What are we doing to close our gender pay gap

March 2020
Introduction

We are committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in our employment, procedures and practices, ensuring that they are non-discriminatory and compliant with legislation in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

Since we first reported our gender pay gap, in 2018, we have seen slight decreases year on year in the mean and median pay gaps between our male and female employees whilst the gender distribution of our workforce has remained largely unchanged. Whilst this is encouraging, we accept that bigger strides in closing the gap cannot be realised without us identifying the reasons for the disparity in pay and developing an action plan to try and address these.

Data analysis

Over the last six months we have looked at the data we have available to us, both within and outside of the organisation, in order to try and identify the reasons for the difference in pay between our male and female workforce.

The results of a recent staff survey have not been analysed this time around but will be included as an additional data source going forwards.

Our pay and grading structure

We have had an agreed pay and grading structure, called the Lancashire Pay Spine, in place since we underwent an equal pay review in 2010, and the vast majority of posts within the council are paid in accordance with this pay spine.

We use job evaluation schemes in order to establish the relative levels of posts in grades within the Lancashire Pay Spine according to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role. We also undertake evaluations for new job roles that arise and where a job significantly changes as part of a restructure (or reorganisation) of services so changes in roles are reflected, where necessary, in the grade of the role and ultimately the pay that is attached to the grade.

Other nationally agreed pay and grading scales are used in the case of our teaching roles and for employees who are paid in accordance with Soulbury Committee or Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Worker terms and conditions.

We are therefore confident that no pay discrimination exists within the pay and grading structures that we use and that pay differentials can be objectively justified through the use of our job evaluation schemes.
Our starters and leavers

We have analysed our starter and leaver data for 2017/18 and 2018/19 by gender and grade.

This data has shown that more females left their employment with us, than joined, at the lowest pay level within our pay spine – aligned to the Foundation Living Wage rate of pay – in both of these years. Posts at this pay level are care assistant, catering and cleaning roles, which are typically part time and undertaken by a predominantly female workforce.

The number of males joining exceeded the numbers that left at this pay level, although the numbers overall were much lower when compared with females.

Exit questionnaires

Employees leaving their employment with us are asked to complete an exit questionnaire in order that we can understand their reasons for leaving. Completion of the questionnaire is voluntary and can be completed and submitted anonymously, or completed in the form of an exit interview with their manager. Questions about promotion opportunities, and opportunities for promotion to progress their careers, form part of the questionnaire.

We have analysed the anonymised exit questionnaire data for 2017/18 and 2018/19 by gender and grade.

The data for 2017/18 has shown that:

- 119 questionnaires were completed in total;
- there was a 72% response rate from females; and
- 28% of females undertaking roles up to Grade 4 on our pay spine said that they did not feel that they had the opportunity for promotion in order to progress their career.

The data for 2018/19 has shown that:

- 162 questionnaires were completed in total;
- there was a 70% response rate from females;
- 33% of females undertaking roles at Grade 4 on our pay spine said that did not feel that adequate training opportunities were available to them (and 70% said that they did not feel that they had the opportunity for promotion in order to progress their career);
- 48% of females undertaking roles at Grade 6 on our pay spine said that they did not feel that adequate training opportunities were available to them (and 71% said that they did not feel that they had the opportunity for promotion in order to progress their career); and
- 45% of females undertaking roles at Grade 8/9 on our pay spine said that they did not feel that they had the opportunity for promotion in order to progress their career.
External data sources

We have also looked at externally published workforce data, from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and other sources, in order to compare our workforce population with the workforce population living and working in Lancashire.

Information obtained from the Annual Population Survey, downloaded from the National Online Manpower Information System, contains summary data relating to the percentage of males and females who live in Lancashire. The data from this survey, covering the period June 2018 to June 2019, has shown that:

- 51.2% of females in employment work in public admin, education and health within Lancashire and that this is the highest percentage when compared with other areas of work within the county. The Lancashire percentage is also higher when compared with females who work in public admin, education and health in the North West and United Kingdom as a whole.

- 16.5% of males in employment work in public admin, education and health within Lancashire. This percentage is also reflective of males working in these work areas across the North West and United Kingdom as a whole.

Information from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), downloaded from the ONS website, contains a gender pay gap analysis of hourly earnings (excluding overtime) across the United Kingdom. The data from the 2019 provisional data set shows that for all employee jobs (both full time and part time) that:

- The mean gender pay gap for Lancashire as a place of work is 17.8% (our mean gender pay gap is 12.67%, as at 31 March 2019).

- The median gender pay gap for Lancashire as a place of work is 20.6% (our median gender pay gap is 16.57%, as at 31 March 2019).
## Action plan

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<tr>
<th>What we will do</th>
<th>How are we going to do this</th>
<th>When we will monitor our progress</th>
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</thead>
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| Promote the benefits of working for us               | We host a dedicated page on our Job Site to promote the benefits of working for the council to potential job applicants.  

We will make reference within our job adverts to the benefits of working for us and the opportunities that are available to our employees for:  

- flexible working – for flexi-time, dedicated part time work, job shares, term time roles and agile working; and  

- training, learning and development (including apprenticeships and funded qualification training).  

We will continue to promote our family friendly policies (for parents and working carers) and our Purchase Annual Leave Scheme, which allows employees to "buy" up to 20 days' additional leave each year on top of their annual leave entitlement for any reason (the first 5 days of which are automatically approved).  

We will also continue to promote the fact that we are a Foundation Living Wage employer, so offer a competitive minimum level of pay that exceeds the government determined National Living Wage. | December 2020 |
<p>| Review our recruitment and selection policy and processes | We will ensure that effective targeted adverts that &quot;sell&quot; our jobs are used.                                                                                     | December 2020 |</p>
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<td>We will ensure that gender-neutral language and job titles continue to be used in our adverts, job descriptions and recruitment material. We will make sure that our established practice of structured interviews is used – with the same general questions being asked of all candidates with supplementary follow-ups based on the response that is given – to allow candidate responses to be compared and scored in a fair, objective and evidence-based way.</td>
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<td>Continue to develop new ways to make it easier for candidates to apply for our jobs</td>
<td>We do not want our application process to put off people from applying for a job with us. We want to make the process quick and easy.</td>
<td>December 2020</td>
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<td>Continue to monitor recruitment statistics and act on candidate feedback</td>
<td>We already analyse and report on applicant monitoring but candidates who apply for a job with us are now asked to provide feedback on (their user experience of) our recruitment process. We will actively encourage feedback from our job candidates and will act on any feedback we receive that may help us to</td>
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<td>Challenge stereotypes within our job roles</td>
<td>The diversity of our workforce features as part of the improvement journey we have embarked on, to create a council for the future. We will consider career pathways and succession planning as part of this project alongside our gender pay gap. We will work with managers to challenge gender norms in our service areas, such as encouraging men to consider a career within the care, catering, cleaning sectors, and women within highways and engineering.</td>
<td>December 2020</td>
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<td>Develop our employees</td>
<td>We are committed to supporting our employees in their career development. We will promote the wide range of learning and development opportunities we have on offer, both in-house and externally in the case of apprenticeship and funded qualification training. We will encourage managers to consider options for employees to “act up” into higher graded roles or be paid more money for taking on higher-level duties and/or responsibilities, where situations arise. This will enable employees to gain valuable experience to better equip them to apply for future job promotions, where these become available. It will also help services in terms of their career pathways and succession planning.</td>
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<td>We will continue to promote our coaching and mentoring offer to support employees in their development, to reach their potential and plan for their future work goals, alongside opportunities for work shadowing.</td>
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| Raise the profile of fairness and inclusion         | We are relaunching our employee equality networks and are looking to re-establish a group specifically for working carers. We will consider setting up a women’s focus group, to identify barriers or perceived barriers to recruitment and progression, as part of this work.  
A fairness and inclusion ambassador, from our corporate management team, has been nominated to promote the activities of the employee equality networks and help to raise the awareness and profile of these groups within our organisation. | December 2020                    |