

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting: 16 February 2020

Report by: Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Report title: Gender Pay Gap Report 2020

Ward(s) affected: None

Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

- (a) To note the Gender Pay Gap Report 2020**
- (b) To agree the action plan 21/22**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 This report sets out the outcome of the Gender Pay Gap report 2020, reports progress on last year's action plan and outlines new actions for this year. The report and resulting action plan was agreed by Leadership Team on 18 January 2021.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In 2017 the government introduced legislation that made it statutory for organisations with 250 or more employees to report on their gender pay gap by 30 March 2018 and annually thereafter. As well as publishing our gender pay gaps we follow the best practice in terms of sharing the full report by providing a link so that the public can view our analysis and the actions we are taking to address the gap.

- 2.2 East Herts Council published its first gender pay gap report in March 2018 for the snapshot date of 31 March 2017. This is the council's fourth gender pay gap report for the snapshot date of **31 March 2020**.
- 2.3 The gender pay gap is a measure of the difference between men's and women's average earnings across an organisation. It is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings.
- 2.4 The data the council is required to provide includes mean and median pay gaps; mean and median bonus gaps; the proportion of male and female employees who received bonuses; and the proportion of male and female employees in each pay quartile.
- 2.5 The gender pay gap is different from 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. All jobs at East Herts are put through a 'Hay' job evaluation scheme to ensure the right grade and pay is given to jobs.

3.0 Report

Review of action plan

- 3.1 In our last gender pay report published in January 2019 we prioritised areas for action to reduce our gender pay gap. Here we report our progress.
- 3.2 Due to the reprioritisation of work in the HR and Communications teams as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff case studies were not progressed in 2020 but will be progressed in 2021 with our Communications team Work with the aim of building a set of varied staff case studies that

demonstrate diversity in our workforce and use them as part of our recruitment literature.

- 3.3 Leadership Team decided not to make it a requirement that selection panels always have both genders as this would be challenging but each interview panel chair is expected to give consideration to the diversity of the interview panel and where possible try to ensure the panel is diverse. Where this is not possible we ask managers to try to ensure that other elements of the panel show staff diversity, for example 'meet the team' sessions to demonstrate the diversity at East Herts and to appear as welcoming as possible to applicants of all backgrounds. HR are prompting managers to consider the diversity of the panel and involvement of the wider team in the process to present a more welcoming message to diverse applicants. The recruitment policy will be revised in May 2021 and will set out these requirements. In 2021/22 all managers will be trained in recruitment and selection as part of a new management training programme. There is also a section in our recruitment literature welcoming diversity which states:

However you identify yourself, whatever community you come from, we want the skills and commitment you have to bring. We want to work with you as an individual to help plan and support your career growth at East Herts. We're determined to break down barriers. We want East Herts to be a great place to work, learn and be able to contribute for everybody.

- 3.4 We have continued to issue the unconscious bias guidance with all shortlisting packs and HR Officers have provided briefing sessions to new managers as outlined. In November 2020 unconscious bias training was embedded into the general equality and diversity training e-learning that all staff are required to complete on an annual basis.
- 3.5 We have made improvements to the shortlisting form and selection decision form and made it mandatory for all

shortlisting forms to be returned before a conditional offer letter is sent out. This has had a very positive impact on the data available for analysis.

- 3.6 We have continued to focus on hard to recruit areas for apprentices and during this period this has focused on Planning. We have taken on two further apprentices but progress has been slowed by the pandemic, budget constraints, and the Planning framework no longer being available. East Herts Council is currently focusing on apprentices in Customer Services which will allow apprentices to have exposure to a wide range of areas in the council in which to progress to. We will always choose apprentices on merit but the Customer Services route should be attractive to both female and male candidates, in part due to the wide range of progression options available.

2020 figures

- 3.7 As can be seen in the report (Appendix A), the mean gender gap has remained the same as 2019 and the median gender pay gap has decreased by 2 percentage points from the 2019 figures. The median pay figure for women has increased slightly more than the median pay figure for men, which has reduced the gap. There has been an increase in men at the council since last year's report whereas the number of women has remained the same. There is an increase in men at some of the lower grades which has caused the mid-point to come closer to the mid-point for women. The data shows increases in the percentage of men in Q1, Q2 and Q4 and the percentage remains the same in Q3. The most notable increase is in Q4 where the percentage of men has increased by 5 percentage points. This is positive as it has been an ongoing action for the council to try and increase the number of males in our lower graded posts.
- 3.8 We are confident that the gender pay gap does not stem from paying men and women differently for the same or equivalent

work. All jobs are evaluated using the HAY job evaluation method and the council has a pay and grading structure agreed with Unison.

- 3.9 The council's mean gender pay gap is slightly less than median gender pay gap because there are more women than men employed in senior roles and the mean is more skewed by the extremes. The median figure represents the 'typical' man or woman (i.e. the man/woman in the middle of the male/female pay range) and is higher because of the greater proportion of men in the upper pay quartiles compared with lower pay quartiles, and a greater proportion of women in the lower pay quartiles compared with the upper pay quartiles. This is partly due to our organisational structure. The council has outsourced services such as refuse and grounds maintenance which are predominately male dominated areas of work. If these services remained in-house the proportion of male and female employees in the lower pay quartiles would be much more even. The types of roles typically found in the council in the lower quartiles tend to be customer facing or administrative in nature and currently are occupied predominately by women.

Action plan for 21-22

- 3.10 We have already taken forward several actions since the 2019 report and will continue to build on these as follows. Rather than create new actions, the actions below have been taken from the general equalities action plan (published in November 2020) which already considered gender based equality actions for the Council:

- Embed unconscious bias training into the general equality and diversity training e-learning that all staff are required to complete on an annual basis. Unconscious bias will also feature in more depth in the recruitment training for managers. The unconscious bias guidance will continue to be sent to each panel and this has been well received by

both the HR Committee and managers as a useful guide.

- Each interview panel chair to give consideration to the diversity of the interview panel and where possible try to ensure the panel is diverse. Where this is not possible try to ensure that other elements of the panel show staff diversity, for example 'meet the team' sessions to demonstrate the diversity at East Herts and to appear as welcoming as possible to applicants of all backgrounds (as covered above HR will prompt this for each recruitment process).
- Work with Communications to build a set of varied staff case studies that demonstrate diversity in our workforce and use them as part of our recruitment literature. These will include men in roles in the lower quartiles (especially in Customer Services and Administration) and higher graded female employees. Willing employees would need to be identified to become case studies but we need role models to try to break down more traditional stereotypes and career norms.
- HR have secured a refund for the recruitment module of the main HR system and will invest this money into an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) that will include an electronic application form and enable name blind recruitment, further reducing the opportunity for bias at the shortlisting stage.

4.0 Options

N/A - publishing the Gender Pay Gap figures on an annual basis is a statutory requirement.

5.0 Risks

N/A

6.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

Yes – as described in the report

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

Yes – as described in the report

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**7.1 Appendix A – Gender Pay Gap Report 2020**

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