



Gender Pay Gap Report 2021

Snapshot Date: 5th April 2021

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 2021.

On the snapshot date, Meridian employed 209 permanent employees, of whom 79 were males and 130 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, 4,742 temporary workers were engaged on either a Contract for Services or an Employment Contract. Of these, 2,902 were males and 1,840 were females. Temporary workers are paid on a weekly basis and none receive any bonus. 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.

The mean gender pay gap has reduced from 1.8% to 0.3% which means the gap between the hourly rates for males and females has narrowed. Considering we employ a significantly higher proportion of males than females, this will impact the mean result so the gap may even be less than reported in reality. The median gender pay gap has also reduced from 3.2% to 2.3% meaning the mid point salaries for males and females were much closer on the snapshot date.

Overall across the whole of the business we have seen positive movements in 2021 over 2020 suggesting that the pay gap has narrowed. 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.

2021 & 2020 Gender Pay Gap Results

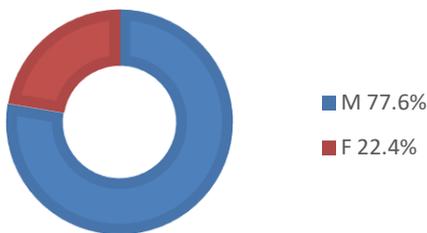
	Employees		Temps		Combined	
	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020
% Male	37.8%	34.6%	62.4%	63.5%	61.2%	61.3%
% Female	62.2%	65.4%	37.6%	36.5%	38.8%	38.7%
Mean Gender Pay Gap	7.6%	20.4%	3.3%	1.8%	0.3%	1.80%
Median Gender Pay Gap	9.5%	14.4%	3.2%	2.6%	2.3%	3.2%
Mean Gender Bonus Gap	50.1%	37.7%	n/a	n/a		
Median Gender Bonus Gap	6.08%	41.3%	n/a	n/a		
% males receiving bonus	83.3%	79.5%	n/a	n/a		
% females receiving bonus	85.4%	81.5%	n/a	n/a		

Population by Pay Quartiles

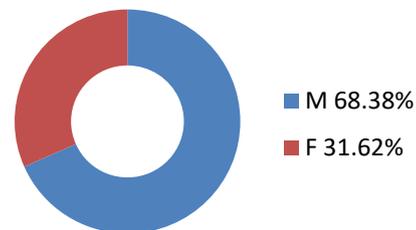
Combined results

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 4,951 employees and workers, of whom 38.8% are female.

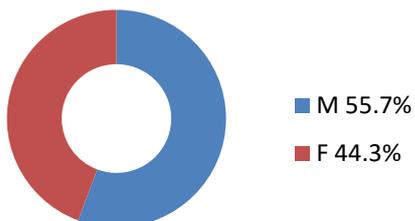
Upper Quartile



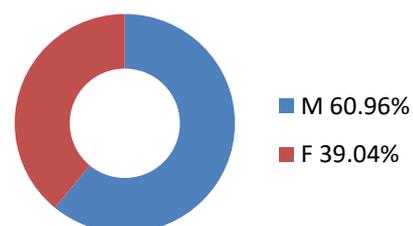
Upper Middle Quartile



Lower Middle Quartile



Lower Quartile



When analysing the combined results, out of a total of 4,951 employees and workers who fall under the scope of the Gender Pay Gap Reporting, 4.4% of this population are permanent Meridian employees.

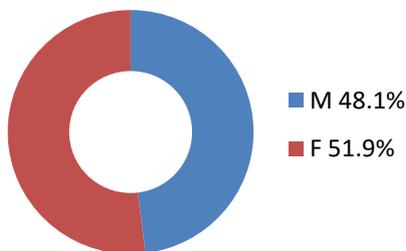
When looking at the results for Meridian permanent employees on their own, the results are significantly different to those of the combined results. In light of this, the rest of the report will focus on the results for permanent employees as this is believed to be more meaningful for Meridian.

Population by Pay Quartiles

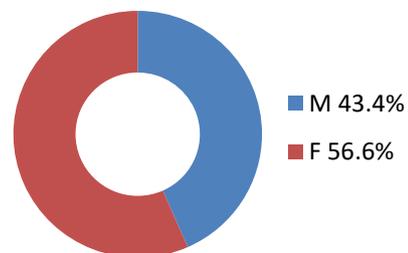
Permanent employees

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 209 employees, 62.2% are female.

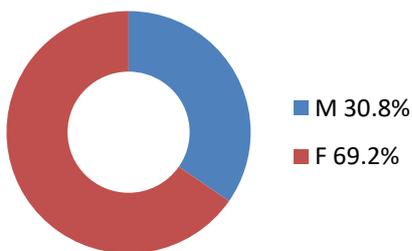
Upper Quartile



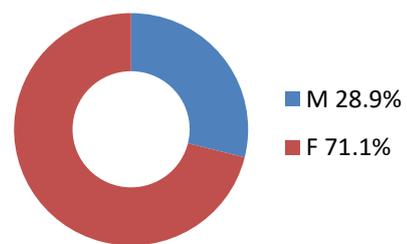
Upper Middle Quartile



Lower Middle Quartile



Lower Quartile



	2021		2020	
	M	F	M	F
Upper Quartile	48.1%	51.9%	47.1%	52.9%
Upper Middle Quartile	43.4%	56.6%	36.0%	64.0%
Lower Middle Quartile	30.8%	69.2%	37.3%	62.7%
Lower Quartile	28.9%	71.1%	23.5%	76.5%

Whilst the proportion of males to females in the upper quartile and upper middle quartile have increased, there remains a higher proportion of females to males in both groups. In the lower quartile, the percentage of males has increased by 5.4% whilst the percentage of females in the lower middle quartile has increased suggesting a shift between the two groups.

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 3:1 and following the promotion of two female Senior Managers to the Senior Leadership Team in April 2021, the ratio of males to females became 7:3, a change from 7:1. In addition, females are well represented in Head of Department and Operational Management roles across the business with the ratio of males to females being 7:10.

Whilst there remains a higher proportion of females in both the lower middle and lower quartiles in 2021, this is attributable to the fact Meridian employs more females than males, the percentage of females being 62.2% in 2021. Meridian offers flexible working to all of its employees which enables them to achieve the right balance between work and family life; this flexibility is mainly requested by females. 38 of our people work part time, 18.2% of the working population, with 36 of these being female (27.7% 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	2020	Difference
% Male	37.8%	34.6%	3.2%
% Female	62.2%	65.4%	-3.2%
Mean Gender Pay Gap	7.6%	20.4%	-12.8%
Median Gender Pay Gap	9.8%	14.4%	-4.6%
Mean Gender Bonus Gap	50.1%	37.7%	12.4%
Median Gender Bonus Gap	6.08%	41.3%	-35.2%
% males receiving bonus	83.3%	79.5%	3.8%
% females receiving bonus	85.4%	81.5%	3.9%

Hourly Rate of Pay

The mean gender pay gap for permanent employees is 7.6% which is below the national average of 7.9% as stated by the Office National Statistics (ONS) 2021 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.

The above comparison of results between 2021 and 2020 shows that there have been positive reductions in both the mean and median gender pay gap, whilst the proportion of females to males employed has decreased by 3.2% however this remains significantly higher than males. During the course of the reporting period, 3.8% of our people were promoted, of whom 62.5% were female which accounts in part for the reduction in mean and median gender gaps. In the 12 months leading up to the snapshot date, there was a significant decrease in promotions when compared to the prior year, which was almost entirely due to the pandemic and its impact on the business. Had this not been case, the number of promotions is likely to have been higher which would have had a further impact on the figures.

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 both males and females receiving profit share rose from 79.5% and 81.5% respectively to 83.3% and 85.4%. 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 2021. Firstly, the mean bonus pay gap has increased by 12.4% to 50.1%. This can be explained by exceptional performance in some areas of the business which have had a direct impact on the overall figures. When you look at the median bonus pay gap however, this has fallen significantly by 35.2% to 6.08% which suggests the difference in bonus being received by males and females has narrowed overall.

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, six of our people took maternity leave, all of whom returned to their roles after their maternity leave ended. Four 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 and flexibility in how the job is carried out. Subsequent enhancements to our Flexible Working Policy to incorporate remote and flexible 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, however this has increased to 45%, 63.8% of whom are 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 which has in turn helped narrow to gender pay gap. As such we will continue to invest in these and other similar programmes.

We will also continue to invest in other external training such AAT, CIPD, Prince Two and Six Sigma. These programmes are open to everyone irrespective gender where it will support them in their role and aid their career progression.

Coupled with our development programmes, our Talent Acquisition team 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 talent retention and development, but it also allows the business to utilise talent more effectively, positively impacting performance. During the reporting period, six employees, five of whom were female, transferred to roles that they would previously not have been able to due to location and were consequently retained in the business.

Our promotion statistics over the past 12 months demonstrate that our continued investment in the development of our people despite the pandemic and our inclusive approach to promoting opportunities continues having a positive impact in supporting the progression of our people. We are developing a mentoring programme to support managers who are looking to progress and potentially move into leadership roles. In addition, the 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 E,D&I and 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