GCHQ

GENDER PAY GAP 2021

GCHQ Gender Pay Gap Report 2021

Addressing GCHQ's Gender Pay Gap is as mission critical as any intelligence report that crosses my desk. We must be able to attract, reward and retain the most diverse talent from across the UK to be successful at keeping the country safe. Diverse teams think and innovate differently. That's exactly what we need to counter threats from terrorists, criminals, and hostile states; support our armed forces overseas; defend the nation's cyber security and protect our citizens online.

This year's report shows that our actions are starting to reduce the gender pay gap. The gaps in ordinary and bonus pay continue to fall. We have a better balance of women across grades, and they are progressing at a more consistent rate. We have been more innovative in how we recruit to target those who we know often self-select out. While evidence shows that around the world the pandemic continues to have a disproportionate effect on women's careers, we are not seeing this translate to women at GCHQ.

Alongside the progress that should be celebrated, the report shows us where we must do more. The proportion of women within the department, particularly in technical roles, is still far lower than we would like. The number of women recognised with expert level skills, attracting specialist pay, has not improved. We continue to tackle these issues and more as part of our commitment to create a fully inclusive workplace where everyone can reach their potential.

This is the fourth year we have published our progress on the gender pay gap. While I hope that one day we will eradicate it altogether, I'm committed to continued transparency as we work towards that goal.

Jeremy Fleming, Director GCHQ

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Background

In 2017 the Government announced legislation making it statutory for organisations with 250 or more employees to report annually on their gender pay gap.

While GCHQ does not have to publish its data, we believe it is important to be open about our progress to demonstrate the importance of equality to us as an organisation.

Gender pay gap versus equal pay

The **Gender Pay Gap** (GPG) shows the difference in the average pay between all men and women in a workforce. If a workforce has a particularly high gender pay gap, this can indicate there may be several issues to deal with, and the individual calculations may help to identify what those issues are. The gender pay gap is different to 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.

GCHQ promotes the fair treatment of all employees in its pay and reward, irrespective of gender.

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Data

This is GCHQ's fourth GPG report. It is based on a snapshot of all GCHQ employees on 31 March 2021. On that date, GCHQ's permanent workforce head count was made up of **34%** women and **66%** men. For the purposes of this report, we are obliged to report purely on the binary categories of women and men. However, we acknowledge that we have an increasing number of staff who identify outside of these categories, and we are continuously working to ensure that all employees feel included and reflected within our organisation.

Ordinary Pay

The mean[1] gender pay gap is the difference between mean pay for men and women in the organisation. In GCHQ, the mean pay for men is **10.4% higher** than for women (11.7% in 2020, 12.5% in 2019).

The median[2] gender pay gap is the difference between median for men and women in the organisation. In GCHQ, the median pay for men is **11.7% higher** than for women (12.5% in 2020, 14.2% in 2019).

The downward trend in GPG this year is the cumulative result of efforts to support women's progression and promotion across the department. This illustrates the importance of consistent efforts at a local level to review, and make continuous incremental improvements to our systems and processes.

If we remove all additional payments for technical specialism from our calculations, our mean GPG is 3.3% (4.7% in 2020) and median 2.1% (6.3% in 2020). These numbers have continuously fallen since 2013.

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[1] Mean is the sum of all pay divided by the number of people.
[2] Median is the middle-ranked pay when you line up all salaries in ascending order.
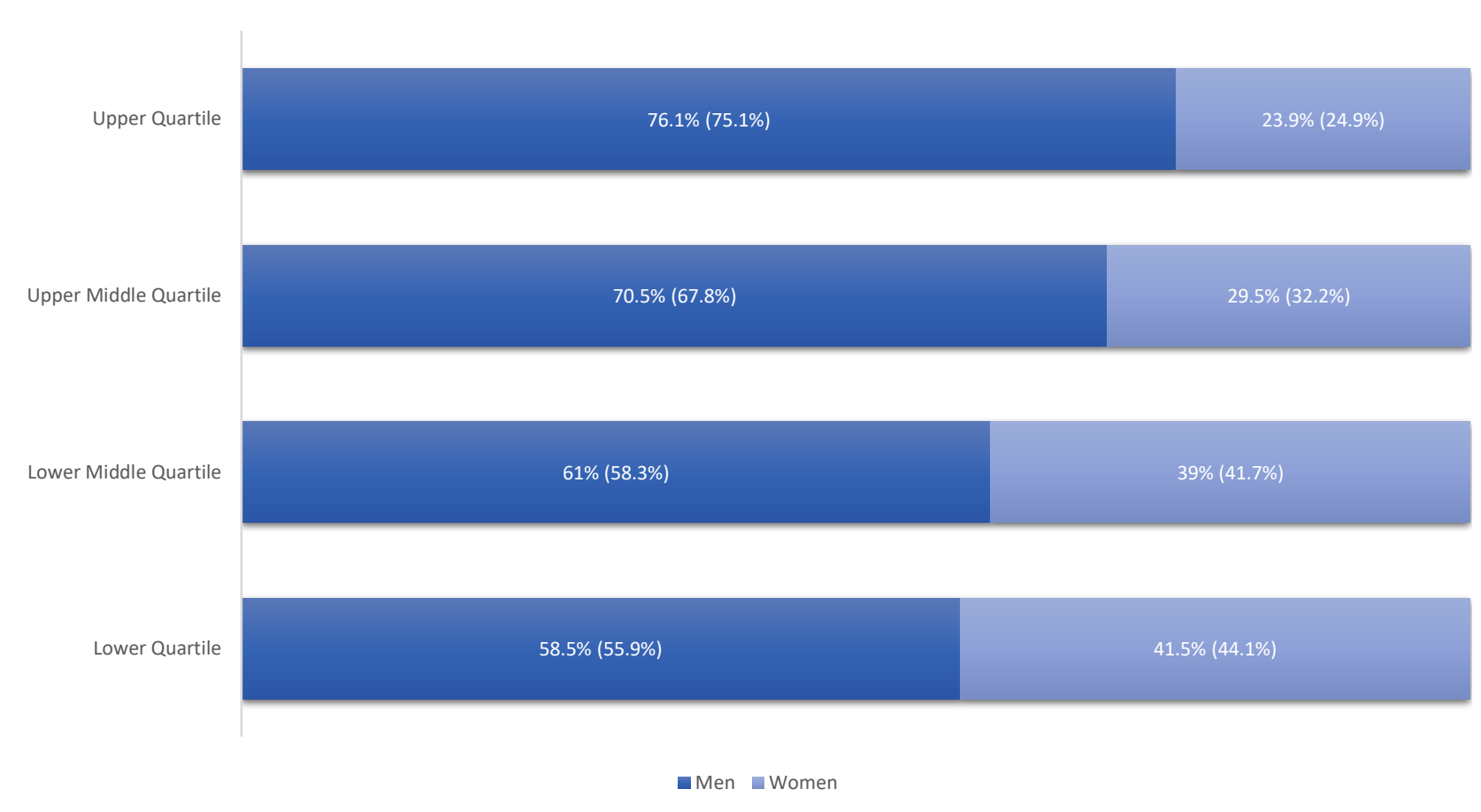
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Bonuses

The mean gender pay gap for bonuses is the difference between mean bonuses paid to men and women in the organisation. In GCHQ, the mean gender pay for bonuses for men is **5.6% *lower*** than for women (7.4% *higher* in 2020, 15.2% higher in 2019).

The median gender pay gap for bonuses is the difference between median bonuses paid to men and women in the organisation. In GCHQ, the median gender pay for bonuses for men is **13.6% *lower*** than for women (19.5% *higher* in 2020, 29.3% *higher* in 2019).

The proportion of employees paid a bonus is **34.5%** of men (34.2% in 2020) and **37.7%** of women (38.5% in 2020).

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Proportion of men and women in each pay quartile[3]

	Men	Women
Upper Quartile	76.1% (75.1%)	23.9% (24.9%)
Upper Middle Quartile	70.5% (67.8%)	29.5% (32.2%)
Lower Middle Quartile	61% (58.3%)	39% (41.7%)
Lower Quartile	58.5% (55.9%)	41.5% (44.1%)

■ Men ■ Women

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[3] Figures in brackets are from 2020.

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Strategy

We have seen some improvement in most of the gender pay gap measures in 2021, with a reduction in the mean and median gender pay gaps, and bonus pay gaps for the second year in a row. This is encouraging, but we know there is still a lot to do and remain committed to identifying and tackling underlying structural issues, as well as accelerating the rate of recruitment and progress for women.

In 2021 our Board endorsed both Diversity and Inclusion action, and a Gender Equality Action Plan, to set out clear intent and action to improve the way we recruit, retain, and support the progression of women in GCHQ, and improve their experience of working with us. We remain determined to break UK technology industry norms by attracting and training more women into our highest paying professions.

In 2021 so far, we have:

- Increased our use of innovative approaches to external recruitment to broaden the diversity of our applicant pool, particularly the number of women and applicants from non-white ethnic minority backgrounds. We know we still have a long way to go, but our approaches have already resulted in a greater proportion of women joining us.

- Expanded the scope of targeted outreach and training opportunities for women and girls in technical fields, including supporting nationwide initiatives like Black CodHer, TechUp Women, and Stemmettes.

- Conducted inclusion surveys across our technical professions to identify areas for improvement, and associated actions, which will be implemented in the coming months.

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Case studies: what is working?

- **Targeted interventions:** Jen joined the department mid-career as a project manager in August 2020 and soon realised she wanted to work at the operational heart of what we do. She was accepted on to our Inspiring Women Leaders positive action programme, which enabled her to build a network of like-minded women. Thanks in part to the confidence and network she built during the programme, Jen applied for, and was successful in gaining, promotion into the counter-terrorism team within nine months of joining the department.

- **Being intentionally inclusive:** Maya was an experienced mathematician with an accredited L2 skill, when she took parental leave in 2012, followed by an extended career break. In 2018 she returned to a role which built on the skills she had previously developed. Her manager gave her flexibility by supporting her decision to reduce her working pattern to 15 hours a week and designed her role with the right amount of technical autonomy to fit in with that working pattern. Maya was successful in her application to L3 in 2021, helped in part by an updated skills framework, which allows people who work reduced hours to apply with a pro-rated quantity of evidence. She has since developed her career further by moving to a new role in a different technical area, supported by a new team who are also actively inclusive in accommodating her working pattern.

- **Active allies:** Tom was nominated as an example of best practice in allyship by a woman in our technical community. "He is someone who has always actively encouraged me and others to take on new challenges and pursue opportunities that we may not have attempted on our own. He has consistently been an enthusiastic and vocal supporter of the GCHQ Women in Tech employee network, and of our positive action programmes for women, as well as supportive of me, on an individual level. Tom has been proactive in linking me up with other women he mentors, as well as anyone else he thinks I would benefit from knowing. His ongoing support, friendship and allyship has helped me to achieve more than I would have on my own, and I know I am not alone in benefiting from his support."