

## **Foreword**

From April 2017, all organisations that employ over 250 employees are required to report annually on their gender pay gap. The gender pay gap is defined as the differences in the average earnings of men and women over a specified time period, regardless of their role or seniority. The report presented here represents the outcomes of research into the pay gap within Warrington Borough Council on 31 March 2023 between the male and female employees. This report has been prepared by the organisation and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Strategic Equalities Group, and we will report on progress in 12 months' time.

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## **Gender Pay Gap Report for Warrington Borough Council 2023**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Since April 2017, all organisations that employ over 250 employees are required to report annually on their gender pay gap. The gender pay gap is defined as the differences in the average earnings of men and women over a specified time period, regardless of their role or seniority.
- 1.2 This involved carrying out six calculations that show the difference between the average earnings of men and women in an organisation. The calculations related to hourly pay, bonus pay and quartiles. It does not involve publishing individual employees' data.
- 1.3 Once calculated, employers must then both publish their gender pay gap data along with a written statement on their public-facing website and report their data to government online using the gender pay gap reporting service. The reporting of this information must be completed by end of March 2024.
- 1.4 This report was compiled based on a snapshot of the workforce on 31 March 2023.

### **2.0 Context**

- 2.1 In respect of the information to be published on the website, there are a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration.
- 2.2 All jobs in the Council are subject to job evaluation and the schemes used to evaluate jobs are gender neutral.
- 2.3 73% of the contracts captured in the snapshot were female and over the 12-month period ending 31 March 2022, approximately 70% of new starters to the organisation were female.
- 2.4 The nature of the organisation's business means that there are a wide variety of different jobs undertaken. Some of these roles, such as cleaners and kitchen staff, are predominantly undertaken by females and these are at the lower end of the pay range. Other roles which are primarily male occupied, such as drivers, gardeners and loaders, have been evaluated higher under job evaluation and are subsequently paid more.

The nature of the business of the organisation has not substantially changed since the introduction of the regulations. The variety of roles has not diminished over the last few years and this has been reflected with the figures returned this year.

- 2.5 The Council also still provides a number of services which have been outsourced by other Councils. These include cleaning, school meals and waste services. Those working in the Cleaning (paid at Grade 01) and School Meals services (paid on Grades 03 and 05) are predominately female occupied. Whilst those in Waste services range between Grades 04 – 06 and are male dominated. Between them, these three services account for approximately 27% of the workforce.

- 2.6 The chart at appendix 1 provides a split of the grades by gender and illustrates the imbalance of the genders in the lower grades on the pay scale.
- 2.7 The top 5% of earners within the organisation are made up of 49% females and 51% males. The difference in pay between full time salaries is not as great at this level with the difference between the genders being -0.92%. The differences at the lower end of the grading scale between Grade 01 – 05 varies between 0.31% and 0.85% with one band being entirely female. When the Grade 01 through Grade 16 are examined (excluding grades with only one gender) the differential in each grade band varies between -6.35% to 2.15% from the lowest to highest percentage difference in hourly rates.
- 2.8 The lowest hourly rate of pay in the council is paid in line with the Living Wage Foundation living wage rate. If the council continues to match the lowest rate to that of the Foundation then this should in conjunction to other actions, help to reduce the gender pay gap as the annual % increase for that hourly rate has been historically higher than the % increase for any cost of living award. So a continued alignment to that rate will over the long term create a small reduction.
- 2.9 The hourly rate was determined by using the guidance on how this calculation is derived on the ACAS website. This looks at the ordinary pay received by an employee during the pay period. Ordinary pay includes basic pay, fixed monthly allowances, pay for leave and shift premium pay.
- 2.10 Within the organisation there are options where staff are able to work flexibly, this includes those working term-time and other patterns not covering the whole year. At the point the snapshot was produced 21% of the contracts did not work over the whole year. The majority of those roles were associated with roles for services provided to schools such as cleaning and catering. Those roles mainly covered bands Grade 01 and 03 and represented 76% of those contracts working less than 365 days.
- 2.11 45% of the workforce at the point of the snapshot worked on a part time basis. The majority (over 91%) of those working part time hours were female. Of the workforce covered by the snapshot, 41% were both female and working part time. The size of this cohort of employees has had an effect on the pay gap as many were paid on the lower grades.
- 2.12 Warrington Borough Council continues to pay employees in line with the different set of terms and conditions agreed by the national bodies. Since 2016 the organisation has paid a living wage hourly rate as determined by the Living Wage Foundation as the lowest rate per hour. However following the changes to the NJC rates in 2019 the organisation reverted back to the NJC rates. To allow for the council to continue to pay a value at the Living Wage Foundation rate it was decided that an additional enhancement would be paid should that value be higher than the lowest NJC spinal point.
- 2.13 The pay award for 2022-2023 was a flat rate increase of £1,925 to each point on the pay spine rather than the % increases previously received. This meant that for Grade 01 to Grade 16 the percentage increase ranged from 10.5% on SCP 1 to 2.36% on SCP 60. With those on the lower spinal column points receiving the higher percentage increase this has had an effect in reducing the pay gap. That when coupled with the decision to raise those on spinal column points 1 to 3 to the Living Wage Foundation Living Wage hourly rate in November rather than April also contributed to reduction in the overall gap.

### 3.0 Hourly Rate

- 3.1 The mean average difference between male and female contracts showed that female employees were paid 12.5% less per hour than male employees. In 2022 this was 16.0%.
- 3.2 The median average difference between male and female contracts showed that female employees were paid 13.7% less per hour than male employees. In 2022 this was 14.6%.
- 3.3 Over the last few years the differences have been as follows for both the mean and median average hourly rate between male and female contracts.

| Year        | Mean Average (%) | Median Average (%) |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 31 Mar 2017 | 17.9             | 15.0               |
| 31 Mar 2018 | 15.7             | 15.7               |
| 31 Mar 2019 | 16.3             | 15.6               |
| 31 Mar 2020 | 16.1             | 15.3               |
| 31 Mar 2021 | 15.8             | 15.1               |
| 31 Mar 2022 | 16.0             | 14.6               |

### 4.0 Bonus Pay

- 4.1 The Council ceased making bonus payments a number of years ago. There is a requirement to report bonus payments; however, this will be a zero return with respect of both the mean and median averages.

### 5.0 Pay Quartiles

- 5.1 The organisation as part of the reporting process is required to show the proportion of males and females in each pay quartile.
- 5.2 The quartiles were determined by ranking relevant employees pay from highest to lowest, before being divided into 4 equal parts ('quartiles'). The proportion of the men and women in each quarter were used to determine the gender percentage.
- 5.3 The pay quartiles for employees are listed in the table below.

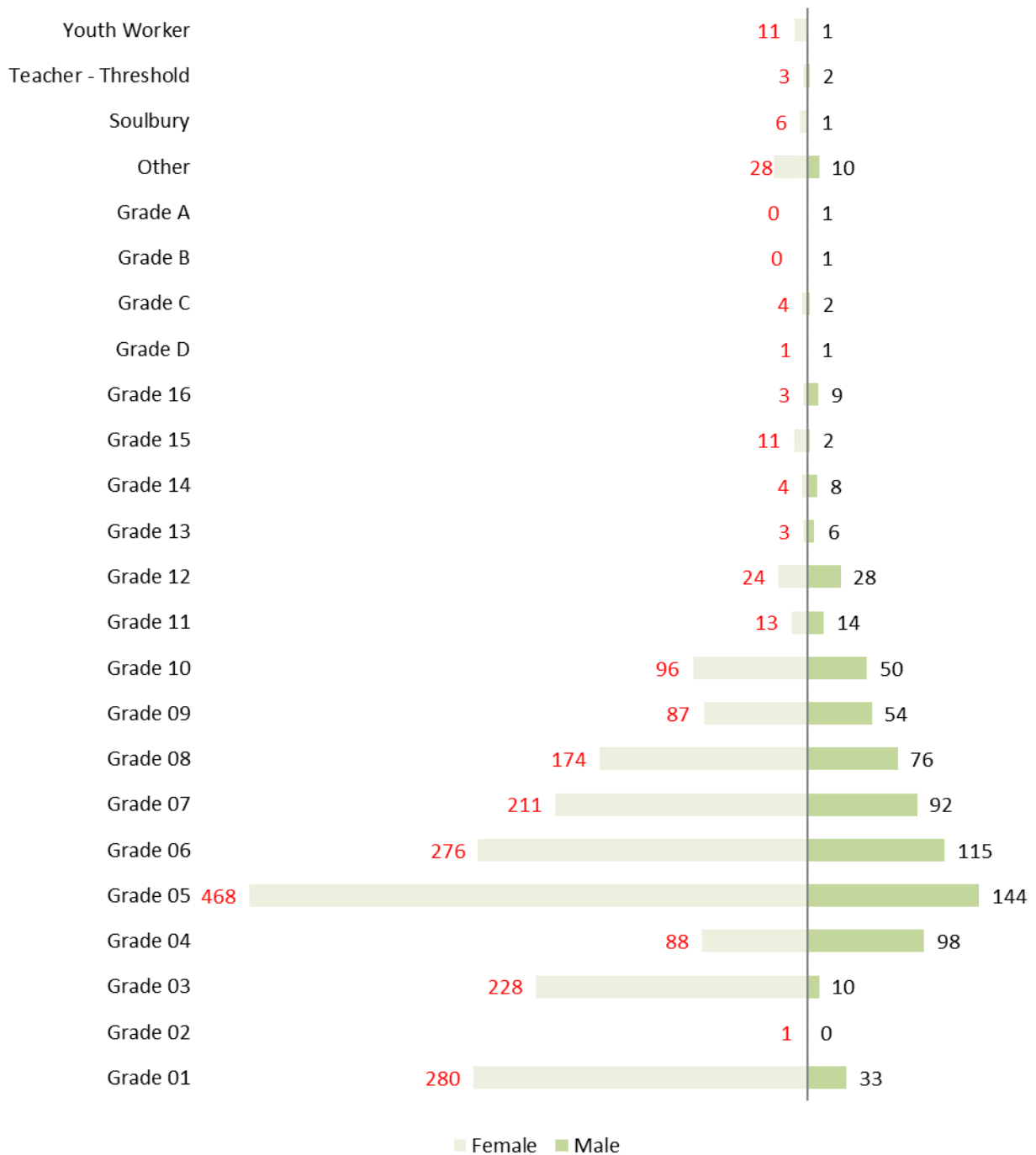
|                       | Female | Male |
|-----------------------|--------|------|
| Upper Quartile        | 63%    | 37%  |
| Upper Middle Quartile | 70%    | 30%  |
| Lower Middle Quartile | 72%    | 28%  |
| Lower Quartile        | 86%    | 14%  |

## **6.0 Steps the council can take to reduce the gap**

- 6.1 The organisation should continue to promote the flexible working opportunities to all employees in line with the different business needs of the different services.
- 6.2 Continued consideration of the continuation of the alignment to the minimum hourly rate of pay as determined by the Living Wage Foundation, rather than the national Living Wage rate of pay. This would then continue to see the % increases to those staff at the lower end of the pay scale increase more than those at the higher end for whom the rate is based on the negotiated cost of living increase.
- 6.3 We are committed to monitoring the Gender Pay Gap annually and will explore the reasons for our gender pay gap prior to considering appropriate measures to reduce the gap.

## Appendix 1

### Grade Profile by Gender



Note: The council pays staff on a number of different sets of terms and conditions, whilst the majority of the workforce are on NJC terms and conditions there are some groups who are not. This is the reason why Grade headings for Teachers and Soulbury etc. are listed on the chart.

## Appendix 2

As part of the regulations central government maintains a website where the organisations covered by the regulations are required to show the six items relating to the pay gap (as indicated below). A number of the organisations have also provided a web link to their specific Gender Pay Gap Report.

- mean gender pay gap in hourly pay
- median gender pay gap in hourly pay
- mean bonus gender pay gap
- median bonus gender pay gap
- proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment
- proportion of males and females in each pay quartile

The web link below takes the viewer to the central government website where this information is uploaded. Here other example of reports can be viewed from organisations covered by the legislation.

<https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/>