

FSA Gender Pay Gap Report 2021

In 2017 the Government introduced world-leading legislation that made it statutory for all organisations with 250 or more employees to report annually on their gender pay gap.

Government departments are covered by the [Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties and Public Authorities\) Regulations 2017](#) that came into force on 31 March 2017. These regulations underpin the Public Sector Equality Duty and require the relevant organisations to publish their gender pay gap data annually, including mean and median gender pay gaps; the mean and median gender bonus gaps; the proportion of men and women who received bonuses; 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 there may be a number of issues to deal with, and the individual calculations may help to identify what those issues are.

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.

Profile of the Food Standards Agency

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is a non-ministerial government department established under the Food Standards Act 1999 and operational since April 2000. The FSA's role is defined in law. The Food Standards Act states that: "The main objective of the Agency in carrying out its functions is to protect public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food (including risks caused by the way in which it is produced or supplied) and otherwise to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food."

Our headquarters are in London however the FSA have offices in Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff and York. We also have significant numbers of employees working through England, Wales and Northern Ireland based in abattoirs or as field staff and homeworkers.

The FSA supports the fair treatment and reward of all staff irrespective of gender and is committed to creating a culture that is transparent, diverse, and inclusive through the delivery of the objectives set out in our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy published in 2018:

- attract and retain a diverse workforce
- champion inclusivity across our leadership and management community
- develop and support staff networks in strengthening our diverse and inclusive culture

This is the FSA's fifth Gender Pay Gap report. It is based on a snapshot of all FSA staff as at 31 March 2021 and fulfils our reporting requirements, analyses the figures in more detail and sets out what we are doing to close the gender pay gap in the organisation.

The 2021 gender pay gap for the FSA

Average	Ordinary pay gap	Bonus pay gap
Mean	-9.5%	-25.3%
Median	-23.1%	-40%

Our workforce

The FSA uses Civil Service grades ranging from Administrative Officer to Senior Civil Servant. Grades vary according to the level of responsibility that staff have and each grade has a set pay range. Salaries are paid according to grade and annual pay awards within the grade are paid irrespective of gender.

All grades with the exception of the Senior Civil Service (SCS) have both a London and National pay range.

On 31 March 2021, 1310 people worked for the FSA, an increase of 45 since 31 March 2020. The percentage of females remained at 40%. The number of Senior Civil Servants who are female, fell from 42% to 41%.

Gender balance at different grades is one of the main contributing factors to an organisation's gender pay gap. A breakdown of gender representation at each grade is shown below.

Grade	Number of men	% at this grade	Number of women	% at this grade	% who are female	+ / - 2019 figure
AO	3	1%	6	1%	67%	0%
EO	347	44%	90	17%	21%	-1%
HEO	148	19%	148	28%	50%	+2%
SEO	157	20%	170	32%	52%	-1%
Grade 7	87	11%	87	16%	50%	-1%
Grade 6	27	3%	18	3%	40%	+1%
SCS	13	2%	9	2%	41%	-1%
Total	782	N/A	528	N/A	40%	0%

(Rounding means that percentages may not sum to 100%)

Gender Pay Gap analysis

Ordinary pay

Mean pay gap	Median pay gap
-9.5%*	-23.1%*

*A negative number indicates that women on average earn more than men

The mean gender pay gap is the difference in the average hourly pay for women compared to men. Across the organisation, mean pay for women is 9.5% more than that of men.

The median represents the middle point of a population. If you separately lined up all female employees and all male employees, the median pay gap is the difference between the hourly pay rate for the middle woman compared to that of the middle man. The median pay for women across the organisation is 23.1% more than that of men.

Averages	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Mean pay gap	-9.4%	-9.3%	-8.0%	-9.6%	-9.5%
Median pay gap	-16.7%	-17.5%	-14.7%	-21.6%	-23.1%

The negative gender pay gap across the organisation as a whole is mainly due to the structure of our workforce.

The FSA workforce continues to have a significantly higher proportion of males (60%) than females (40%) although this has narrowed by eight percentage points since 2017. Forty-five percent of male employees work in the two most junior grades (mainly as Meat Hygiene Inspectors at EO grade). Almost 79% of employees in the two most junior grades are male. The proportion of women in more senior grades (HEO-SCS) is higher with 82% of female employees in HEO-SCS grades.

In addition to this, most Meat Hygiene Inspectors are on national pay bands, which are lower than the London range to reflect the difference in living costs. The gender balance for roles in London is 50/50 whereas outside of London it is 64% to 36% in favour of men.

The average pay gaps (both mean and median) when analysed by grade are significantly different to the overall figure with the pay gaps much narrower.

Mean pay gap

Grade	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
AO	-0.4%	-6.4%	-3.6%	2.9%	9.8%
EO	3.9%	4.7%	4.5%	1.9%	0.8%
HEO	4.8%	-0.8%	0.2%	-0.4%	0.6%
SEO	1.9%	-0.03%	0.7%	-0.45%	0.9%
Grade 7	3.0%	-0.5%	2.2%	1.5%	-0.4%
Grade 6	2.6%	1.1%	2.1%	-5.1%	-4.4%
SCS 1	0.2%	1.2%	7.9%	10.7%	4.3%
SCS 2	7.8%	2.6%	-1.6%	-3.6%	-4.7%
SCS 3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Median pay gap

Grade	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
AO	-1.7%	-8.8%	-3.4%	0.4%	3.9%
EO	3.3%	4.2%	3.9%	2.8%	0%
HEO	0.3%	-2.3%	-0.1%	-0.2%	1.1%
SEO	2.7%	2.2%	0.9%	0.2%	3%
Grade 7	5%	0.9%	1.3%	2.4%	-3.1%
Grade 6	2.5%	1.5%	0.9%	-4.8%	-6.6%
SCS 1	-0.3%	-2.3%	9.6%	10.3%	8.3%
SCS 2	10.2%	4.6%	-1.9%	-2.9%	-5.4%
SCS 3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(No pay gap at SCS3 as only one employee)

Although automatic pay progression has ceased, its historical impact combined with male staff more likely to have longer service, at EO grade in particular, affected our gender pay gap. Our new pay structure introduced in August 2019 has had a positive impact. Spot rates at EO grade have resulted in the mean pay gap for the grade falling from a high of 4.7% in 2018 to less than 1% in 2021, and, there is no median gap for the grade. We employ a number of interns at AO grade who are predominantly female hence the increase in the gap at that grade. Our pay structure has higher pay bands for 'market-force/niche' job roles and this accounts for the gap in favour of women at Grade 6.

The 2020 SCS pay award targeted those at the lower end of the SCS1 grade and this has helped reduce the mean pay gap by over 6 percentage points. The SCS population size is small and SCS pay bands are wide, meaning any staffing changes are likely to amplify the impact.

Bonus pay

Mean bonus pay gap	Median bonus pay gap	Proportion of men receiving a bonus	Proportion of women receiving a bonus
-25.3%	-40.0%	60.6%	65.3%

The FSA recognises and rewards individuals or teams for exceptional achievements relating to specific tasks or activities, and/or for acting as an outstanding role model in the demonstration of the FSA's Values. Awards are limited to specific values (cash awards of £100, £250, £500 or £1,000). There is no limit to the number of awards an individual may receive but the total amount is capped at £2,500. A larger proportion of females received bonuses and female staff received proportionately higher amounts than male colleagues (the mean amount £110 more for females and the median £100 more). Higher graded staff of both sexes received higher amounts than lower grades and due to the workforce structure mentioned above this has impacted on the bonus pay gap.

Averages for bonus pay	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Mean bonus pay gap	4.7%	0.9%	11.8%	-16.3%	-25.3%
Median bonus pay gap	5.5%	0%	0%	0%	-40.0%
Proportion of men receiving a bonus	33%	28%	60%	62.9%	60.6%
Proportion of women receiving a bonus	38%	32%	60%	62.8%	65.3%

Proportion of male and female employees in each pay quartile

Lower quartile Female	Lower quartile Male	Lower middle quartile Female	Lower middle quartile Male	Upper middle quartile Female	Upper middle quartile Male	Upper quartile Female	Upper quartile Male
23.1%	76.9 %	37.5%	62.5%	52.0%	48.0%	47.4%	52.6%

The hourly pay quartiles show the proportion of men and women that are in each pay quartile, when employees are arranged in order of hourly pay rate. The higher concentration of men at more junior grades where pay is lower illustrates why there is a large negative pay gap. The proportion of men and women in the upper quartiles is similar with the majority gender in each having 9 more employees.

2017

Grade	Male	Female
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Lower quartile	75.4%	24.6%
Lower middle quartile	79.9%	20.1%
Upper middle quartile	58%	42%
Upper quartile	58.6%	41.4%

2018

Grade	Male	Female
Lower quartile	74.5%	25.5%
Lower middle quartile	78.7%	21.3%
Upper middle quartile	52.1%	47.9%
Upper quartile	56.3%	43.7%

2019

Grade	Male	Female
Lower quartile	74.4%	25.6%
Lower middle quartile	73.7%	26.3%
Upper middle quartile	49.8%	50.2%
Upper quartile	53.6%	46.4%

2020

Grade	Male	Female
Lower quartile	74.3%	25.7%
Lower middle quartile	67%	33%
Upper middle quartile	50.5%	49.5%
Upper quartile	48.6%	51.4%

2021

Grade	Male	Female
Lower quartile	76.9%	23.1%
Lower middle quartile	62.5%	37.5%
Upper middle quartile	48.0%	52.0%
Upper quartile	52.6%	47.4%

Taking action

We are committed to fair pay irrespective of gender and to eliminating our gender pay gap. We will continue to promote policies and initiatives to support equal opportunities for our entire workforce.

Recruitment

We ensure the selection process is clear on our job adverts, providing prospective candidates with transparency regarding the selection panel, assessments and criteria. We are committed to representative selection panels and each panel must include female representation to ensure

gender balance. To eliminate potential bias in the recruitment process we use gender-neutral language in job adverts and inclusive language in all communications to gain the attention and interest of diverse applicants.

We use structured interviews and we can use a range of assessments including situational judgment tests, technical interviews and media scenarios. Staff Engagement Focus Groups for senior roles see candidates asked to facilitate a two-way discussion on topic areas chosen by the FSA. This approach elicits greater evidence about the candidates' engagement and communication style. Feedback is structured around the Civil Service Leadership Statements (Inspiring, Confident and Empowering). These approaches reduce the reliance on candidates performing well at a single interview as well as testing a range of skills. These assessments aid the panel in making their final decision and are not an automatic pass or fail.

We have adopted Civil Service Success Profiles. The framework is designed to make the process for recruitment more flexible, accessible and inclusive, offering different methods of recruitment based on behaviours, strengths, ability, experience, and technical skills.

Flexible working

We support all staff who wish to work more flexibly such as job share, reduced hours, compressed hours. We encourage the uptake of shared parental leave, which means men can take on more caring responsibilities and offer three weeks paternity leave. We have developed modern working practices that offer staff greater flexibility, focussing on outcomes, and location agnostic roles where possible.

The FSA Our Ways of Working programme was established to create an environment in which our people are highly capable, effectively supported and engaged with our mission – food we can trust – so that they consistently choose to make outstanding contributions to protecting, informing and empowering consumers. A key part of the programme is our People Offer where staff can choose the most productive environment to work in subject to business needs. Staff have the opportunity to be office-based, work from home or split their time between the office and another location. We have invested in upgrading our IT infrastructure to support this and trained our managers and teams in managing performance and working remotely.

Career development

The FSA recognises the importance of talent management and how it interlinks with performance management. By taking a consistent approach to how we define, identify and manage talent across the FSA, we ensure that everyone can think about, discuss and plan their development needs in line with their ambitions and potential. At quarterly check-ins we expect managers to hold career conversations with individuals in their team discussing their career aspirations and the development needed to get there (for example, potential for lateral moves) along with, what things engage and motivate and how these can be developed in role.

We help women to progress their careers through schemes such as Beyond Boundaries (a talent programme for under-represented groups) and Crossing Thresholds (a year-long career development programme for Women in the Civil Service). These programmes provide access to the right opportunities, exposure, stretch and development to assist participants reach their potential. In addition to this, we provide access to the Future Leaders Scheme (for Grade 7 and Grade 6) and Senior Leaders Scheme (for SCS) enabling those with potential to develop their senior leadership skills and move into the top civil service roles.

Reward

We introduced a new pay structure effective from August 2019. Our previous grading structure had long bandwidths with clusters of employees at the minima and maxima of each grade. We introduced spot rates at AO and EO grades for grades HEO to Grade 6 we targeted higher pay increases to employees at the lower end of their pay grades. After three consecutive years of no median bonus pay gap, 2021 saw a large increase in favour of female staff. This increase is being analysed to understand the reason behind this.

Diversity

Developing and supporting staff networks is a key element of our diversity and inclusion strategy. We have a range of employee led networks that provide a forum to discuss, and provide mutual support, for those with a common interest. Our networks provide a voice for and support to all employees within the FSA and each network is championed by a director who promotes their work and provides senior representation and strategic direction for their areas.

The FSA Women's Network's vision is to encourage and inspire women to achieve their full potential and our Parent Support Network aims to encourage and support parents who have not only recently had children, but all parents in their career journey and as their children grow, as well as providing support to managers so they can in turn support staff who are on the parental journey. Our Men's Network is a safe and supportive space to support and encourage the promotion of Men's Health and Wellbeing. All employees are encouraged to join these networks.

Networks are also represented on the FSA Diversity Council which is chaired by our Chief Executive and was established to ensure we deliver our commitments under the diversity and inclusion strategy. Ring-fenced funding is available to support networks stage events.

Declaration

We confirm that our data has been calculated according to the requirements of The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.