



Ministry
of Defence

UK Armed Forces Gender Pay Gap Reporting Year 2024



27 March 2025

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Headlines

The UK national median gender pay gap in 2024 was **13.1%**, down from 14.2% in 2023¹. The UK Armed Forces compare favourably with this:

Gender Pay Gap

Median pay gap of **0.46%**², down **0.89 percentage points** from last year.

Mean pay gap of **-0.03%**, down **1.11 percentage points** from last year.

Gender Bonus Gap³

Median bonus gap of **0.00%**, no change from last year.

Mean bonus gap of **19.87%**, up **3.53 percentage points** from last year.

Declaration

We confirm that data reported by the Ministry of Defence is accurate and has been calculated according to the requirements and methodology set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017. Within those Regulations, the methodology adopted across government has been adjusted⁴ so data is not directly comparable with previous years.

David Williams CB

MOD Permanent Secretary

Vice Admiral Phil Hally CB MBE

Chief of Defence People

¹ The UK National Median figure quoted as **14.2%** is for 2023 as quoted in the [Gender Pay Gap in the UK 2024](#).

² Percentages are rounded to 2 decimal places. Changes in percentages are calculated on unrounded data therefore percentage point changes quoted in the tables and text may not always be the same as differences calculated from the rounded figures shown in the tables.

³ The UK Armed Forces do not receive any performance related bonus. However, there are payments which fall within the definition of a bonus in the 2017 Gender Pay Gap Regulation for more details see p.7.

⁴ Methodology is described in [Statutory Guidance](#).

Introduction

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has prepared this report as part of the legal requirement for public authorities to publish their gender pay gap on an annual basis.

In 2017 the Government introduced world-leading legislation that made it a statutory requirement for organisations with 250 or more employees to report annually on their gender pay gap. The legislation underpins the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) and requires relevant organisations to publish their gender pay gap by 30 March annually. This includes the median⁵ and mean⁶ gender pay gaps and gender bonus gaps; the proportions of male and female employees who received bonuses; and the proportions of male and female employees in each pay quartile.

Since the first publication of the [Gender Pay Gap report](#) in 2017, there has been an initial increase and then reduction in the median gender pay gap within the Armed Forces, from **0.22% in 2017** to **2.30% in 2020** to **0.46% in 2024** and mean gender pay gap from **0.93% in 2017** to **2.20% in 2020** to **-0.03% in 2024**. More detailed information is contained in [Annex A](#). The initial increase in pay gap from 2017 to 2020 reflects the UK Armed Forces base-fed recruitment model; efforts to increase the proportion of women in the Armed Forces will initially increase the proportion of lower paid women. However, as an increasing proportion of women has moved up the ranks the pay gap has decreased, initiatives that improve retention will have contributed to this trend.

This report fulfils the Department's reporting requirement and outlines our commitment to close the gender pay gap, covering the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

What is the Gender Pay Gap?

The gender pay gap⁷ is different to the equal pay gap which relates to the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same or similar jobs or work of equal value. Under UK Law it is illegal to pay people differently simply because of their gender⁸. Gender pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between all men and women in a workforce, regardless of any differences in the work they do and as such can be influenced by how the workforce is made up (incl. profession, grade, location etc).

The gender pay gap is also based on hourly pay excluding overtime. This is calculated in line with the Armed Forces Continuous Working Pattern Survey⁹ and the 2017 gender pay gap regulations. Hourly pay is the sum of ordinary pay¹⁰ and any bonus pay (including any pro-rated bonus pay) that was paid in the pay period which ends on the snapshot date of 31 March 2024.

⁵ The median average is the middle number in a sorted dataset, taken as the average of the two middle numbers when the sequence has an even number of numbers.

⁶ The mean average is found by calculating the sum of the values and dividing by the number of values.

⁷ Within this report we use the terms male and female and man and woman interchangeably, aligning with statistical reporting and the Gender Pay Gap regulations.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gender-pay-gap-reporting-guidance-for-employers/overview>

⁹ CWP is used to determine the hours worked within each service, that then helps us to determine the hourly rate for personnel - [CWP Survey](#)

¹⁰ Based on guidance from the Cabinet Office on Gender Pay Gap, calculations are calculated off Ordinary Pay.

Organisational context

Strategic approach

The Armed Forces operate in a rapidly changing environment. The strategic context is complex, dynamic, and competitive; threats are becoming more diverse, intense, and persistent and this will shape the character of conflict both now and into the future. We must ensure that we can meet this challenge and to do this we need to recruit from the broadest base of UK society; only then will we deliver the skills and talent we need. Becoming a more equal and inclusive employer is mission critical, essential to our operational effectiveness, and it ensures we can safeguard the security, stability, and prosperity of our nation.

An important component of our [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2030](#) is making inclusion part of 'business as usual.' Defence has achieved this by integrating the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) and embedding it within our leadership and culture so that we increase the retention and progression of people from under-represented groups. This holistic approach is essential if we are to attract and retain talent from all parts of society.

The MOD supports the fair treatment, reward, and recognition of all staff, irrespective of gender. While we have made encouraging progress to improve D&I, reports including the [House of Commons Defence Committee Inquiry into Women in the Armed Forces](#), the [Wigston Review](#), the [Gray Report into Unacceptable Behaviours](#) and the [Haythornthwaite Review](#) have highlighted we still have more to do to deliver essential cultural change. Defence has acted decisively on these reports and is starting to make tangible progress (see [Targeted Actions](#).)

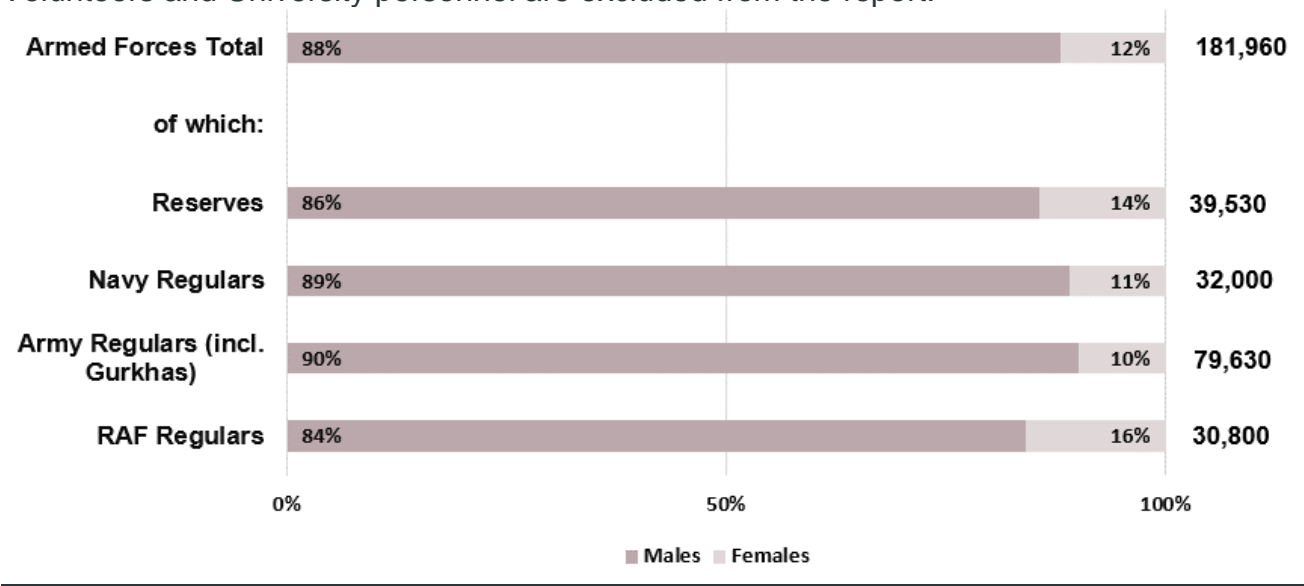
The Department is committed to delivering against the [Defence Command Paper](#) (July 2023) and awaits the outcome of the ongoing [Strategic Defence Review 2024 / 2025](#) to ensure the United Kingdom is both secure at home and strong abroad – now and in the years to come.



Figure 1 Royal Navy Officers on the bridge of a Ship.

Organisational structure

The UK Armed Forces is defined as: Royal Navy and Royal Marines, Army (including Gurkhas), Royal Air Force. These all include the respective Reserve¹¹ forces. Cadet Force Adult Volunteers and University personnel are excluded from the report.



Graph 1. Gender ratio of UK Armed Forces personnel by service, as at 31 March 2024

As of 31 March 2024, the UK Armed Forces personnel headcount was **181,960**.

¹¹ Reserves are defined by personnel that are within; Volunteer Reserves, FTRS, Additional Duties Commitment, MPGS, NRPS, Navy-Marines Non-Reg FTRS, High Readiness Reserve, Called Out Reservist, LEP-Gib Regt, LEP-Gib Regt VR, Sponsored Reserve. Definitions can be found within the [Glossary of Terms](#)."

UK Armed Forces Gender Pay Gap

Median Gender Pay Gap:

- **0.46%** in favour of men, down **0.89** percentage points.
- Males earn £0.08 per hour more, at £17.04 compared to females at £16.96.

Mean Gender Pay Gap:

- **0.03%** in favour of women, down **1.11** percentage points.
- This difference equates to less than 1p per hour between males & females at £18.93.

For the financial year 2023/24, there is a **median pay gap of 0.46%** in favour of male personnel, a decrease of **0.89** percentage points from financial year 2022/23. There is a **mean pay gap of -0.03%**, a decrease of **1.11** percentage points from financial year 2022/23. There are a number of factors that could influence the size of the pay gap, and this report monitors such variables to explain the gap.

The UK Armed Forces has a predominantly base-fed entry system. This means that most personnel¹² are recruited at the most junior rank, be that as Officers or Other Ranks¹³.



Figure 2 A welder from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers takes a break while maintaining a vehicle.

Proportionally there are more women in the Officer Ranks than in Other Ranks. In pay terms, Other Ranks represent the lower pay quartiles. Current drives to increase female representation will predominantly impact the Other Ranks, driving up the number of women in the lowest pay quartile which will in turn increase the overall UK Armed Forces gender pay gap. This should even out over time as more women are promoted through service. However, Defence continues in its drive to recruit the very best people representing the society it serves, whilst also closely monitoring and working to reduce the gender pay gap.

¹² A small number are recruited as Professionally Qualified Officers (Lawyers, Doctors etc) and enter some way up the organisational pyramid.

¹³ Other Ranks in the Armed Forces refer to personnel who are not commissioned officers. The ranks for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines are: Warrant Officer Class 1 and 2, Chief Petty Officer, Colour Sergeant, Petty Officer, Sergeant, Leading Rate, Corporal, Lance Corporal and Able Rate. For Army, these ranks are: Warrant Officer Class 1 and 2, Staff Sergeant, Sergeant, Corporal, Lance Corporal and Private. For RAF, these ranks are: Warrant Officer, Flight Sergeant, Chief Technician, Sergeant, Corporal and Aviator.

UK Armed Forces Gender Bonus Gap

Median Gender Bonus Gap

- 0.00%, unchanged from last year.
- Median bonus is at £1,970 for men and women.

Mean Gender Bonus Gap

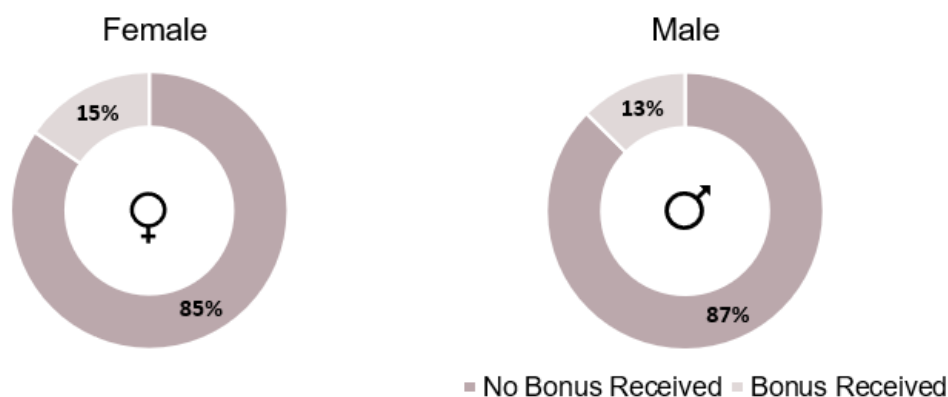
- 19.87% in favour of men, up 3.53 percentage points.
- Men's mean bonus is £646 more than women's at £2,604, compared to £3,250.

The UK Armed Forces do not receive any performance related bonuses. However, there are payments which fall within the definition of a bonus in the 2017 Gender Pay Gap Regulations such as:

- **For UK Armed Forces Regular Personnel** - the most common bonus payment received for both genders in the UK Regular forces is “**Operational Allowance**,” accounting for c.30% of bonuses received by UK Regular personnel.
- **For UK Armed Forces Reserve Personnel** - the most common bonus payment received for both genders in the UK Reserve forces is the “**Annual Bounty Payment**,” accounting for almost 90% of bonuses received by UK Reserve personnel.

For the financial year 2023/24, there is a **median bonus gap of 0.00%**, unchanged from last year. The **mean bonus gap** for the financial year 2023/24 is **19.87%** in favour of male personnel, an increase of 3.53 percentage points from financial year 2022/23. See Annex A for long term trends.

The percentage of male (**12.59%**) and female (**15.45%**) personnel receiving a bonus has **decreased by 1.40 percentage points** and **1.14 percentage points**, respectively, since 2022/23.



Graph 2. Proportion of UK Armed Forces by gender who received a bonus.

Although women receive proportionally more bonus payments than males, the value of these bonus payments is lower, even though all roles in the Armed Forces are now open to women (including those who receive the higher value payment). The presence of a mean bonus gap

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reflects the fact that higher bonus payments are made to professions where women are heavily under-represented e.g. medical officers, pilots, engineers, submariners.



Figure 3 Royal Air Force Poseidon crew on Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2024.

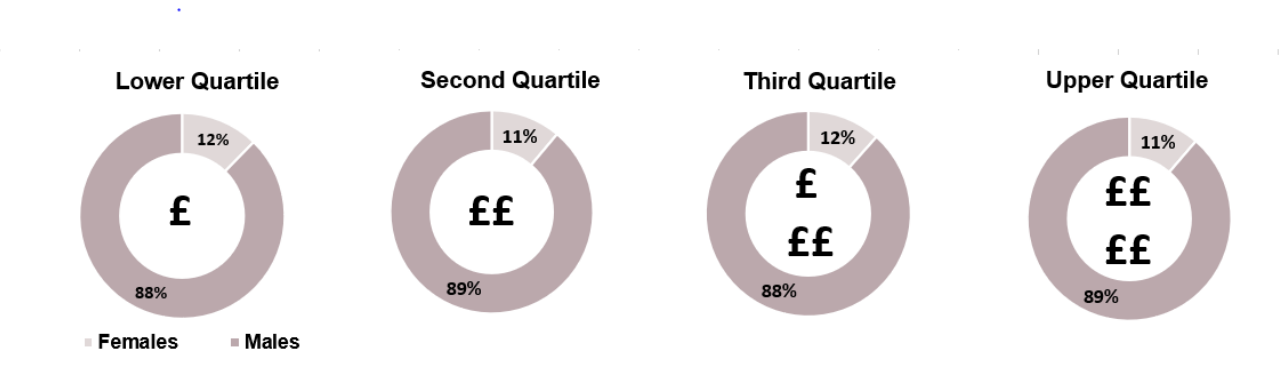
Gender Pay Quartiles

The gender pay quartiles data shows the proportion of men and women in each pay quartile (Graph 3) when Service personnel (both regular and reserve) are arranged in order of hourly pay rate (see Annex B for long term trends).

Female representation in all but the lowest pay quartile has increased since last year's [Armed Forces Gender Pay Gap Report](#), showing the progress of women through the UK Armed Forces. The changes in the quartiles are shown below:

- The proportion of female personnel in the **first** (lower) quartile **decreased** by **0.37** percentage points.
- The proportion of female personnel in the **second** (lower middle) quartile **increased** by **0.10** percentage points.
- The proportion of female personnel in the **third** (upper middle) quartile **increased** by **0.45** percentage points.
- The proportion of female personnel in the **fourth** (highest) quartile **increased** by **0.26** percentage points, the highest increase across all pay quartiles.

For the UK Armed Forces, pay scales are a function of rank, seniority and qualification and are gender blind. However, the Armed Forces is **88% male and 12% female**, and the MOD recognises that more needs to be done to recruit, progress and retain women. Work is already ongoing to address this (see Targeted Actions).



Graph 3. Percentage of UK Armed Forces Male and Female personnel in each pay quartile

Targeted Action

The MOD is committed to continuing to create an inclusive culture for women to thrive and progress in their career and to receive the financial reward they deserve.

Haythornthwaite Review

- The Independent Haythornthwaite Review¹⁴ set out 67 recommendations for how Defence can improve its offer and address the current workforce crisis in recruiting and retaining personnel. Defence has organised its response through the One Defence People Plan and has captured the key changes required in our Strategic Defence Review People submission. These reflect the intent of the Haythornthwaite recommendations and ensure a federated approach across Services, Head Office, and cross-government where appropriate. 'One Defence' brings together military and Civil Service People planning and transformation.
- The portfolio of work to fix the people system is organised around five Missions aligned to the report's themes and many specific recommendations that are being taken forward to deliver benefits as soon as possible. These workstreams demonstrate clear progress already made in priority areas, and how Defence is working to speed up recruitment, support, and retention; to build a people system that is aligned to and evolves with society as a whole. Some benefits are already being felt by Service personnel and their families, such as the largest pay increase in recent years and the expansion of the Wraparound childcare offer to overseas families. The ability to manage the workforce with more flexibility and increased personal choice will be crucial to address the current and predicted skills gaps. By offering a Spectrum of Service allowing people to dial up or down their service depending on family needs, offering seamless transition in and out of formal service, simplifying policy and procedure, and creating a new approach to digital solutions.

Childcare and Flexible Service

- Since the Wraparound Childcare scheme was rolled out in the UK in Sep 22, 11,956 Service children have benefited from the payments (as at 1 Feb 25)¹⁵. The challenges of accessing good quality, enriching and appropriate childcare are a societal issue, exacerbated by the mobility of Service life. As at 1 November 2024 there have been 7,939 Service claimants, 17% of which were female.
- The Armed Forces has offered a range of Flexible Working opportunities¹⁶ since April 2019. In financial year 2023/2024 **275** Service personnel and their families benefited from Flexible Service, while thousands benefit from Alternative Working Arrangements each year.
- The single Services review of personnel and career management policy has resulted in changes to the way serving couples are assigned and deployed, addressing issues such as returning to work after maternity leave and criteria for promotion.

¹⁴ [Agency and Agility: Incentivising people in a new era - a review of UK Armed Forces incentivisation](#)

¹⁵ [Protecting those who protect us: Woman in the Armed Forces from Recruitment to Civilian Life](#)

¹⁶ These include Alternative Working Arrangements such as Remote Working and Compressed Working; and Flexible Service which offers temporary part-time working, and/or limited separation, where operationally possible.



Figure 4: RAF Women's soccer team celebrate victory.

Health & Wellbeing

- The Servicewomen's Health Improvement Focus Team was established in 2022 to accelerate delivery of Servicewomen's health policies, services, and education leading to the publication of the 'Servicewomen's Health Handbook',¹⁷; a book for all Service personnel to improve understanding, assist with personal management and normalise conversations regarding female specific health issues. This has also been translated into Ukrainian and shared with the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Other projects include:
- Defence updated its policies on Breastfeeding to better support personnel who chose to breastfeed upon their return to work, as well as Menopause policy, helping to support personnel who are transitioning through menopause recognising the challenges that the operational environment has for personnel who are experiencing menopausal symptoms. Both policies provide guidance for Line Managers, Chain of Command with tools to effectively manage and support. The policies also aim to create wider awareness for all service personnel with continued commitment to improving cultures and behaviours in the workplace.
- Defence recognises that female urination and menstrual management in austere conditions can be challenging. Defence investigated options to make urination easier for servicewomen and introduce the Urinary Support Device to enable Servicewomen to urinate easily and discreetly. Defence has also now expanded Menstrual Supply Box (MSB) provision to include Defence-run schools as well as deployed female Service personnel, comprising a variety of sanitary and hygiene products to support management of menstruation with safe and clean disposal. Further menstruation products will be provided in female & unisex toilets across Defence by the end of 2025.

Other Targeted Actions

- The Armed Forces continue to deliver outreach and recruitment programmes designed to improve the number of women joining. This ambition is supported through improved support to candidates during the application process, running targeted marketing campaigns, increasing the representation of women in recruiting teams, and increasing capacity for female recruits in training establishments.¹⁸

¹⁷ [Servicewomen's Health Handbook](#)

¹⁸ Royal Navy marketing has adopted a segmentation approach whereby women are considered as a 'standalone' segment to enable a deeper understanding of the lived experience and insights of women, including perceived barriers and motivations.

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- A selection of clothing and equipment suitable for those of smaller stature (including some women) has been developed¹⁹, this will support women with maternity wear, sports bras, and other improved clothing / equipment to support training need.
- The **Raising our Standards (RoS) Programme** is part of the One Defence Culture initiative, aimed at creating an inclusive, supportive, and safe environment within Defence. The programme seeks to enhance culture, behaviours, and standards to provide a strategic competitive advantage. The RoS Programme is built on five key areas:
 1. **One Defence standard for behaviours:** Influencing behaviours with a focus on commitment to public service and individual responsibility to behave in ways that are consistent with our values and standards.
 2. **Data-driven decision-making:** Robust data will provide evidence-based insight to inform approaches under our federated model, and assurance to senior leaders and ministers that people in Defence are meeting the standards required of them.
 3. **100% action when tackling unacceptable behaviours:** people will build trust in policies and systems and decrease the risk and cost associated with poor behaviours.
 4. **Streamlined education and training:** Education and training for leaders will be more consistently reinforced and informed by learning expertise to remain interesting and targeted to its audience.
 5. **Developing world-class leaders:** Exemplar behaviours and standards will be role modelled and championed by all leaders throughout Defence and we will equip our leaders with the skills and experience required to tackle complex issues and drive change.
- Within MOD's large workforce, peer support is provided through gender specific focused employee support staff networks across Defence, with Armed Forces and Civil Service gender champions and advocates to ensure a range of views and experiences are heard at senior levels.
- With regard to career progression, a number of initiatives have been implemented to remove traditional impediments to advancement of women. As a result, we have seen a steady increase in the proportion of women attaining OF4 rank and higher and thus, greater influence, including our first female 4-star Officer in 2024.



Figure 5: General Dame Sharon Nesmith inspecting the troops.

¹⁹ The Army is leading on the provision of combat equipment for all three Services.

Annex A –Gender Pay and Bonus Gap

Table A1: UK Armed Forces Gender pay and bonus gap summary for 2022-23 and 2023-24 using [new methodology](#).

		2022-23	2023-24	pp change
Median Gender Pay Gap		1.35%	0.46%	-0.89%
Mean Gender Pay Gap		1.08%	-0.03%	-1.11%
Median Gender Bonus Gap		0.00%	0.00%	0%
Mean Gender Bonus Gap		16.34%	19.87%	+3.53%
Proportion of male and female employees paid a bonus	Male	13.99%	12.59%	-1.4%
	Female	16.59%	15.45%	-1.14%

Table A2: UK National and UK Armed Forces pay and bonus gap historic summary from 2016-17 to 2022-23 using old methodology.

		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
UK National Median Gender Pay Gap		18.40%	17.80%	17.40%	14.90%	15.10%	14.40%	14.20%
UK National Mean Gender Pay Gap		17.20%	17.20%	16.30%	13.90%	14.70%	13.40%	13.20%
Median Gender Pay Gap		0.22%	0.09%	0.46%	0.78%	2.3%	1.54%	1.36%
Mean Gender Pay Gap		0.93%	0.81%	0.88%	1.23%	2.2%	1.97%	1.08%
Median Gender Bonus Gap		0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.47%	0.0%	0.00%	0.00%
Mean Gender Bonus Gap		7.88%	11.12%	18.03%	15.17%	12.2%	15.84%	17.72%
Proportion of male and female employees paid a bonus	Male	20.09%	21.25%	20.33%	24.51%	21.4%	15.60%	13.99%
	Female	23.89%	24.16%	23.35%	25.59%	23.0%	17.98%	16.59%

Note: percentage point changes are based on raw figures.

Source: [Gender Pay Gap in the UK](#).

Annex B – UK Armed Forces Pay Quartiles

Table B1: Proportion of male and female employees in each pay quartile 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Quartile	2022-23	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24	Female percentage point change
	Female (F) %	Male (M) %	Female (F) %	Male (M) %	
First (lower) quartile	12.61	87.39	12.24	87.76	-0.37
Second quartile	11.04	88.96	11.14	88.86	+0.10
Third quartile	11.15	88.85	11.60	88.40	+0.45
Fourth (upper) quartile	11.04	88.96	11.30	88.70	+0.26

Table B2: Proportion of male and female employees in each pay quartile 2016 – 2023

Quartile	2016 – 2017	2016 – 2017	2017 – 2018	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020	2019 – 2020	2020 – 2021	2020 – 2021	2021 – 2022	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023	2022 – 2023
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
First (lower) quartile	89%	11%	89%	11%	89%	11%	89%	12%	87.48%	12.52%	87.64%	12.36%	87.39%	12.61%
Second quartile	90%	10%	90%	10%	90%	10%	90%	11%	89.35%	10.65%	89.17%	10.83%	88.96%	11.04%
Third quartile	90%	10%	90%	10%	90%	10%	90%	11%	89.43%	10.47%	89.13%	10.87%	88.85%	11.15%
Fourth (upper) quartile	90%	10%	90%	10%	90%	10%	90%	11%	89.42%	10.58%	89.28%	10.72%	88.96%	11.04%

Note: percentage point changes are based on raw figures.