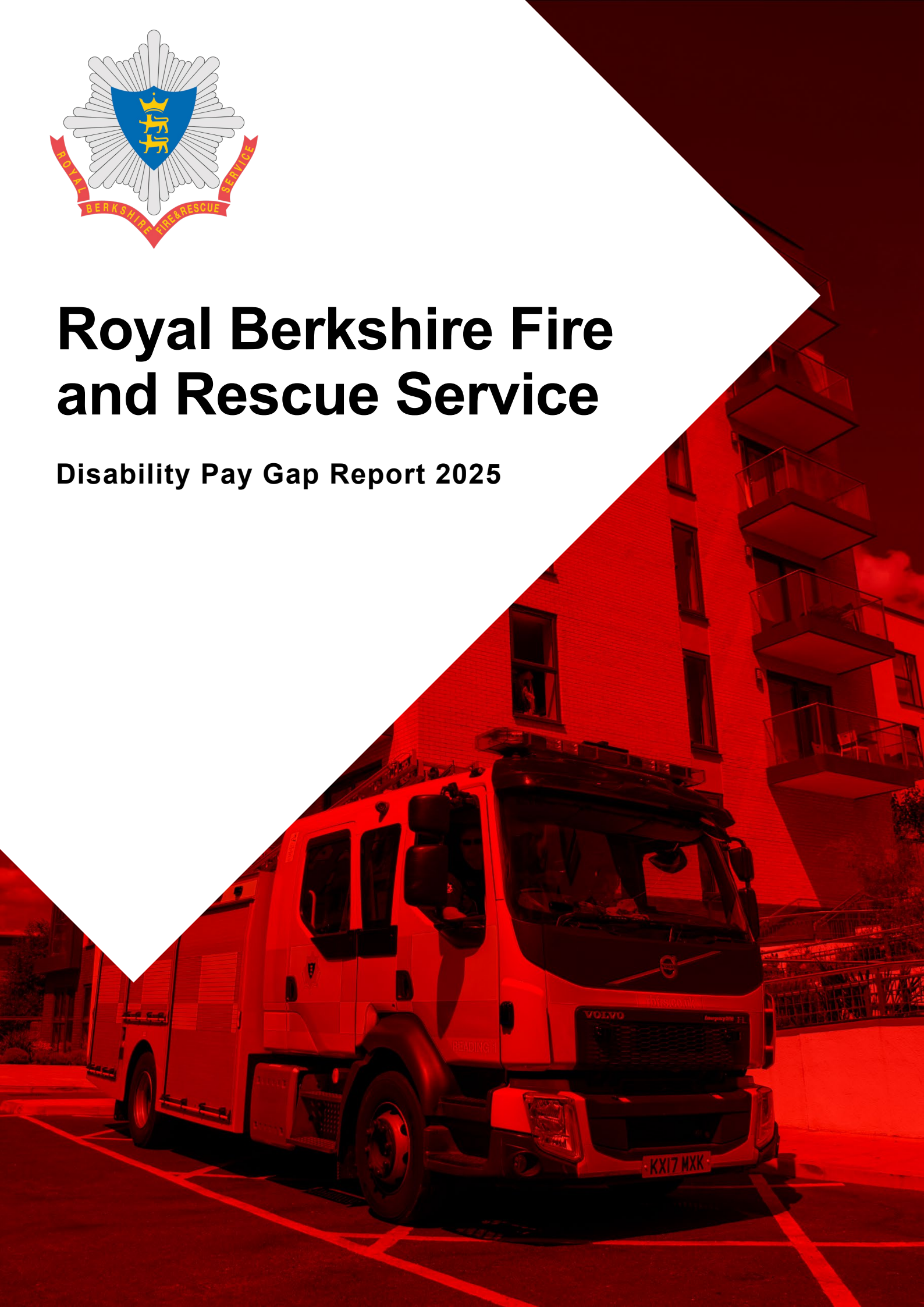




Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Disability Pay Gap Report 2025





Executive Summary

The disability pay gap report for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) provides information on the pay gap that exists between staff declaring a disability and those that have not declared disability within the Service. Currently there is no legislative requirement for organisations to publish their disability pay gap but RBFRS has opted to publish this information voluntarily. The publication of this report is an important tool to help us achieve our ambition to fully embed a transparent, diverse and inclusive culture.

The disability pay gap is calculated using the mean and median average rates of hourly pay for those declaring a disability and those not declaring a disability and this is also split into four quartile pay bands. A negative pay gap shows that those declaring a disability are paid more than those not declaring a disability.

Our mean pay gap is -8.31% and our median pay gap is -4.75%. This shows on average for each £1 earned by employees not declaring a disability, those declaring a disability earn £1.08 according to the mean disability pay gap. According to the median disability pay gap, for each £1 earned by employees not declaring a disability, those declaring a disability earn £1.04. The median gap is a more accurate measure of a disability pay gap as it discounts very high or very low rates of pay that can skew the overall average. According to the Office of National Statistics, the national median disability pay gap for 2023 was 12.7%.

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.

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 disability pay figures. The disability pay gap figures at RBFRS demonstrate we do not operate a pay system that disadvantages employees with a declared disability.

RBFRS is taking action to address this including the development of an Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan.



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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 disability pay gap. RBFRS has opted to publish these figures voluntarily. The method for calculating the disability pay gap mirrors that of gender pay gap reporting and show how large the pay gap is between employees declaring a disability and those not declaring a disability.

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

Mean disability pay gap	The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of employees declaring a disability and those not declaring a disability as a percentage.
Median disability pay gap	The difference between the median hourly rate of hourly rate of pay of employees declaring a disability and those not declaring a disability as a percentage.
Mean bonus gap	The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to employees declaring a disability and those not declaring a disability as a percentage
Median bonus gap	The difference between the median bonus pay paid to employees declaring a disability and those not declaring a disability as a percentage
Bonus proportions	The proportions of relevant employees declaring a disability and those not declaring a disability who were paid a bonus during the relevant period
Quartile pay bands	The proportions of relevant employees declaring a disability and those not declaring a disability in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands.

Research by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) suggests in the UK in 2023, the median hourly pay gap between employees declaring a disability and those not declaring a disability was 12.7%. Meaning those not declaring a disability had a higher median hourly rate of pay of £15.69 per hour compared to those employees declaring a disability with £13.69 per hour.

RBFRS' Pay and Bonus Disability Pay Gap

This disability pay gap report is based on data as of 31 March 2025. RBFRS employed 680 staff with 512 (75%) declaring they do not have disability and 106 (16%) declaring they have a disability. Please note, due to an equality data collection exercise, 62 staff (9%) preferred not to



declare their disability information. Due to the reporting requirements and provisions, RBFRS can only report the disability pay gap for staff who declare whether or not they have a disability.

Based on the 2021 Census data for Berkshire, the proportion of the population declaring a disability is 13%.

The overall disability pay gap for RBFRS is as follows:

	Mean	Median
Year	2025	2025
Pay Gap	-8.31%	-4.75%
Bonus*	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 employees declaring a disability earn 8.31% more than employees with no declared disability based on a **mean** hourly rate of pay. A **negative** pay gap shows that employees declaring a disability earn 4.75% more than employees with no declared disability based on **median** hourly rates of pay.

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

The mean gives an overall indication of the size of the disability pay gap in RBFRS. A high mean disability pay gap would indicate a payment system that disadvantages those employees with a declared disability.

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 staff declaring a disability and those not declaring a disability 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 employees declaring a disability and those not declaring a disability in each quartile pay band is as follows:



Quartile		Year	Mean Pay Gap	Median Pay Gap
Lower	<div><div>Disabled 14%</div><div>Not Disabled 86%</div></div>	2025	-18.11%	-7.63%
Lower Middle	<div><div>Disabled 19%</div><div>Not Disabled 81%</div></div>	2025	0.16%	0.00%
Upper Middle	<div><div>Disabled 16%</div><div>Not Disabled 84%</div></div>	2025	-1.64%	-0.80%
Upper	<div><div>Disabled 21%</div><div>Not Disabled 79%</div></div>	2025	-2.96%	-2.73%



Commentary

The mean and median pay gap was calculated for each of the quartiles to give an indication of the range and distribution of employees declaring a disability and those not declaring a disability.

When broken down into the four quartiles, the disability pay gap differs significantly from the overall disability 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)).

In the Lower quartile, 20 staff declare a disability, in the Lower Middle 30 staff declare a disability, in the Upper Middle quartile 24 staff declare a disability and in the Upper quartile there are 32 staff that declare a disability. In each of these quartiles, staff who declare a disability occupy a range of grades and roles, which will impact the overall mean and median pay gap of each of the quartiles.

Despite the lower quartile having the lowest proportion of staff that declare a disability overall, the lower quartile has a negative pay gap for both the mean and medium, in favour of staff that declare a disability. The mean pay gap is particularly high, but this can be skewed by a handful of staff at the top of the quartile receiving a higher rate of pay. 75% of staff declaring a disability in the lower quartile fall in the upper half of the quartile in terms of hourly pay which can help to explain the negative pay gap.

The Lower Middle quartile has a positive pay gap in favour of staff that don't declare a disability for the mean and no pay gap for the median which means there is no difference in average pay for staff declaring a disability and those who don't. Staff declaring a disability are evenly distributed within the quartile occupying a range of roles.

The Upper Middle quartile has a negative pay gap for both the mean and median in favour of those staff declaring a disability. The majority of staff (71%) declaring a disability in the Upper Middle quartile fall in the upper half of the quartile in terms of hourly pay.

The Upper quartile has the highest proportion of staff that declare a disability overall. Both the mean and median pay gaps for the Upper quartile are negative in favour of those staff declaring a disability. More staff declaring a disability fall in the upper half of the quartile in terms of hourly pay.

It is recognised that the number of staff declaring a disability at RBFRS is broadly consistent to the demographics of Berkshire. 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 with a declared disability may experience challenges during the course of their employment and regarding their career progression. RBFRS is taking action to identify any such trends and address this, including a review of where positive action initiatives can be used within promotion processes. The expansion of our equality monitoring processes to take into account progression, development and promotion will allow career progression and development to be monitored across the Service, with any



causes for concern targeted and addressed as appropriate. RBFRS now utilise a quarterly EDI dashboard to help identify and address gaps.

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 November 2024, the results of which did not indicate any underlying causes for concern in terms of employees with a declared disability. The next equal pay audit will take place in 2026.

The Service continues to address the overall diversity within the RBFRS workforce, ensuring an inclusive workplace for all. Actions include but are not limited to:

- Utilising Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to identify the impacts of all processes to ensure there are no negative or disproportionate impacts on employees with a declared disability.
- Reviewing the adjustments process for both recruitment and employment practices including creation of a Service policy and ensuring a clear approach for candidates requesting adjustments
- Renewing our Disability Confident Leader status in 2024 which is now in place until 2027, including addressing additional recommendations received from the Business Disability Forum
- Creating more awareness, knowledge and education around neurodiversity including recognising neurodiversity celebration week challenging stereotypes and misconceptions, establishing the RBFRS neurodiversity network, sharing the stories of RBFRS staff and their experiences with neurodiversity and the launch of a new neurodiversity LMS package.
- Providing practical guidance and support for staff and managers in regards to neurodiversity, including publication of the Neurodiversity handbook, work with me profile and working with Occupational Health following bespoke engagement with RBFRS staff teams to provide guidance for managers when making workplace adjustments for staff who are neurodiverse in two safety critical areas of the Service (Operational station based roles and Thames Valley Fire Control). As a Service we also have access to specialised coaching for staff who are neurodivergent.
- Continuing to engage in the Change 100 programme by Leonard Cheshire offering paid internships, professional development and mentoring to university students or graduates with a disability or long term health condition.
- Ensuring as a Service that we're committed to publishing accessible information for example using alt text when posting on social media, publishing easy read documents when consulting and having accessible templates that can be readily used.
- A review of the guidance documents available to managers supporting staff with disabilities including those who are absent from work and the ongoing delivery of



sickness absence workshops to managers with a specific section focussing on disability absence

- Mental health awareness training is mandatory for all staff to challenge stigmas and raise awareness around mental health in the workplace. Managing mental health training is available for all line managers to give them the skills and confidence when supporting members of their team with mental health.

RBFRS launched face to face EDI and Cultural Awareness Training in 2024 to help improve learning across the Service, demonstrating our commitment to promoting EDI and making a positive difference for our employees, this continues to be rolled out across the Service.

Specific actions concerning the information raised in this report 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. Work is also underway internally to draft and consult on the new EDI action plan and objectives for 2026 and beyond

Wayne Bowcock
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
November 2025

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