service we offer support to all our employees regardless of protected characteristics so those needing assistance may not feel it is necessary to declare any disability they may have, while exploring any underlying reasons why staff may not be willing to declare a disability.

## Allowances

### Additional Responsibility Allowances (ARAs)

The ARA category of payment is an additional payment made for skills or responsibilities that can be applied and maintained outside of the requirements of a person's role map but are within the job function of the organisation. These additional responsibilities support delivery of work of particular value to the Service. For the purposes of this audit, training allowances, job allowances (such as those paid to Watch Based Station Managers and Area Managers) and all other ARAs are reported as one total amount. Continual Professional Development (CPD), flexi-duty and detachment allowances are reported separately. Allowances are shown as an average amount per category.

ARAs are mainly paid to Grey Book staff and relate to the national conditions with amounts determined locally.

The analysis shows that the average ARA payment made to male employees was 112% higher than those made to female employees. The average ARA payments made to employees who have not declared a disability are 22% higher than those that have a declared disability. White British employees from receive 96% higher ARA payments than staff from an ethnic minority group. This can be attributed to the underrepresentation in this groups across the operational workforce, and the work location of the individuals to which the ARAs are paid (for example Boat Crew payments made to staff based at Caversham Road).

Age makes very little difference to the amount of allowances received except for in the 25 and under group. All Wholetime and On-Call (RDS) Firefighters in this age group are trainees or in development, which means they are not eligible to receive ARA payments.

While ARA and other payments are available to all eligible staff based on the role they undertake, it is recognised that the differences identified above are reflective of the imbalance of protected characteristic groups within operational roles (particularly in terms of gender and ethnicity). RBFRS has a comprehensive Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan and works closely with the EDI Forum and EDI Steering Group to consider actions which will have a long-term positive effect on minority representation.

## **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

This allowance is paid to Grey Book and Control employees only. It can be claimed only when a Firefighter is competent and has five years' service. Other roles are required to have one years' service at competent level. Females and other minority groups are underrepresented in this area and males receive on average 113% more in CPD payments than females in this category.

Full-time employees receive 117% more CPD than part-time employees. This can be explained by the fact that 67% of On-Call (RDS) Firefighters are on training and development rates.

White British employees earn on average 62.8% more CPD than employees from ethnic minority groups.

In contrast employees who have declared a disability receive 30.8% CPD more than employees who have not declared a disability.

CPD is not paid to anyone in the lowest age group and those in the 26 to 35 age group receive, on average, the lowest proportion of CPD payments (only 9% of staff in this age group receive CPD payments). This can be explained by the requirement to have the requisite amount of service before claiming CPD payments.

## **Flexi Duty Payments**

This payment is made to all Flexible Duty Officers based on the role undertaken regardless of any protected characteristic. However it is recognised that this group of staff are predominately white males and measures to address underrepresentation of the operational workforce are incorporated into the EDI Action Plan.

## **Detachment Payments**

These payments are made to Grey Book staff who are required to work at a station away from their 'home' station. Males receive 112% more than females, with full-time employees receiving 100% of the payment due to the fact we do not have any part-time employees working in the Wholetime duty system (On-Call (RDS) receive an hourly rate regardless of the reporting station). Detachment payments may also be made where staff are required to work away from their 'home' station where a specific skill is required - for example drivers or those with an incident command

qualification. A further review will be undertaken to establish why males are sent out on detachment more than females (and therefore receive proportionately more detachment payments).

The age group receiving most of this allowance is 26 to 35 years. This may be explained by the fact that this groups makes up a large proportion of the operational workforce. A significant number of those in the higher age groups hold higher ranks (Station Manager (B) to Chief Fire Officer) and are not therefore detached.

## Grey Book Overtime

In this case, the audit was focused on pre-arranged overtime, which is needed to provide specific skills to enable operational efficiency and meet the qualifications for the role being offered as overtime. Eligible employees are Wholetime Firefighters and Control. On-Call (RDS) employees are not included in the calculations if they cover additional shifts, this would be shown as working hours rather than an overtime payment.

The analysis shows that overtime is relatively equally shared across all types of workers, and differences are not significant enough to suggest any underlying equal pay issues amongst operational staff. To summarise:

1. Female staff receive 9% of Grey Book overtime and make up 12% of the Grey Book workforce.
2. Part-time workers receive 2.5% of Grey Book overtime and make up 0.7% of the Grey Book workforce (this figure represents the part-time workers in Thames Valley Fire Control Service).
3. Employees declaring a disability receive 6.7% of this overtime and make up 1.5% of the workforce.
4. The highest average overtime is undertaken by the 36-45 age group, which is reflective of the fact this age group makes up the highest proportion of the operational workforce.

## Green Book Overtime

A total of 38 people (25% of Green Book staff) worked overtime in the reference period. Workers in Transport/Fleet (all of whom are male) undertake contractual overtime and therefore the statistics are presented both including and excluding this work group as this distorts the ad hoc overtime data.

269 occasions of overtime are worked by females (32.7%), however 57.8% of Green Book workers are female. If Transport/Fleet workers are excluded, 78% of overtime is worked by females. The Human Resources/Resourcing and Development department, the workforce of which is mainly female, undertake the majority of this overtime to cover out of hour's careers events and weekend recruitment activity.



96.9% of Green Book overtime is worked by white British employees who make up 83% of the Green Book workforce. 3.1% of Green Book overtime is worked by staff from ethnic minority groups who make up 17% of Green Book workers. If Transport/Fleet is excluded 92.7% is worked by white British employees.

Employees who have declared a disability, who make up 5.8% of Green Book workers, undertake 1.6% of Green Book overtime or 3.8% if Transport/Fleet is excluded.

11% of Green Book staff are part-time and work 1% of Green Book overtime or 2.3% if Transport/Fleet is excluded. It is difficult to ascertain why this might be but it may be that part-time employees have requested to work less hours and may not offer extra hours which would not attract an enhanced rate.

These differences are not at a significant level to suggest any equal pay issues.

## Merit Payments

Merit payments are made to reward individuals who have taken on additional duties or performed exceptionally well. The calculations include honorarium payments for ongoing duties that are made on a monthly basis. In this 24 month period 123 merit payments were made. It is open to both Green Book and Grey Book employees. All proposed payments are reviewed by HR to ensure consistency of approach and to ensure that there is no obvious bias.

In general, all types of workers are in receipt of merit payments. The audit showed that 40% of all payments were made to females and 60% were made to males. This broadly coincides with the overall statistics in that males make up 77% of the total workforce. 93% of these payments were paid to white British employees (who make up 92% of the workforce) with only 7% being paid to those from ethnic minority groups (who make up 8% of the workforce).

The percentage of merit payments made to part-time employees (8%) was significantly less than that paid to full-time employees, however this is reflective of the overall workforce - part-time employees including On-Call (RDS) make up 5% of the workforce.

Merit payments are evenly distributed over the age group categories and broadly coincide with the overall age distribution across the service.

10 employees who have declared a disability received a merit payment (8% of merit payment received) which again broadly coincides with the proportion of the workforce with a declared disability (5%).

Average amounts of merit payment were fairly even across the various categories. The average merit payment for female staff was £1,115.33 and the average payment for males was £733.14. Individuals from ethnic minority groups received an average payment of £303.33 while white British employees received an average payment of £948.54. Both of these average payment have been skewed by four senior staff receiving a temporary honorarium payment for undertaking

additional duties in the early part of 2021. This impacted both the average figures for female and white British staff which is reflected in the difference detailed above.

When analysing the distribution of one-off merit payments, these were broadly consistent with the makeup of the workforce. The amounts paid were also consistent across these groups. The biggest difference in the amount of payments being made was found in the ongoing merit payments. It should be noted here however that these were impacted by a small number of senior staff receiving temporary honorarium payments which skewed the figures overall. This therefore did not provide a cause for concern.

It should be noted that the reason for merit and honorarium payments can differ, as can relate to a specific piece of work or one off task which may lie outside the normal job parameters, sustained high performance within an employee's normal job or undertaking temporary additional responsibilities where an ARA is not applicable. These payment are discretionary, so while the reasons and amounts being paid on an ongoing basis, care should be taken when trying to directly compare amounts as payments can be for a variety of reasons.

## Spinal Column Starting Points

In Green Book areas, there is an option to recognise experience or specific technical skills by offering a starting salary within the evaluated grade but above the bottom of the band. In the reference period, only six individuals started at the top of the band, three of whom were previously agency workers or ex-members of staff with high levels of experience working within the organisation. The three remaining staff were appointed to areas within the organisation that required specialist skills or were in hard to recruit to roles.

It should be noted that any ex-members of staff are expected to apply for and compete with external candidates for any roles advertised and are subject to the same application and competitive selection process as any candidates new to the Service.

Many of those starting at the bottom of the band were Fire Safety Inspecting Officers. This is due to the fact a specific career grade scheme is in place to encourage individuals with limited experience to join the Service and provides them with a development pathway and relevant professional qualifications. As individuals progress through the development pathway, the pay received increases.

An analysis of starting points over 24 months can be seen in Table 3 at the end of this report.

Individuals who start at the top or middle of the band are spread fairly evenly across the categories of employees reviewed (Tables 3 and 4).

The variance among the age groups can be attributed to the fact that the older age groups are likely to start with more experience from other industries, whilst those under 25 are likely just starting their careers or undertaking their first job following college or university studies.

A central log held by HR details the justifications for Spinal Column starting points to ensure that there is no bias for appointing staff above the bottom of the grade. This is monitored by HR on an ongoing basis.

## Conclusions

This audit has shown that in the areas of basic pay, overtime and merit payments employees are treated fairly regardless of their personal characteristics. Basic hourly pay for females is slightly higher (1.47%) than males. Part-time workers on average have a higher basic hourly rate than full-time workers and employees from ethnic minority groups receive a higher basic hourly rate than white British workers.

In the area of allowances, all allowances support the delivery of work of particular value to the Service and are mainly paid to operational personnel. Payments are in line with the demographic make-up of the Service, however the under representation of protected characteristics groups in operational roles is acknowledged and more work is being undertaken in this area through the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

## Recommendations

The following actions are currently underway.

Action	Owner	Timescale	How Monitored	Status of Action
1. Commence consultation process to remove the inequality of the uniform payment to TVFCS staff	HR / GM (TVFCS)	Q4 2019/20	Proposal report to SLT followed by implementation plan as agreed	Complete – uniform payment removed from TVFCS staff in December 2020
2. Review CPD application process	HR	31 Dec 2019	Proposal to be submitted to Head of HR and L&D and Head of Service Delivery.	Complete – new policy published June 2020
3. Develop enhanced monitoring system for Spinal Column starting points and reasons thereof to ensure elimination of any potential unconscious bias.	HR	31 Oct 2019	Spreadsheet redesigned accessible on request and reviewed on a quarterly basis by HR Manager.	Complete – central record held in HR to monitor and analyse Spinal Column starting points. Monitored on an ongoing basis

4. Develop enhanced monitoring system to monitor merit payments and reasons thereof to ensure the elimination of unconscious bias.	HR	31 Oct 2019	Data is entered into spreadsheet and reviewed on a quarterly basis by HR Manager.	Complete – central record held in HR. Monitored on an ongoing basis by Senior HR Adviser – Service Provision
5. Monitor Spinal Column starting points and reasons on an ongoing basis to ensure the elimination of unconscious bias.	HR	1 Nov 2019	Data is entered into spreadsheet and reviewed on a quarterly basis by Senior HR Adviser.	Ongoing
6. Monitor merit payments and reasons on an ongoing basis to ensure the elimination of unconscious bias.	HR	1 Nov 2019	Data is entered into spreadsheet and reviewed on a quarterly basis by Senior HR Manager.	Ongoing
7. Initiatives to address underrepresentation of females and ethnic minority groups	HR	1 Nov 2019	Ongoing initiatives linked to EDI Action Plan, Gender Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports	Ongoing Monitored through EDI Action Plan via EDI Steering Group
8. Review of detachment payments to ascertain why males are paid proportionally more than females	HR	31 March 2023		Commenced December 2022

## Addendum

### Table 1: Staff in post by job type

Please note, this does not include staff currently on career breaks or maternity and not receiving payments. These figures are based on data from 31 March 2022.

Job Type	Total
All employees receiving payment	642

Wholetime only	341
Retained only	32
Control only	38
Green Book only	165
Dual Contract Control + Green Book	1
Dual Contract W/T + Green Book	5
Dual Contract W/T + RDS	28

## Appendix 2: Distribution

Please note, these figures include eight individuals who were on career breaks or maternity and therefore not receiving a full salary payment. These figures are based on data from 31 March 2022.

<b>Total employees</b>	<b>650</b>
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<b>Gender</b>	
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Male	492
Female	158

<b>Disability</b>	
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Declared disability	33
No declared disability	617

<b>Contract Type</b>	
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Part-time	34
Full-time	616



Ethnicity	
Asian or British Asian Indian	3
Asian or British Asian Pakistani	1
Asian or British Asian Other	3
Black or Black British African	3
Black or Black British Caribbean	4
Black or Black British Other	0
Chinese	1
Mixed White and Asian	1
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	2
Other	1
Other Mixed	3
Unknown	4
White British	603
White Irish	3
White Other	7
Age	
25 years and under	49
26 – 35	168
36 – 45	201

46 – 55	182
56 – 65	44
66 and Over	6

## Appendix 3: Spinal Column Starting Points by Category

### Gender

Spinal Column Starting Point	Total Staff	Total Percentage/Percentage of Category
<b>Bottom</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>69.12%</b>
Female	27	57.45%
Male	20	42.55%
<b>Middle</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22.06%</b>
Female	9	60.00%
Male	6	40.00%
<b>Top</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8.82%</b>
Female	1	16.67%
Male	5	83.33%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Ethnicity

Spinal Column Starting Point	Total Staff	Total Percentage/Percentage of Category
<b>Bottom</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>69.12%</b>
Ethnic Minority	4	8.51%
White British	43	91.49%
<b>Middle</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22.06%</b>
Ethnic Minority	1	6.67%
White British	14	93.33%

<b>Top</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8.82%</b>
White British	6	100.00%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Disability

Spinal Column Starting Point	Total Staff	Total Percentage/Percentage of Category
<b>Bottom</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>69.12%</b>
No	44	93.62%
Yes	3	6.38%
<b>Middle</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22.06%</b>
No	14	93.33%
Yes	1	6.67%
<b>Top</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8.82%</b>
No	6	100.00%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Part Time/Full Time


Spinal Column Starting Point	Total Staff	Total Percentage/Percentage of Category
<b>Bottom</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>69.12%</b>
FT	38	80.85%
PT	9	19.15%
<b>Middle</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22.06%</b>
FT	11	73.33%
PT	4	26.67%
<b>Top</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8.82%</b>
FT	6	100.00%

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
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## Age

<b>Spinal Column Starting Point</b>	<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>Total Percentage/Percentage of Category</b>
<b>Bottom</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>69.12%</b>
25 and Under	15	31.91%
26-35	11	23.40%
36-45	9	19.15%
46-55	7	14.89%
56-65	5	10.64%
<b>Middle</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22.06%</b>
26-35	7	46.67%
36-45	3	20.00%
46-55	3	20.00%
56-65	2	13.33%
<b>Top</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8.82%</b>
26-35	1	16.67%
36-45	3	50.00%
56-45	1	16.67%
56-65	1	16.67%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## **ROYAL BERKSHIRE** **FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

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