



Gender Pay Gap Report 2023

Snapshot Date: 5th April 2023

Our Values



INNOVATION



PARTNERSHIP



EXCELLENCE



INTEGRITY

Forward

At Meridian Business Support (Meridian) we believe that everyone, whatever their role, makes a valuable contribution towards the success of our business. In turn we ensure that everyone is rewarded fairly for the work that they do and has access to the same opportunities to develop and grow. We believe in being an inclusive and diverse organisation where anyone can reach their full potential.

What is the Gender Pay Gap?

The gender pay gap measures the difference in average hourly pay between men and women across all levels of seniority in a company and is expressed as a percentage of men's pay. A positive percentage means that the average hourly pay for men is higher than that of females, whilst a negative percentage indicates that the average hourly pay for females is higher. It does not measure equal pay, which refers to how much a man or a woman is paid for doing the same or similar role.

Our Results

For the purpose of the Gender Pay Gap Regulations, we are required to report on Meridian Business Support Ltd. The results below include Meridian's permanent employees and its temporary workers who were engaged on either a Contract for Services or Employment Contract, on the snapshot date of 5th April 2023.

On the snapshot date, Meridian employed 187 permanent employees, of whom 70 were males and 117 were females. All permanent employees are paid on a monthly basis and most are eligible to participate in a relevant profit share scheme.

On the same date, 2,830 temporary workers were engaged on either a Contract for Services or an Employment Contract. Of these, 1,718 were males and 1,112 were females. Temporary workers are paid on a weekly basis and whilst it is the end user client who dictates the rates of pay, Meridian along with its clients, ensures that temporary workers are paid the same hourly rate irrespective of gender.

When looking at the combined total number of employees and temporary workers, males account for 59.2% of the workforce whilst females account for 40.8%. The results show that the mean gender pay gap has risen to 6.6% which means the gap between the hourly rates for males and females has increased. The median gender pay gap, which shows the difference between the mid point salaries for males and females, has also risen to 3.4%. When compared with the ONS figures for the gender pay gap in 2023 which stand at 14.3%, Meridian's overall results for both employees and temporary workers are lower.

This report analyses both the combined results for Meridian as a whole, including its temporary workers as well as the results for Meridian's permanent employees. This is because the results vary when looked at individually.

2022 & 2023 Gender Pay Gap Results

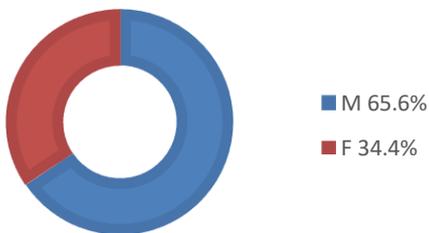
	Employees		Temps		Combined	
	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
% Male	37.2%	37.4%	60.3%	60.7%	61.3%	59.2%
% Female	62.8%	62.6%	39.7%	39.3%	38.7%	40.2%
Mean Gender Pay Gap	17.1%	16.4%	2.8%	8.79%	0.7%	6.6%
Median Gender Pay Gap	15.8%	5.6%	1.5%	5%	2.3%	3.4%
Mean Gender Bonus Gap	41.6%	38.6%	n/a	n/a		
Median Gender Bonus Gap	33.2%	36.5%	n/a	n/a		
% males receiving bonus	89%	81.4%	n/a	n/a		
% females receiving bonus	82.1%	85.5%	n/a	n/a		

Population by Pay Quartiles

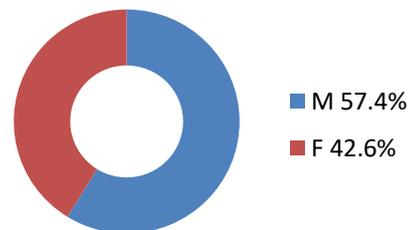
Combined results

These quartiles detail the pay rates from the highest to the lowest for all permanent employees and temporary workers, split into four equal sized groups and with the percentage of males and females in each group. The total population is 3,018 employees and workers, of whom 40.8% are female.

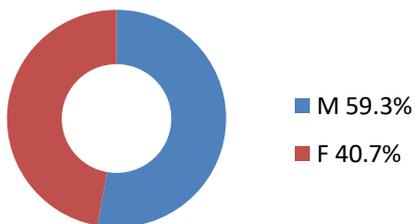
Upper Quartile



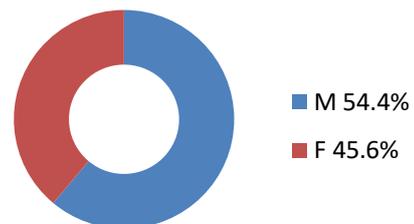
Upper Middle Quartile



Lower Middle Quartile



Lower Quartile



When analysing the combined results, out of a total of 3,018 employees and workers who fall under the scope of the Gender Pay Gap Reporting, 6.2% of this population are permanent Meridian employees.

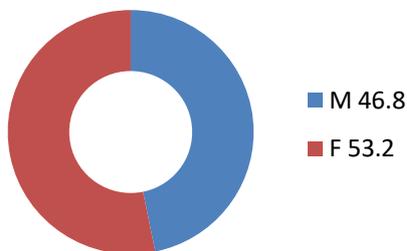
When looking at the results for Meridian permanent employees on their own, the results are significantly different to those of the combined results. In light of this, the rest of the report will focus on the results for permanent employees as this is believed to be more meaningful for Meridian.

Population by Pay Quartiles

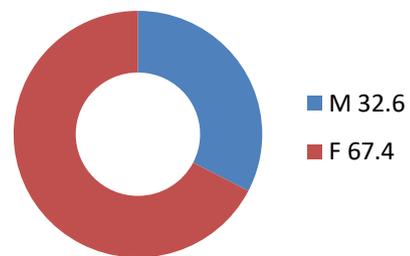
Permanent employees

These quartiles detail the pay rates from the highest to the lowest for all permanent employees, again split into four equal sized groups and with the percentage of males and females in each group. Out of the total population of 187 employees, 62.2% are female.

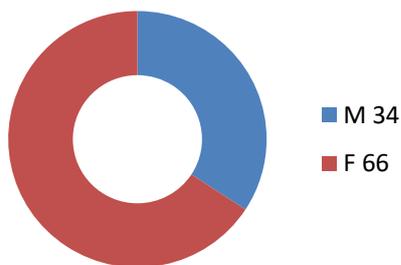
Upper Quartile



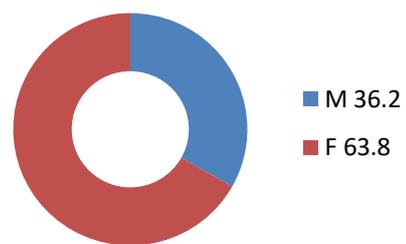
Upper Middle Quartile



Lower Middle Quartile



Lower Quartile



	2023		2022	
	M	F	M	F
Upper Quartile	46.8%	53.2%	41.7%	58.3%
Upper Middle Quartile	32.6%	67.4%	47%	53%
Lower Middle Quartile	34%	66%	34.7%	65.3%
Lower Quartile	36.2%	63.8%	27.1%	72.9%

Whilst the proportion of females in the upper quartile has decreased by 5% since 2022, there are still a higher proportion of females in this quartile than males. When looking at the upper middle quartile, there has been a 14.4% increase in females in this quartile in comparison to 2022 with 67.4% now placed in this quartile. Therefore when looking at the results for both the upper and upper middle quartiles in 2023, there has been an overall increase in the proportion of females of 9.4%.

When looking at the results for the lower middle and lower quartiles, there has been a significant change since 2022. Females account for two thirds of employees and the distribution of females in these groups are roughly two thirds in each which reflects the proportion of males to females in the business. This is an improvement on the 2022 results where 72.9% of people in the lower quartile were female.

Whilst the majority of the most senior roles in the business are held by males, females are well represented in other senior roles. The ratio of males to females on Meridian’s Board is 2:1 and on the Senior Leadership Team it is 1:4. In addition, females are well represented in Head of Department and Operational Management roles across the business with 60.4% of roles being held by females.

Meridian offers flexible working which enables our employees to achieve the right balance between work and family life; this flexibility is mainly requested by females. 33 of our people work part time, 17.6% of the working population, with 32 of these being female (27.3% of the female population). Whilst 7 of our part time female employees are in management positions, 11 are in admin support roles which typically attract a lower hourly rate of pay than operational fee earners.

Comparison of 2022 & 2023 Results for Permanent Employees

	2023	2022	Difference
% Male	37.4%	37.2%	0.2%
% Female	62.6%	62.8%	-0.2%
Mean Gender Pay Gap	16.4%	17.1%	-0.7%
Median Gender Pay Gap	5.6%	15.8%	-10.2%
Mean Gender Bonus Gap	38.6%	41.6%	-3%
Median Gender Bonus Gap	36.6%	33.2%	3.4%
% males receiving bonus	81.4%	89%	-7.6%
% females receiving bonus	85.5%	82%	3.5%

Hourly Rate of Pay

The mean gender pay gap for permanent employees is 16.4% which is above the national average of 14.3% as stated by the Office National Statistics (ONS) 2022 figures. Like many other UK companies, we recognise that this percentage is largely attributable to the fact that we have more males employed in Senior Leadership roles and more females in more administration and resourcing type roles which typically have a lower rate of hourly pay.

Whilst we have seen the proportion of females to males decreased by 5% in the upper quartile, overall there were 9.4% more females in the upper two quartiles and proportionally fewer in lower quartile which reflects the narrowing of both the mean and median gender pay gaps.

During the course of the reporting period, 13 of our people were promoted, of whom 8 were female which may account in part for the decrease in mean and median gender gaps. Decisions to promote and recruit are always based on skills and ability, irrespective of gender.

Bonus Pay

All our people make a valuable contribution to our business and it is important to us that everyone is rewarded fairly for their performance. For those in client facing operational roles, there are standard profit share schemes for each job type which everyone in that job type participates in, irrespective of gender. The quantum of the bonus earned is dependent upon individual performance.

For support roles, profit share is calculated on the overall performance of the business or relevant team, not on individual performance and is applied to every support role regardless of gender.

During the reporting period the proportion of males receiving profit share fell by 7.6% to 81.4% and for females, the proportion receiving bonus increased by 3.5% to 85.5%. The explanation for why some people did not receive a bonus on the snapshot the date is due in a large part to a policy introduced in 2021 whereby new starters would be required to pass their probation (usually 6 months) before being eligible to participate in a profit share scheme. When you look at the people who were employed on the snapshot date, 29 were new starters and therefore not eligible to take part in a scheme.

There have been notable changes to the bonus pay gap in 2023. Firstly, the mean bonus pay gap has decreased by 3% to 38.6%, the median bonus pay gap however has increased by 3.4% to 36.6% suggesting that males are receiving higher bonus payments than females.

In 2022/2023 Company performance was not as strong as it had been in 2021/2022 in some areas of the business which had a direct impact on the amount of profit share paid. For people who were on profit share schemes related to company or team performance rather than personal performance, these schemes saw their payments reduce which in turn may have impacted the increase in the median bonus gap. For example, members of Support Services account for 21.4% of employees, 77.5% of whom are female, and receive profit share in relation to Company performance. Participants in this scheme received lower profit share payments in 2022/2023 which will have impacted significantly more females than males.

For those on profit share schemes based on personal performance, the reduction in the mean bonus gap suggests that female profit share payments have increased.

Commitment to Bridging the Gender Pay Gap

At Meridian we recognise that being an inclusive and diverse employer is not just the right thing to do, it is also good for our business. We are committed to attracting and retaining the best talent, regardless of gender, so we can continue to provide an excellent service to our clients. Meridian is somewhere where people can fulfil their potential regardless of their gender, education or background.

This ethos is reflected in our track record of supporting our females return to work following periods of maternity leave. Over the reporting period, four of our people took maternity leave, all of whom returned to their roles after their maternity leave ended. All of these returners successfully applied for flexible working which helped facilitate their return to work and achieve a balance between work and home life.

Since the advent of the pandemic and the enforced requirement to work remotely, Meridian has become more agile as a result, particularly with regards to working location. Subsequent enhancements to our Flexible Working Policy to incorporate remote working on a permanent basis has allowed us to continue to offer the benefits of this to many of our employees. This style of working is particularly helpful to people with caring responsibilities, a significant proportion of whom tend to be female. We have already seen the positive impact of this in retaining and developing our talent and we will continue to develop this going forward.

Over the last few years we have enhanced our longer term development programmes which allow our people to grow and develop new skills and ultimately improve their performance and their progression opportunities. In partnership with Recruitment Juice, our L&D team have developed the Meridian Recruitment Consultant Development Programme which is a year long course leading to both an NVQ Level 3 and CertRP qualification. This programme is available to all operational employees once they have completed their probation period. We also offer the Meridian Management Development Programme for aspiring and existing managers to develop their management skill set. Both programmes have had a positive impact in the development of our people and have led to progression opportunities for both female and male employees. As such we will continue to invest in these and other similar programmes.

We will also continue to invest in external training such as AAT, CIPD, Prince Two and Six Sigma. These programmes are open to everyone irrespective of gender where it will support them in their role and aid their career progression.

Coupled with our development programmes, Meridian continues to support the strategic objective to promote from within wherever possible to retain our talent within the business. All development opportunities are advertised internally and are open to everyone to apply. The company also continues to explore internal secondment opportunities where possible giving more of our people valuable development opportunities.

Post pandemic, the flexibility of remote working has enabled our employees to take up secondment opportunities or permanent moves more easily as location is not always a barrier. Not only does this have a positive impact on talent retention and development, but it also allows the business to utilise talent more effectively and positively impacting performance.

Our promotion statistics over the past 12 months demonstrate that our continued investment in the development of our people and our inclusive approach to promoting opportunities continues having a positive impact in supporting the progression of our people. The introduction of the year long Meridian Consultant Development has provided an opportunity for females in the lower middle and lower quartiles to develop their skills and progress their career.

Over the next twelve months we will continue to develop the areas above and will also focus on the development of progressive employment practises, particularly around flexibility, to promote further diversity across our business.

Finally, we will undertake an analysis of the data sitting behind the gender pay gap calculations in order to try and better understand, and thereby reduce, our gender pay gap further.

I can confirm that this report has been written in line with the Gender Pay Gap legislation and the figures contained within it are correct.

Jeanette Barrowcliffe
Finance Director