

Aspirations Academies Trust

Gender Pay Gap Report 2024

Introduction

In accordance with The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 the Aspirations Academies Trust has exercised its mandatory gender pay gap reporting obligations.

The reported information of the Aspirations Academies Trust and other employers can be viewed on the Government's gender pay gap service website: <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/>

Sections 1 to 4 of this paper set out the data of the Trust for the snapshot date of 31 March 2023 that has been reported to the Government Equalities Office. Comparable figures from previous reports are shown in brackets. Section 4 (relating to bonus pay) has additional notes providing further contextual information and section 5 provides a general summary report.

1. Difference in pay

Mean gender pay gap: women's mean hourly rate was 15.1% lower than men's (2022: 15.9%; 2021: 15.7%; 2020: 16.1%; 2018: 20.0%)

Median gender pay gap: women's median hourly rate was 21.6% lower than men's (2022: 22.2%; 2021: 23.7%; 2020: 20.7%; 2018: 20.1%)

2. Proportion of women/men in each pay quartile

	Women	Men
Top quartile (highest paid)	64.3% (2022: 65.8%; 2021: 66.3%; 2020: 66.4%; 2018: 67.0%)	35.7% (2022: 34.2%; 2021: 33.7%; 2020: 33.6%; 2018: 33.0%)
Upper middle quartile	69.0% (2022: 70.8%; 2021: 71.6%; 2020: 74.3%; 2018: 74.2%)	31.0% (2022: 29.2%; 2021: 28.4%; 2020: 25.7%; 2018: 25.8%)
Lower middle quartile	75.0% (2022: 75.6%; 2021: 78.4%; 2020: 78.3%; 2018: 80.5%)	25.0% (2022: 24.4%; 2021: 21.6%; 2020: 21.7%; 2018: 19.5%)
Lower quartile (lowest paid)	80.4% (2022: 82.9%; 2021: 82.3%; 2020: 82.4%; 2018: 86.1%)	19.6% (2022: 17.1%; 2021: 17.7%; 2020: 17.6%; 2018: 13.9%)

3. Proportion of women/men paid bonus

4.2% of women were paid bonus (2022: 4.3%; 2021: 4.6% 2020: 3.9%; 2018: 4.48%)

1.9% of men were paid bonus (2022: 1.7%; 2021: 4.7% 2020: 2.9%; 2018: 7.18%)

4. Difference in bonus pay

Mean gender bonus pay gap: women's mean bonus pay was 51.38% lower than men's (2022: 57.26%; 2021: 55.3%; 2020: 68.0%; 2018: 79.1%)

Median gender bonus pay gap: women's median bonus pay was 98.98% lower than men's (2022: 98.27%; 2021: 96.8%; 2020: 98.2%; 97.5%)

The above figures provide the statutorily reportable information but this gives a potentially misleading impression of the distribution of bonus payments. This is explained by the following three notes.

Note A:

The most general application of bonus payments made by Aspirations is where these form part of the reward package of academy principals and (up to September 2022) a small number of top executive positions as a performance related bonus. In the year to 31 March 2023, these ranged in value from £2,000 to £10,000 and were made to 19 staff (14 women and 5 men).

Analysing this group of bonus payments alone shows the women's mean bonus pay was slightly higher than the men's (approximately 0.4%). However, for this group the women's median bonus pay was 30.0% lower than the men's.

The difference in the median figure arises because the bonus payments made to principals of smaller establishments (mainly primary academies) were set at a lower value than those paid to principals of larger establishments (most of the secondary academies) and top central executives. Within the smaller establishment group there were 9 staff who received a bonus (8 women and 1 man) while within the other group there were 10 staff who received a bonus (6 women and 4 men). The distribution of men and women between these two subgroups leads to the median bonus payment made to all men across the two groups being significantly higher than the women's.

Nevertheless, within the smaller establishment category, all individuals received exactly the same bonus, regardless of whether they were female or male. This was also the case for those in the larger establishment category.

Note B:

Other than for the above leadership positions, reportable bonus payments were made by only two academies. These other bonus payments were paid as a reward for high attendance to support staff positions (ranging in value from c. £11 to c. £118). This sort of bonus payment was made to 22 staff in the year to 31 March 2023 (21 women and 1 man).

The analysis of these payments alone shows women's mean bonus pay in this group was higher than the men's (c. 10%) and women's median bonus pay in this group was almost identical to the men's (the difference being less than 1%).

The level of bonus payment made to different individuals in this group was significantly affected by the proportion to full time hours they worked. Therefore, two different individuals employed on the same pay grade and working the same proportion to full time hours would have received an identical bonus subject to meeting the qualifying attendance criteria.

Note C:

Two factors combine to cause the most significant reason for the large gender gap in the reportable data for bonus payments.

The first factor is that the bonus payments relating to the performance of key leaders (note A) was very much higher than the other types of bonus payment (note B). Illustrating this, the mean leadership performance bonus (inclusive of women and men) was 99.32% higher than the mean of other bonus payments (inclusive of women and men). This difference reflects the completely different nature of the two types of bonus payment.

The second factor is that while females outnumber males in both the sub groups that received bonuses, the proportion of men in group (A) (26.32%) was much higher than the proportion of men in group (B) (4.55%).

This difference in distribution leads to the overall male average bonus figures being notably higher than the overall female average bonus figures.

5. Summary report

Firstly, on the matter of the gender pay gap relating to bonus pay, notes A to C in section 4 above provide an explanation of how the reported data potentially gives a misleading impression. Therefore, while the data that legally has to be reported seems to show that men generally received very much higher bonus payments than women, closer analysis of each sub group of staff that received bonuses showed that within each relevant sub group the average payments for men and women were much closer.

Moving on from the matter of bonus pay reporting, the following reports on general pay issues and related factors.

The Trust notes that, as at March 2023, its overall gender split of employees across its workforce was approximately 72.87% women to 27.13% men. The comparative data for previous years was 2022 73.67% to 26.24%; 2021: 74.6% to 25.4%; 2020: 75.3% to 24.7%; 2018: 76.9% to 23.1%.

From 2022 to 2023 the overall workforce relevant to gender pay gap reporting saw a moderate increase from 1029 to 1150.

As shown in the reported data (section 2 above), women outnumber men in all pay quartiles. However, there were notable changes in the gender balance within each pay quartile in the 2022-2023 period.

- In the top pay quartile, the proportion of women decreased by 1.5% (to 64.3%)
- In the upper middle quartile, the proportion of women decreased by 1.8% (to 69.0%)
- In the lower middle quartile, the proportion of women decreased by 0.6% (to 75.0%)
- In the lower quartile, the proportion of women decreased by 2.5% (to 80.4%)

The gender pay gap is largely explained by two factors:

- in the upper pay quartile (the highest paid), women outnumber men by a *lower* percentage compared to the figure that women outnumber men across the whole workforce. That is, the proportion of women in the upper pay quartile was greater than the proportion of men by only c. 28.6% while the proportion of women in the total workforce was greater than the proportion of men by c. 45.7%)
- in the lower pay quartile (the lowest paid) women outnumber men by a *higher* percentage compared to the figure that women outnumber men across the whole workforce. That is, the proportion of women in the lower pay quartile was greater than the proportion of men by c. 60.8% while the proportion of women in the total workforce was greater than the proportion of men by c. 45.7%).

The job profiles of the upper pay quartile and the lower pay quartile are very different. Typical of jobs in the upper pay quartile are senior leadership posts in the Trust's academies and senior executive positions in the central team. Generally, such posts require staff who hold degree and post graduate qualifications. Typical of jobs in the lower pay quartile (as at March 2023) are those in support positions with no professional qualification requirements. Historically the posts represented in the lower pay quartile have been in a very different jobs market compared to those in the higher pay quartiles.

To some extent this situation is changing. Part of the reason for this is that a large number of job roles that previously featured in the lower pay quartile and had no obvious career path to the middle or top pay quartiles have been outsourced (cleaning and catering). Therefore, the lower quartile now has a notably higher proportion of education support roles within it. Coupled with this, the Trust is developing an increasing number of training opportunities for those in education support roles to build a career that could, over time, take them to the sort of posts that feature in the middle and even top pay quartiles.

By applying its commitment to staff development and fair recruitment practice, the Trust would hope to see over time that the proportion of women and men in its upper pay quartile would become more closely aligned with the proportion of women and men in its middle pay quartiles (which are currently comparatively close to the 73:27 split of the overall workforce). Such a development should see a closing of the gender pay gap.

Disappointingly, the 2023 statistics do not show such a development in women's representation in the higher two pay quartiles but this is more than balanced out by the decrease in female representation within the lower pay quartile. This has resulted in a net reduction in the Trust's overall gender pay gap. The 2023 mean gender pay gap of 15.1% compares with a 15.8% gap in 2022 and the reduction continues a trend that has been seen in most years since 2018 when the mean difference was 20.0%.

Having reviewed the gender pay gap data of a number of other multi academy trusts, it would appear that similar factors are relevant across the sector and the Aspirations gender pay gap compares reasonably well with sector norms.

Further weight is given to this assessment by referring to a report prepared by the Local Government Association in April 2023¹. This report, analysing data from 31 March 2022 of 801 different organisations operating in the school sector, assessed the overall school sector to have a mean average gender pay gap of 18.4% and a median gap of 29.4%. These figures indicate a wider

¹ 'Analysis of the gender pay gap in the school sector', Local Government Association (downloaded 18 April 2023)

pay gap across the sector than is the case for Aspirations and, while this data is one year older than the most recently reported figures for Aspirations, they seem sufficiently recent to cautiously use as a benchmark.

John Reece
Director of Human Resources and Compliance
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