Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee

Gender Pay Gap – Additional Information

Overarching Pay Gap Information and Measures
The SFRS recognises that occupational segregation exists within the SFRS and that this is the primary cause of the Pay Gaps between different groups of staff. This segregation arises primarily from traditional societal attitudes that shape employment patterns.

The SFRS has introduced a robust Equality Impact Assessment process that ensures that Equality Issues are considered at the formative stages of policy formulation, and which ensures that each policy supports the SFRS’s commitment to equality. Through these measures the SFRS seeks to ensure that the individual needs of employees with different needs can be accommodated.

Specifically the SFRS considers that occupational segregation can best be addressed by ensuring that our recruitment, development and promotion processes are free from discriminatory elements, and encourage applications from all parts of the organisation and the community. The SFRS also believes that the incorporation of procedures that permit flexibility within employees’ terms and conditions will assist all employees achieve a healthy work/life balance, and permit them to meet personal challenges without compromising their professional and career development.

The SFRS’s recruitment and selection processes have been accredited through the Government Sponsored “Disability Confident Employer” Scheme as fair and free from discriminatory elements. This accreditation is further supported through the use within all recruitment and promotion processes of Diversity Questionnaire which enables us to monitor our success in attracting applicants from all sections of the community, and from each of the groups protected under the Equality Act 2010. The subsequent progress of candidates through the various stages of the selection process is also monitored, and this provides the SFRS with the ability to identify how successful applicants from different protected group are in meeting our criteria. Where it is identified that the SFRS has not been successful in attracting applicants that are representation of the community, or that a disproportionate number of applicants from specific protected groups are unable to meet our criteria at any point in the process, then our monitoring processes permit us to review these processes, and use the outcomes of this review to improve these processes where necessary.
The SFRS additionally recognises that female employees are proportionately more likely to have primary care responsibilities than their male counterparts. The SFRS also acknowledges that this can result in some employees either leaving the workplace or accepting part time jobs, or that it may inhibit the career development of these employees. The SFRS has therefore incorporated a range of measures into its employee practices to promote flexibility, and support employees who require flexible work arrangements. These arrangements include Flexible Working, a Flexi-time Scheme, and the provision of a Childcare voucher scheme within the Employee Benefits package.

The SFRS also considers that the existing occupational segregation within the Service can be addressed through developing the talents of staff from all levels of the organisation, and from all staffing groups. The SFRS is therefore currently developing a Leadership and Management Development Framework that will provide all our staff with the opportunity to develop their professional and technical job specific skills which, supported by our development focussed Appraisal system, will provide staff from all backgrounds with the opportunity to reach their full potential. The SFRS is also committed to tackling issues of low pay, and has formally adopted the Scottish Living Wage as the minimum point of the salary scales. In addition the SFRS has committed to providing low paid staff with the minimum annual pay award suggested by the Scottish Government’s Public Sector Pay Policy.

As occupational segregation is strongly influenced by deeply rooted societal factors, the SFRS considers that reducing pay gaps through delivering balance in the representation of staff from all backgrounds remains challenging. Nevertheless the SFRS is committed to fairness within the workplace, and will continue to build on the solid foundations it has developed over the four years since its foundation.

**Additional measures to reduce the Gender Pay Gap and Occupational Segregation.**

In support of its commitment to equality in pay and opportunity, the SFRS will seek to enhance its existing policies and procedures by introducing, enhancing or reviewing the following measures.

- Maintaining our commitment to addressing low pay though an on-going commitment to the Scottish Living Wage, the low pay provisions of the Scottish Government’s Public Sector Pay Policy, and by gaining accreditation as a Scottish Living Wage Employer from the Poverty Alliance.
- Reviewing our Pay and Reward Framework to assess the impact of our Total reward package on the Gender Pay Gap.
- Forming partnerships with other organisations to develop benchmarking criteria, and identify best practice.
- Review our Recruitment and Selection processes, Appraisal processes and Development programmes to support pay equality throughout the organisation, and in particular for staff with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010.
- Review our appraisal and incremental progression processes to assess their impact on those experiencing a period of absence from the workplace as a result of maternity leave etc, and develop supporting programmes for women returning to work after maternity leave.
- Extend our existing Positive Action campaigns to encourage applicants from all sections of the community to seek employment within all sections of the SFRS, and to address societal stereotypes regarding traditional patterns of employment.
- Develop employee forums and support networks to identify areas of best practice in our employment practices, and to identify areas for improvement, with particular focus on identifying female, disabled and minority ethnic staff needs.
- Assess and promote the capacity of the recently introduced Uniformed Shift System to accommodate requests for part time and flexible working.
- Review our strategy to address the findings of our recent Cultural Audit, and consolidate our corporate values of Safety, Teamwork, Innovation and Respect.
- Examine the potential of Apprenticeship Schemes to assist young people from different backgrounds achieve employment throughout the SFRS.
- Improve our processes for gathering and recording Employee Data in respect of Gender, Disability, Ethnicity and other protected characteristics.
- Support and assist Lobby Groups promote legislative change, and address early year societal stereotyping of employment by gender.