

Agenda Item	9
Report No	VAL 25/14

HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD

DRAFT EQUALITIES MAINSTREAMING AND EQUALITIES OUTCOMES

March 2013
Amended October 2014

HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD
EQUALITIES MAINSTREAMING and EQUALITIES OUTCOMES
MARCH 2013

Legal Context

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination for people on the grounds of the following characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The Public Sector Equality duty

The Act introduced a positive public sector equality duty (or general duty) on public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

The Act envisages that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others. The duty covers eight of the protected characteristics. It applies to Marriage and Civil partnerships in relation to non-discrimination duty only.

The specific equality duties

In May 2012 the Scottish Government introduced a set of specific equality duties in May 2012 to support the better performance of the general duty by listing public bodies; these include local authorities, licencing boards and joint boards. These duties include requirements to:

- Publish a report on mainstreaming the equality duty by 30th April 2013
- Publish equality outcomes and report on progress
- Assess and review policies and practices
- Gather and use employee information
- Publish gender pay gap information
- Publish an equal pay statement
- Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement

Mainstreaming Equality

Mainstreaming simply means integrating equality into the day to day work of the board – taking equality into account in everything that is done as an employer and when planning and providing services. By doing so equality becomes part of structures, behaviours and cultures.

Gathering information is an important aspect of mainstreaming and includes monitoring service users and service activity as regards all of the protected characteristics and then analysing outcomes.

It is also important for the council to take steps to gather annual information on its workforce and on the recruitment, development and retention of its employees with respect to protected characteristics.

It is important that in mainstreaming equality senior managers give clear and consistent messages and give equality an appropriate profile and emphasis.

Staff should be able to recognise the relevance of the equality duties to their own role and should take it into consideration in carrying out their work.

What has been done since the Act was passed?

The Assessor has participated in the Highland Council staff equalities group in order to gain information and insight through the good offices of the specialists who have been developing the policy of the Highland Council across its much larger remit.

These activities are described in the Highland Council Mainstreaming Report March 2013 and include consultation with and involvement of the following groups-

- Representatives from local equalities groups
- National equality organisations;
- Council's officers equalities working group and senior management teams;
- Staff groups
- Elected Members
- Community planning partners;
- Other Scottish local authorities.

The aim has been to seek to avoid duplicating work that is of a common character and to benefit from consultation activity carried out in connection with a range of functions in an effort to avoid "consultation" fatigue.

Information sources

In addressing the drawing up of equalities outcomes, the Board has drawn heavily on the Highland Council's Equalities Plan "A Fairer Highland" and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar document "Single Equality Duty". As an area of accessing broad statistical information we have relied upon the Highland

Council Equalities Profile which draws together information from a wide range of sources. As to attitudes in the Highlands we rely upon the Highland Council report "The Attitudes to Equalities and Discrimination Report".

It is intended to maintain that connection as to base data which it is anticipated will change over time particularly as the full results of the most recent census are released and base statistics founded in the 2001 census are refreshed and replaced by material from the 2011 census.

A separate body of information particularly relevant to the department's functions is to be found in the work of the Electoral Commission which since its creation has engaged in much research in the electoral field. In particular there is research suggesting differential levels of registration and attitudes amongst ethnic groups, between age groups and other demographic and economic characteristics.

While the material requires to be read in full it is clear that amongst other things:

- Voting turnout tends to be lower amongst Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BME)
- Levels of completeness on the electoral registers differ by ethnicity
- Turnout differs between BME groups
- Religion and ethnicity cannot always be disentangled
- Under-registration or not voting is greatest amongst the young
- While women and men are equally likely to vote in local, regional and national elections, women are less likely to participate in party membership and other formal political activities
- People in rented property tend to be less likely to participate in politics
- Deprivation has an association with non participation in the electoral process
- Mobile populations tend to be under-registered. This is believed to include travellers

It is clear that even if the equalities legislation did not apply to electoral registration there would be many issues arising in registration that demand attention under the terms of the legislation that require the ERO to take "all steps necessary" to produce complete and accurate registers.

While it might be thought to be an adequate position that in a jurisdiction with low numbers of BME voters it would be sufficient to assume that the area is not free of the difficulties found in larger ethnic communities. However there is some evidence to suggest that registration is greater where the population concentration is greater than one in ten. The suggestion is that where there is an active ethnic community there is greater encouragement to register and vote; absent that condition the position could be worse.

At a general level therefore there is a confluence of issues arising out of equalities work and electoral registration duties that acts as a clear pointer as to actions that may be required.

Pertinence and Proportionality

The process of preparing equality outcomes requires to understand the most significant equality issues arising in the organisation and sector. Efforts and resources require to be targeted as effectively as possible to meet the equality duties. Setting outcomes should focus on the areas where the organisation can have the most impact taking a strategic overview of the organisation as a whole and its functions.

Partnerships

The Joint Board does not operate in a vacuum albeit that its remit has a very narrow, wholly statutory compass. It is important to recognise that its functions are restricted but also that the impact of its functions are fundamental – the franchise and taxation.

Quite apart from the assistance gained in addressing the Board's equalities duties that is received by utilising specialist skills in the lead authority, the billing activities of the constituent councils are a continuation of the valuation and banding process and require close co-operation. This same holds true of the Returning Officer function where the year round activity of registration forms the bedrock of the large but short lived organisation that comes into existence when there is a major polling event.

The department is one of a number of Boards and liaison with other Assessors and EROs as to experiences and developments in the field is plainly pertinent. In the field of electoral registration the involvement of the Electoral Commission through their research, monitoring and more specific duties is also of great importance.

The full realisation of equality outcomes requires that the wider environment be kept in mind and that the complex interactions that can arise are not permitted to act counter to individual initiatives.

The many organisations which seek to advance the interests of those with protected characteristics are also viewed as partners with a particularly important role to play in providing feedback as to performance.

Outcomes

The Highland Council Plan "A Fairer Highland" has the following high level outcomes:

1. People are, and feel free to live their lives without harassment and discrimination, and can take part in community life.
2. People benefit from public services in a fairer way and are able to have their say about them.
3. Staff feel there is an organisational culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

The Board has no difficulty in associating itself with these ambitions. The mainstreaming process requires that more specific outcomes are established in order to tailor general ambitions to the circumstances of the organisation keeping in mind the ideas proportionality, priority and partnership.

It is also pertinent to keep in mind the circumstances in which the Board finds itself.

The strategic position

On a broad canvass the Board's strategic position can be summed up as follows:

- So far as the electoral registration function is concerned, the period from the start of 2013 through to the summer of 2015 is taken up with great change in the registration regime allied to three major polls – the European election, the Scottish Referendum and the UK General election. The change from household to individual electoral registration is a fundamental one and is seen as a prime focus for attention in the equalities field given the particular characteristics of the change of regime and the known difficulties affecting the relevant groups
- Rating – the rating revaluation due to be held in 2015 will now take place in 2017. This means that the bulk of the preparatory work will take place in 2014 – 2016 as the valuations will require to be finalised by the end of the summer in 2016
- The Council Tax regime is currently a stable function, however the Scottish Government has indicated that they are reviewing its future and it is possible that it will be replaced following the next Scottish Government election in 2016
- So far as the Board's role as an employer is concerned, during a time of severe restraint in public expenditure, it seems unlikely that other than in short term arrangements to deal with the introduction of IER, there is likely to be any expansion of the staff compliment and turnover in staff is likely to be low other than that engendered by retirements. Given these circumstances there is likely to be limited scope to affect change through the recruitment channel

Against that background and recognising that the rating and council tax function are largely property based, it seems clear that the main focus in the next two years requires to be in the electoral registration field.

This is not to suggest that when it comes to service delivery, there are no issues which can arise in the rating and council tax areas. These however are less likely, less obvious and plausibly may well be of a similar character as those that arise in the electoral field.

The Board's obligations as an employer must also assume a prominent position.

Accordingly the following outcomes are proposed:

Outcome One

People feel involved and are able to participate in public life and influence decision-making

This outcome shall be supported by:

- The existence of a comprehensive publicity plan supporting participation
- Integration of the equalities element with the Electoral Commission performance standards regime
- Engagement with individual equalities groups to ensure removal of barriers to registration as the IER regime enters its transitional phase.
- Ensure all property that should be taxed is included in the valuation roll and council tax list.

This will require a number of measures to track progress which are provisionally as follows:

- Number on the register relative to population estimates and census outputs
- Number of responders to household and individual canvass as a proportion of the total number of households
- Number of corrections and complaints
- Feedback from survey of equalities groups
- Reports by auditors

Outcome Two

We will improve customer satisfaction rates in particular from people with protected characteristics

The following steps shall support this outcome:

- Focus on improved materials using straightforward language tested with relevant groups in partnership with other EROs and the Electoral Commission
- Improved communication with particular target groups through engagement with individual equalities groups and other agencies representing those with protected characteristics and seeking to remove barriers to registration
- Develop public engagement strategy

In order to track this outcome the following will be examined:

- Public performance survey via random sampling of transactions with the department
- We will monitor performance more generally via partners' survey work, such as Electoral Commission and Highland Council research and reports by representative groups

- Number of complaints
- Analysis of the number of electoral errors that come to light

Outcome Three

Increase the proportion of staff and job applicants who feel they are treated fairly, particularly those with protected characteristics.

The Board is a relatively small organisation with low staff turnover which limits the capacity to address any imbalance in the workforce. As part of this exercise it is acknowledged that younger people, particularly those under the age of 30, are under-represented.

This outcome shall be supported by the following:

- A systematic review of employment policies to ensure fair and equal conditions and opportunities
- Promotion of work experience opportunities
- Increased training in equalities matters for staff at each of the departments offices
- Increased commitment to training where there is an identified need for the organisation to improve the skills of staff
- Reduction in occupational segregation where this contributes to an equal pay gap and generally seek to reduce the gender pay gap
- Review of recruitment channels to improve access to opportunities
- Promote full use of flexible working and maternity and related arrangements
- Promote career progression schemes

In order to track this outcome we shall require the following:

- A periodic staff survey to monitor and record staff opinions, perceptions and satisfaction
- Analysis of employment data and recruitment monitoring statistics
- Assessment of equalities monitoring statistics

Adopting these outcomes will require that a revised Equalities Plan be prepared that sets out in greater detail the steps that will require to be taken to advance towards these outcomes. It may also be necessary to modify some of the measures that are proposed. This is particularly so in the electoral field where the intention to integrate some of this work with the Electoral Commission will give rise to the opportunity to merge statistical requirements when the Commission guidance on individual electoral registration is published.

Equal Pay Statement and Staffing Information

Under the statutory regime there is also a requirement to publish an equal pay statement and to publish information as to the characteristics/demographics of the Board's employees and the gender pay gap.

So far as the equal pay statement is concerned, this is attached as Appendix 1. The terms are the same as those which are proposed for approval by the lead authority, the Highland Council.

The statistical material is set out in Appendix 2.

The gender pay gap information is set out in Appendix 3.

Reporting

The Board is required annually to report and publish information on equalities matters. It is intended to accommodate this requirement by including a section in the annual report that is produced each year which will draw together performance, equalities and financial information.

Review

It is a requirement to review equalities practices, policies and outcomes from time to time. A suitable timeframe for review is after the introduction of individual electoral registration which is likely to conclude by the end of 2014.

Moray House
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March 2013
Updated October 2014

HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD

EQUAL PAY STATEMENT

1. The Highland & Western Isles Valuation Joint Board is committed to the principle of equal pay for all its employees and aims to eliminate any sex bias in its pay systems.
2. The Board understands that equal pay between men and women is a legal right under both domestic and European law.
3. It is in the interest of the Board to ensure that it has fair and just pay systems. It is important that employees have confidence in the process of eliminating sex bias and the Board is committed to achieving this through consultation with employees and the recognised trade unions.
4. The Board recognises that gender segregation in the workforce may have an effect on equal pay gaps. The Board is committed to monitoring and analysing areas of gender segregation in identifying appropriate equalities action and outcomes.
5. The Board believes that by eliminating sex bias in its pay systems, it is sending a positive message to its employees and the Highland/Western Isles communities. It makes good business sense to have fair and transparent reward systems and it also helps the Board to control costs.
6. The Board's objectives are to:
 - Identify and eliminate any unfair, unjust or unlawful practices that impact on pay
 - Take appropriate remedial action
7. The Board will publish progress against action plans and review this statement every three years.

Moray House
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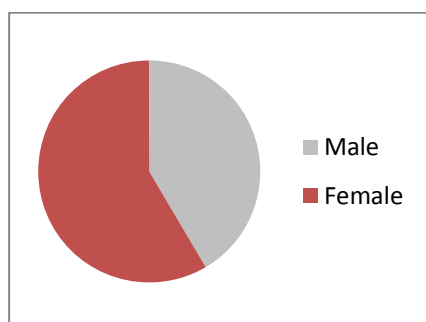
27 March 2013

HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD

EQUALITIES MONITORING – AS AT 1st APRIL 2013

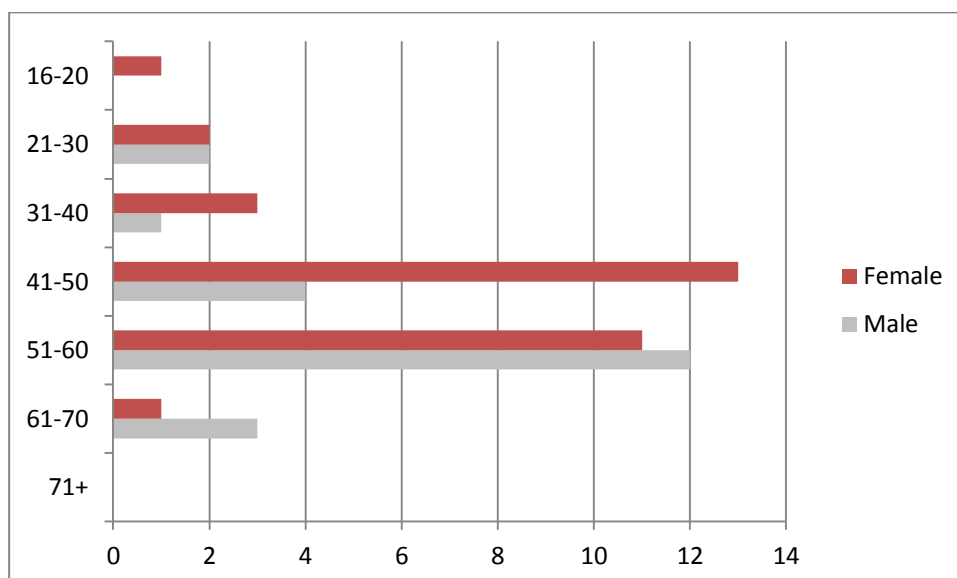
Employees by Gender

Male	Female
22	31



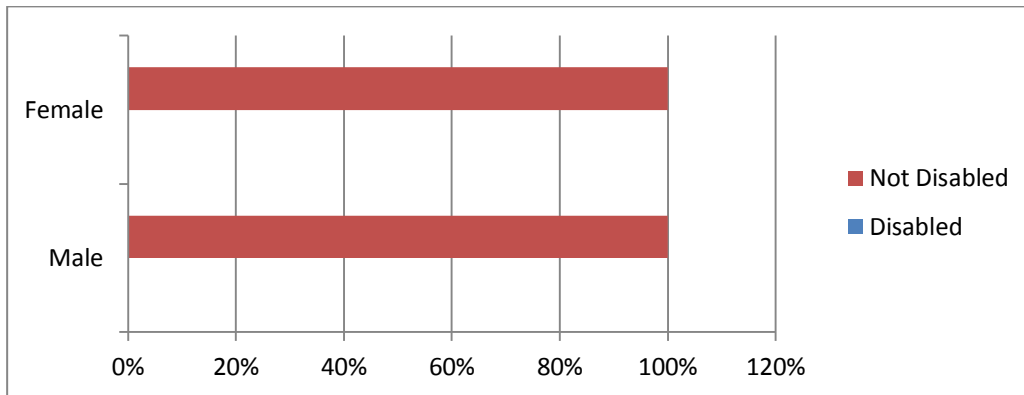
Employee Age Distribution

Age Range	Male	Female
71+	0	0
61-70	3	1
51-60	12	11
41-50	4	13
31-40	1	3
21-30	2	2
16-20	-	1



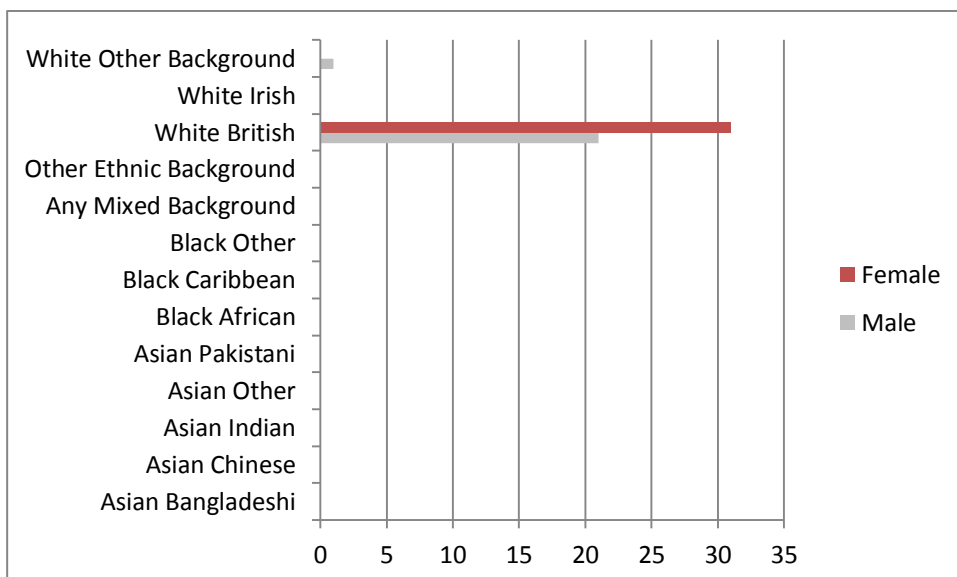
Disability

	Male	Female
Disabled	0%	0%
Not Disabled	100%	100%



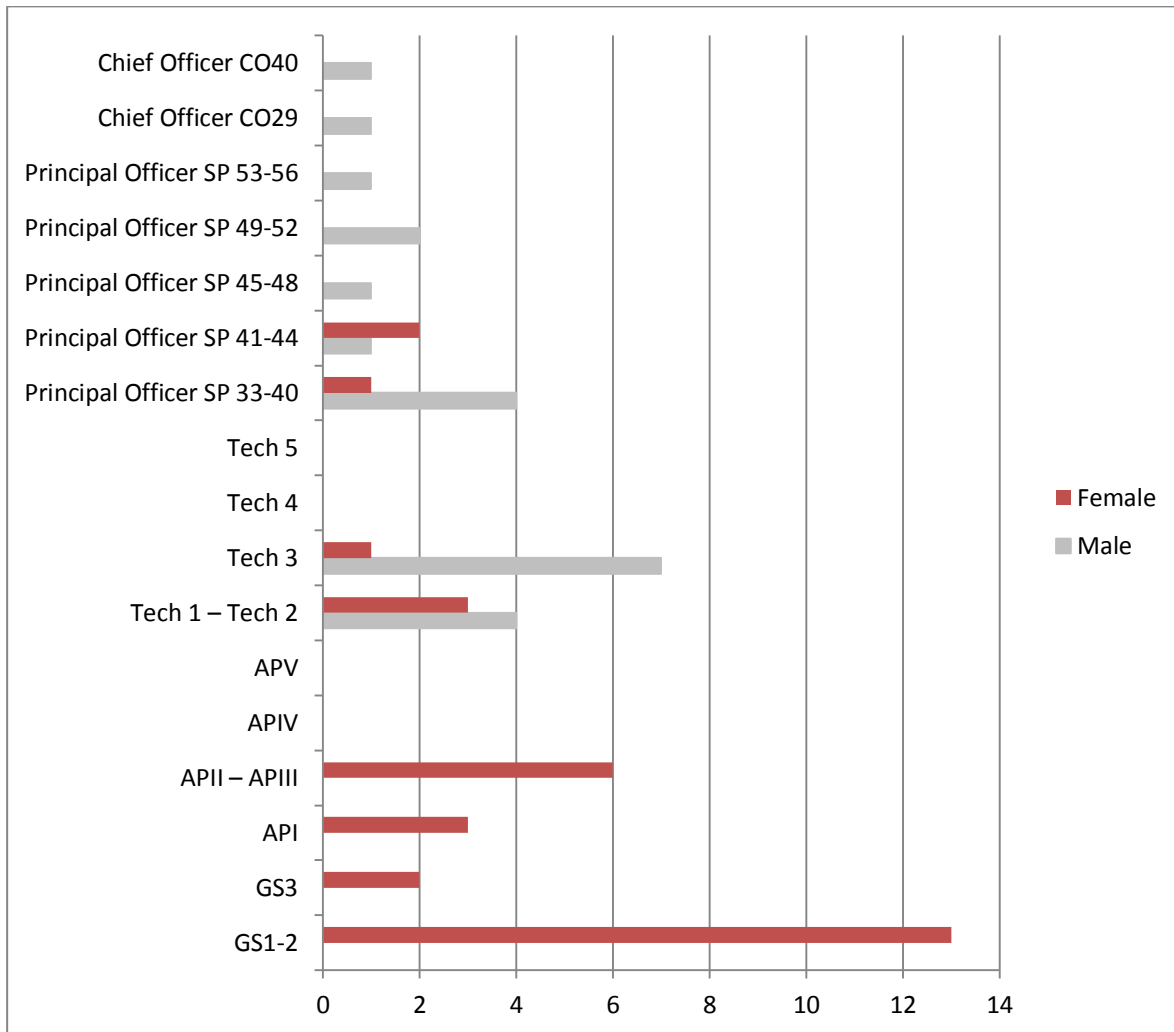
Ethnic Group

Ethnicity	Male	Female
Asian Bangladeshi	0	0
Asian Chinese	0	0
Asian Indian	0	0
Asian Other	0	0
Asian Pakistani	0	0
Black African	0	0
Black Caribbean	0	0
Black Other	0	0
Any Mixed Background	0	0
Other Ethnic Background	0	0
White British	21	31
White Irish	0	0
White Other Background	1	0



Average Salary

Salary Grade	Male	Female
GS1-2	0	13
GS3	0	2
API	0	3
APII – APIII	0	6
APIV	0	0
APV	0	0
Tech 1 – Tech 2	4	3
Tech 3	7	1
Tech 4	0	0
Tech 5	0	0
Principal Officer SP 33-40	4	1
Principal Officer SP 41-44	1	2
Principal Officer SP 45-48	1	0
Principal Officer SP 49-52	2	0
Principal Officer SP 53-56	1	0
Chief Officer CO29	1	0
Chief Officer CO40	1	0



HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD

GENDER PAY GAP DATA AS AT 1 APRIL 2013

Combined Gap

Male	Female
£397.30 – combined salary for all 22 male employees	£325.65 – combined salary for all 31 female employees
Average hourly rate = £18.06 per hour	Average hourly rate = £10.50

Gender pay gap – difference between the average male and female pay rates. It is calculated by dividing the average female hourly pay rate by the average male hourly pay rate.

$$£10.50 / £18.06 \text{ per hour} = + 0.58\%$$

Full Time Gap

Male	Female
£397.30 – combined salary for all 22 full time male employees	£273.55 – combined salary for all 26 full time female employees
Average hourly rate = £18.06 per hour	Average hourly rate = £10.52

Full time gender pay gap is the gap between the average hourly rate of female employees who work full time and male employees who work full time.

$$£10.52 / £18.06 \text{ per hour} = + 0.58\%$$

Part Time Gap

Male	Female
£397.30 – combined salary for all 22 full time male employees	£52.10 – combined salary for all 5 part time female employees
Average hourly rate = £18.06 per hour	Average hourly rate = £10.42

Part time gender pay gap is the gap between the average hourly pay rate of female employees who work part time and male employees who work full time.

$$£10.42 / £18.06 \text{ per hour} = + 0.58\%$$

	Combined Gap	Full Time Gap	Part Time Gap
All employees	+ 0.58%	+ 0.58%	+ 0.58%

Positive figures indicate a pay gap to the detriment of female employees while negative figures indicate a pay gap to the detriment of male employees.