



Gender Pay Gap Report 2022

Snapshot Date: 5th April 2022

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 2022.

On the snapshot date, Meridian employed 196 permanent employees, of whom 73 were males and 123 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, 2,963 temporary workers were engaged on either a Contract for Services or an Employment Contract. Of these, 1,782 were males and 1,181 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 58.7% of the workforce whilst females account for 41.3%. The results show that the mean gender pay gap has risen from 0.3% to 0.7% which means the gap between the hourly rates for males and females has increased 1. The median gender pay gap, which shows the difference between the mid point salaries for males and females, remained unchanged at 2.3%.

Across the whole of the business we have seen the average pay gap has increased by 0.4% since 2021 however the median pay gap has remained unchanged. 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 & 2021 Gender Pay Gap Results

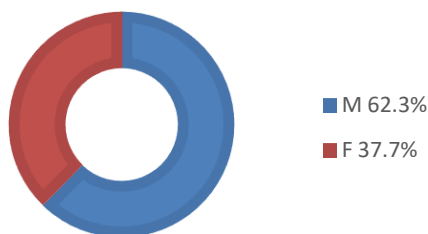
	Employees		Temps		Combined	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
% Male	37.8%	37.2%	62.4%	60.3%	61.2%	61.3%
% Female	62.2%	62.8%	37.6%	39.7%	38.8%	38.7%
Mean Gender Pay Gap	7.6%	17.1%	3.3%	2.8%	0.3%	0.7%
Median Gender Pay Gap	9.5%	15.8%	3.2%	1.5%	2.3%	2.3%
Mean Gender Bonus Gap	50.1%	41.6%	n/a	n/a		
Median Gender Bonus Gap	6.08%	33.2%	n/a	n/a		
% males receiving bonus	83.3%	89%	n/a	n/a		
% females receiving bonus	85.4%	82.1%	n/a	n/a		

Population by Pay Quartiles

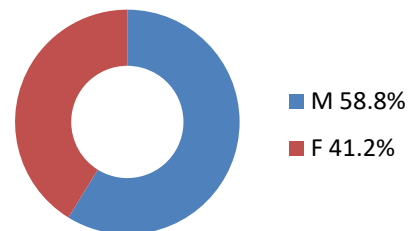
Combined results

These quartiles depict 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 3,159 employees and workers, of whom 41.3% are female.

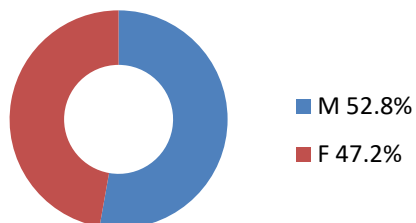
Upper Quartile



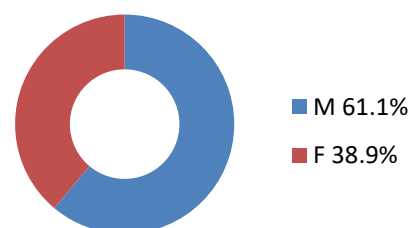
Upper Middle Quartile



Lower Middle Quartile



Lower Quartile



When analysing the combined results, out of a total of 3,159 employees and workers who fall under the scope of the Gender Pay Gap Reporting, 6.2% of this population are permanent Meridian employees.

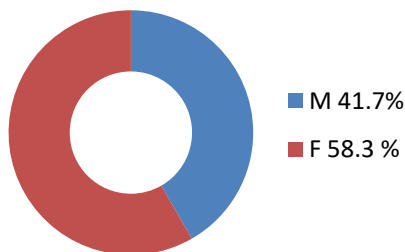
When looking at the results for Meridian permanent employees on their own, the results are significantly different to those of the combined results. In light of this, the rest of the report will focus on the results for permanent employees as this is believed to be more meaningful for Meridian.

Population by Pay Quartiles

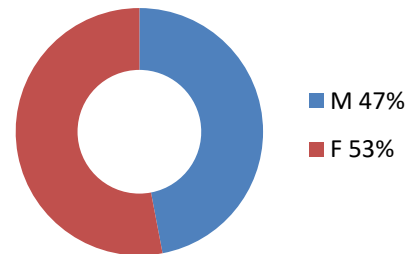
Permanent employees

These quartiles depict 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 196 employees, 62.4% are female.

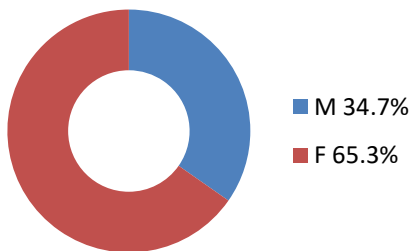
Upper Quartile



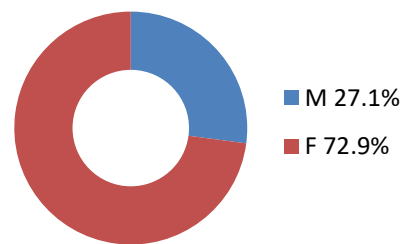
Upper Middle Quartile



Lower Middle Quartile



Lower Quartile



	2021		2022	
	M	F	M	F
Upper Quartile	48.1%	51.9%	41.7%	58.3%
Upper Middle Quartile	39.6%	60.4%	47%	53%
Lower Middle Quartile	34.6%	65.4%	34.7%	65.3%
Lower Quartile	28.9%	71.1%	27.1%	72.9%

Whilst the proportion of males to females in the second upper quartile has increased, the proportion of females to males in the upper quartile has increased by the same amount. There has therefore been a direct shift in the proportion of females to males in both groups with more females in 2022 in the upper quartile. In the lower quartile, the percentage of males has decreased slightly by 1.8% whilst the percentage of females and males in the lower middle quartile has barely changed.

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 59.6% of roles being held by females.

Whilst there remains a higher proportion of females in both the lower middle and lower quartiles in 2022, this is attributable to the fact Meridian employs more females than males which in 2022 was 62.8%. In addition, when looking at the more junior roles in the business, 80% are held by females which is a 10% increase on 2021.

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. 39 of our people work part time, 19.9% of the working population, with 37 of these being female (30% of the female population). Whilst 6 of our part time female employees are in management positions, 12 are in admin support roles which typically attract a lower hourly rate of pay than operational fee earners.

Comparison of 2021 & 2020 Results for Permanent Employees

	2021	2022	Difference
% Male	37.8%	37.2%	-0.6%
% Female	62.2%	62.8%	0.6%
Mean Gender Pay Gap	7.6%	17.1%	9.5%
Median Gender Pay Gap	9.8%	15.8%	6%
Mean Gender Bonus Gap	50.1%	41.6%	-8.5%
Median Gender Bonus Gap	6.08%	33.2%	27.12%
% males receiving bonus	83.3%	89%	5.7%
% females receiving bonus	85.4%	82%	-3.4%

Hourly Rate of Pay

The mean gender pay gap for permanent employees is 17.1% which is above the national average of 8.3% 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 increase by 7% in the upper quartile, we also have 10% more females employed in administration and resourcing roles in 2022 compared to 2021 which will have impacted on the increase in the mean and median gender pay gap.

During the course of the reporting period, 16 of our people were promoted, of whom 11 were male which may account in part for the increase 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 rose by 5.7% to 89% and for females, the proportion receiving bonus fell by 3.4% to 82.1%. The main reason for this is that in 2021, a new policy was introduced 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, 35 were new starters and therefore not eligible to take part in a scheme. Of these 35 people, 24 were female hence the reason why there is a higher percentage of females not receiving bonus at the snapshot date.

This is attributable to many factors including an investment in the development of our people, more effective performance management and an overall improvement in business and individual performance.

There have been notable changes to the bonus pay gap in 2022. Firstly, the mean bonus pay gap has decreased by 8.5% to 41.6%, the median bonus pay gap however has increased by 27.1% suggesting that males are receiving higher bonus payments than females.

In 2021 there was exceptional performance in some areas of the business which had a direct impact on the overall figures. For people who were on profit share schemes related to company or team performance rather than personal performance, this meant that they received a significant increase in profit share payments that year. Whilst company performance in 2022 was still good, it was not as exceptional as it was in 2021 and consequently company or team performance based profit share schemes saw their payments reduce.

When you look at the number of people who joined the business during the bonus reference period (April 2021 to March 2022) and were employed on the snapshot date, 40 were female and 21 were male. Due to the new policy brought in 2021 that meant new starters could not join a profit share scheme until they had passed probation, this will have limited that bonus earning potential of 50% more females than males which will have had a direct impact on the increase in the median bonus pay gap.

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. Pre pandemic only 3.8% of employees worked remotely or partly remotely of which 62.5% were female. One of the consequences of the pandemic is that it has transformed the way we work which has had a very positive impact on flexibility 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 no longer 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