

Gender Pay Gap Report

Report for the year 2022-2023

March 2024

Gender Pay Gap Report

This gender pay gap report for the Forestry Commission covers the period 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023. It publishes the mean and median gender pay gaps, the bonus pay gap and the proportions of male and female employees in each pay quartile.

The gender pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between all men and women in a workforce. If a workforce has a particularly high gender pay gap, this can indicate issues to address such as less women working in higher pay bands.

The gender pay gap is different to equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. It is unlawful to pay people unequally because they are a man or a woman.

The Forestry Commission is committed to equality of opportunity for all and will continuously strive to reduce the gender pay gap.

FC Gender Mix



45.3% of the FC workforce is female, which is an increase of 1.4% from last year's report.

FC Gender Pay Gap

Mean Pay Gap



Median Pay Gap



The average (mean) hourly rate for males is 2.84 higher than females. The median gender pay gap is lower than the mean gender pay gap at 0%. The median shows that of all the male and female employees of the Forestry Commission, the middle female salary is equivalent to the middle male salary. The mean has decreased since the 2021-22 pay gap publication which previously had been 3.07% and the median has increased slightly where it was -0.28% last year. The negative figure in the 2021-22 publication meant that the middle female salary was 0.28% higher than the middle male salary.

Bonus Pay Gap

Mean Bonus Pay Gap



Median Bonus Pay Gap



There are two bonus schemes within the Forestry Commission that contribute to the bonus pay gap as presented above.

The first type of bonus is based on performance but only available for the Senior Civil Servant (SCS) grades.

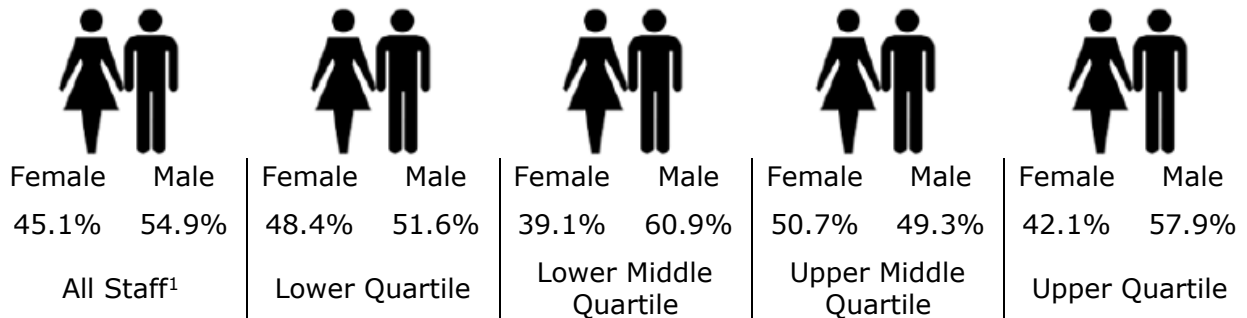
The second type of bonus is a non-consolidated payment to employees that are promoted from operational to non-operational grades, where the difference in salary is less than a 10% uplift. There were 27 payments of this type, 13 of these bonuses had a value of less than £35.

The Forestry Commission does not usually include the bonus pay gap percentages in its report due to the low numbers of employees impacted. This year there has been a significant trend of employees moving from operational to non-operational grades which has allowed its inclusion in this year's report.

As many non-consolidated bonuses are minor amounts, and the senior staff group performance bonuses are larger amounts, the median bonus pay gap is particularly susceptible to volatility. This year the median shows that the median bonus for female staff was 347.97% more than male. This is because there were more males who received the lower (<£35) non-consolidated bonus.

Pay Quartiles

Proportion of men and women in each hourly pay quartile



Since the last Gender Pay Gap report (2022), we have seen a reduction in the percentage of women in the lower quartile from 50.4% to 48.4% and an increase in the percentage of women across the lower middle quartile and upper quartile.

The biggest change has been in the upper middle quartile, which has seen an increase of women from 41.5% to 50.7% since 2022.

Causes of the Gender Pay Gap at FC

Forestry work has historically attracted fewer female candidates than male candidates. This is particularly the case in forestry operational roles. This imbalance is improving. The proportion of female employees has increased over the past few years from 35% to 45.3%. In 2005 the gender pay gap at the Forestry Commission was 21%. Significant work has been undertaken over recent years to reduce this to the current position.

Working to reduce the Gender Pay Gap

The Forestry Commission is committed to improving our gender pay gap and has several programmes underway looking to reduce it, these include:

Narrowing of Pay Ranges

Historical salary progression within a grade was removed across the Civil Service and recruiting external staff to the bottom of the pay band become the standard procedure. As a result of this, staff with a longer length of service within the same grade would often be paid more by virtue of being employed before the policy change. The Forestry Commission has sought to resolve this by moving from pay grade scales to spot points, whereby all employees within a grade are paid the same salary.

From October 2022 the 3 lowest pay bands were set to spot points, removing any historical pay progression related gaps for these grades. These changes are likely to have supported the narrowing of the pay gap in this year's report.

¹ This measure excludes staff not on full pay at 31 March 2023 (e.g. statutory maternity pay, long term sickness or unpaid career breaks)

FC Women's staff network

Over the last 12 months, the FC Women's Staff Network has hosted a range of activities and events, open to everyone working for the Forestry Commission.

The network has held online discussions about caring responsibilities, psychological safety at work, and the menopause. These safe spaces (led by a member of the network) have allowed for informal discussions around these topics. The network also continues to support the FC's work for better female fit PPE and the provision of free period products across our sites and offices.

FC Policy and Procedures

Through the application of our policies and procedures we are continuously striving to reduce the gender pay gap. For example, we have been considering the language used in job adverts across the board but particularly in senior roles. We want to widen the pool of who applies for senior roles. In Forest Research, there are science promotion procedures. We are ensuring that the panel is balanced and checks are made at each stage of the process to check for fairness (e.g. part time working/career breaks).

Everyone Belongs Board

We launched the Everyone Belongs Board in July 2023 with engaged members passionate about championing diversity and inclusion within the organisation.

The board acts as the corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group and provides oversight, assurance and co-ordination of the Forestry Commission's compliance with EDI legal and government requirements, and championing a culture where everyone is welcome and included.

The programmes cover staff, visitors, communities and other stakeholders, and includes:

- Ensuring the Forestry Commission's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Supporting the delivery of the Forestry Commission's Inclusion Strategy
- Supporting the delivery of the Forests for Everyone programme

Chaired by the OD Director, the board is made up of senior representatives from the different divisions nominated by their respective Chief Executive or equivalent, and these members will act as EDI champions for their respective areas or divisions.

Diversity and Inclusion training

We are continuing to roll out diversity and inclusion training for all staff through the interactive board game Equally Yours. This will ensure that all employees understand the importance of diversity within their teams and will challenge any bias stereotypes or discrimination around gender.

We also deliver a course on Creating and inclusive workplace to complement Equally

Yours, aimed at educating managers and staff on unconscious bias, gender stereotypes, microaggressions, privilege, allyship inclusive language and diversity in recruitment.

Inclusion Ambassadors

We currently have 32 Inclusion Ambassadors (plus 7 Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Ambassadors at Forest Research) who have been trained to tackle both conscious and unconscious discrimination and promote inclusion using regular 'conversation starters' to increase knowledge and understanding of diversity alongside inclusive practice.

Leadership and management development

Our Professional Manager Programme (PMP) launched in September 2019 continues to support the growth of future leaders for the organisation. Its aim is to provide a consistent approach to leadership and management development, thus advancing opportunities for all. Open to managers at pay bands 5, 5 ops, 4 and 3, the Professional Manager Programme has been designed for the Forestry Commission, taking the very best in tools, materials and facilitator input the market has to offer.

Due regard has been paid to ensure balanced gender representation for both nominees and mentors participating in the programme. The programme presents an opportunity to nurture the leadership skills of women in the lower and middle quartile pay bands.

The PMP includes an Equally Yours session and an Inclusive Leadership workshop as core elements of the programme.

In addition, the Forestry Commission sponsored two female staff members to participate in the Stepping Up Diversity leadership programme 2023/24. Stepping Up aims to unlock potential and develop talent while ensuring a fair representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, disabled, women and LGBTQ+ staff in positions of leadership.

A reverse mentoring pilot was also launched with a small group of volunteers, which includes women. This is a unique platform where a reverse mentor from an under-represented group, is paired up with a senior reverse mentee, focusing on supporting them to understand the experiences of staff with certain protected characteristics. Mentees and mentors have been paired up and will undertake five to six confidential sessions over the course of four to six months.

Includability D&I Star Award Winners 2024

In December 2023, the Forestry Commission won the Includability D&I Star Award 2024, recognising outstanding efforts in diversity and inclusion awareness and support in the workplace.

We were chosen from five shortlisted members by Includability's Verification Partner, ODISEE Ltd, as recognition that we have gone above and beyond to foster a diverse and inclusive work environment for our employees.

