

Annual gender pay gap report 2022/23

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils (the Councils) are required by law to publish an annual gender pay gap report.

This is the report for the snapshot date of 31 March 2022.

- The mean gender pay gap is 7.27%
- The median gender pay gap is 4.70%
- The mean gender bonus gap is 0%
- The median gender bonus gap 0%
- The proportion of male employees receiving a bonus is 0% and the proportion of female employees receiving a bonus is 0%.

Pay quartiles by gender

Band	Males	Females	Description
A	35.11%	64.89%	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them at or below the lower quartile
B	36.15%	63.85%	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the lower quartile but at or below the median
C	31.54%	68.46%	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the median but at or below the upper quartile
D	43.85%	56.15%	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the upper quartile

The figures above have been calculated using the standard methodologies in the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

What are the underlying causes of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils gender pay gap?

The law requires men and women to receive equal pay for:

- the same or broadly similar work;
- work rated as equivalent under a job evaluation scheme; or
- work of equal value.

The Councils are confident that the gender pay gap does not stem from paying men and women differently for the same or equivalent work. The gender pay gap is the result of the roles and number in which men and women are employed within the organisations and the salaries associated with those roles. The Councils acknowledge that individuals within comparable roles may fall within different spinal column points due to length of service at the Councils. However, comparable roles

fall within the same Grade, and individuals have the capacity to increase a spinal column point as part of the annual Pay Award process. Grades have a maximum cap to ensure individuals can catch up with those with a longer service at the Councils.

Across the UK economy as a whole:

- Men are more likely than women to be in senior roles (especially very senior roles at the top of organisations).
- Women are more likely than men to be in front-line and administrative roles at the lower end of the organisation.
- Men are more likely than women to be in specialised roles (such as technical and IT-related), which attract higher rates of pay than other roles at similar levels of seniority.
- Women are more likely than men to have breaks from work that have affected their career progression, for example to bring up children.
- Women are more likely than men to work part time, and many of the jobs that are available across the UK on a part-time basis are relatively low paid.

This pattern from the UK economy as a whole is reflected in the make-up of the Councils' workforce, where the majority of front-line administrative services are women. However, the majority of line manager roles at the Councils are also filled by women and, there are more women in the upper quartile for pay within the Councils than there are men.

This can be seen in the table depicting pay quartiles by gender. This shows the Councils' workforce divided into four equal-sized groups based on hourly pay rates, with Band A including the lowest-paid 25 per cent of employees (the lower quartile) and Band D covering the highest-paid 25 per cent (the upper quartile). In order for there to be no gender pay gap, there would need to be an equal ratio of men to women in each band. The percentage of women to men is higher in all bands.

Since the last time of reporting, there are now more women and less men in the lowest quartile, giving reason in part as to why both the mean and median pay gap figures have increased for 2022/23 reporting.

There have been 62 new starters included in this report since the last South and Vale gender pay gap report. Of those 62 new starters, 35 of them fall in Band A, the lower quartile group. Within this group of new starters in Band A, 69% were female, which has negatively impacted the mean and median calculations.

Across all other quartiles, the split of male and female starters was not significant. Upon reviewing the gender split between those who left the Councils during reporting previous figures and this report, this was also found not to be significant.

How does South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Councils gender pay gap compare with that of other organisations?

At the time of reporting, the mean gender pay gap for the whole economy (according to the reported figures in 2022 Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) figures) is 13.9 per cent, whilst in the public sector it is

13.6 per cent. At 7.27 per cent, the Councils' mean gender pay gap is significantly lower than both. There has been an increase in the mean gender pay gap in comparison to last year's South and Vale gender pay gap report.

The median gender pay gap for the whole economy (according to the 2021 ONS ASHE figures) is 14.9 per cent, whilst in the public sector it is 15.9 per cent. At 4.7 per cent, the Councils' median gender pay gap remains significantly lower than both. There has also been an increase in the median gender pay gap in comparison to last year's South and Vale gender pay gap report.

The Councils do not make bonus payments.

What is South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils doing to address its gender pay gap?

Although the Councils' gender pay gap compares favourably with organisations across the whole UK economy and within the public sector, we recognise that the Councils' mean and median gender pay gap figures have increased since our last report. As referenced earlier, this is in part to the gender balance of new starters in the reporting period.

The Councils are committed to the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment for all employees, regardless of sex, race, religion or belief, age, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or disability. We have a clear policy of paying employees equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of any characteristic mentioned above.

The steps that the Councils take to promote gender equality in all areas include the following:

Equality in Employment Policy

In January 2022, the Councils produced an updated Equality in Employment Policy. The policy details our Equal Opportunity Commitment across all aspects of employment (including recruitment, promotion, training opportunities, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy), so as to avoid unlawful discrimination. Many of the items laid out in the Equality in Employment policy are detailed further below.

Pay Scales transparency

The Councils are committed to operating a pay and reward system which is transparent, based on objective criteria and free from bias.

The Councils commit to reviewing our pay every three years to ensure that there is no discrimination within the pay structure. All employees are able to access clear information regarding our pay practices. Any employees concerned about equal pay are encouraged to speak with their line manager and Strategic HR.

Every year following the pay review, which is agreed with the Trade Union under the principle of collective bargaining, pay scales are made available via the Councils' internal website. A breakdown of the process, including cost of living and increments is also provided. This allows all staff to easily view the structure of each pay grade, meaning staff are not discouraged from salary negotiations, and via the trade union play an active role.

Regardless of gender, the Councils' policies are that all staff will begin at the bottom of a grade's spinal column points. The Councils acknowledge that some roles have the ability to be awarded outside of the grade scales, regardless of gender. This process must be approved by a Head of Service and is still subject to the annual Pay Award process.

Vacant roles are advertised with pay scale included, so that all applicants (internal and external) can know what to reasonably expect when applying for a role.

Annual pay review

Every year the Councils undertake a pay review with trade union representatives to ensure fair and equal pay across all roles.

Job evaluation scheme

All roles are subject to formal job evaluation process, which includes the active involvement of the trade union, to ensure a fair structure. All staff can put forward a business case for their role to be reviewed against the job evaluation scheme, regardless of gender. This includes any negotiations to move to a higher spinal column point, which must be approved by the Head of Service. This process is also reviewed by the Councils' recognised trade union, UNISON. Any changes agreed will apply to all staff within the amended job role.

Equality Monitoring and Review

The Councils will take appropriate action to address any significant under-representation or barriers that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process. The purpose of this monitoring is to help the Councils ensure that their employment practices and opportunities continue to be fair and accessible to all.

Recruitment

Job descriptions for all roles will be limited to requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Any candidates for employment (internal or external), or promotion, will be assessed objectively against the job requirements.

In line with the Equality Act (2010), the Councils, where possible, will make reasonable adjustments to their standard working practices to best support disabled job applicants and employees. This will help the Councils to always recruit and retain the best person for the job, irrespective of gender.

Open and transparent reporting

To identify any barriers to gender equality and inform priorities for action, in 2016 the Councils introduced annual gender monitoring to understand:

- the proportions of men and women externally applying for jobs and being recruited;

- the proportions of men and women leaving the organisation and their reasons for leaving;
- the numbers of men and women in each-pay band;
- working patterns

Flexible working

The Councils have had a long commitment to flexible working. The Councils' annualised hours policy applies to all officers below service managers, allowing staff to achieve a good work/life balance. Additional holiday allowance is given to senior managers and above as they cannot access annualised hours. As mentioned above, childcare arrangements can impact the gender pay gap, and these options give all staff greater flexibility day to day regardless of their personal commitments.

Hybrid working

In July 2021, with the support of the Trade Union, the Councils confirmed that the majority of staff are contractually entitled to work in a hybrid manner, as we seek to continue enhancing the flexibility available to our staff. By allowing staff to work from a wider range of locations, rather than solely the traditional office, they can better achieve the desired work/life balance that can impact on the gender pay gap data. This also allows a wider pool of individuals to apply for a job at the Councils, further encouraging a wider variety to our staff population and reducing inequality.

Training and Culture

The Councils have an online learning platform, with a variety of modules focused on equalities added throughout the year. All staff have access to this training, which is widely communicated upon launch and checked for completion.

A Diversity and Inclusion strategy is due to be launched at the Councils in 2023.

I, Mark Stone, CEO, confirm that the information in this statement is accurate.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Stone', with a horizontal line underneath it.