



Gender Pay Report 2021





Summary

Mark Lightfoot, Chief Executive Officer

The last 12 months has challenged us all, the way we work, the way we communicate, the way we deal with all that life brings, and the way we view what is important inside and outside of work.

Having all been thrown into this situation together, I genuinely believe we better appreciate and understand each other's challenges, regardless of who we are and how much experience we have. Couple this with our ability to, and the necessity to, communicate with more people than may have historically been considered normal and we have seen a leap forward, which has given everyone more of a voice and a chance to drive their and our future. By its very nature that drives inclusion and can only bring fresh opportunities, growth, and recognition for all our people.

In Chess we have always considered that we drive a culture that promotes inclusion and diversity, and we have always celebrated successes of all our people, but complacency is dangerous and there is always more we can do. We pay close attention to what other organisations are doing, we listen to our people, and our goal is to drive hard in this area, providing opportunity for all who wish to take it. It is great to see a deliberate focus on driving STEM interest from school age onwards for girls, and in Chess we are committed to providing opportunity for the women who want to develop this early life interest into a career. I am sure our business and our sector will be all the stronger for this.



Summary

Anne Binnie, People Support Director

In a year in which Chess, like many companies, has been focused on navigating our way through the challenges that COVID-19 has thrown at us, it is disappointing though perhaps not surprising that we have not made the progress we had anticipated in reducing our Gender Pay Gap.

The pandemic has brought with it many problems, but it has also brought some positives, one of which is undoubtedly the much greater flexibility in ways of working that were at first forced upon us but which we now find is the way in which the majority of our people wish to continue with. Chess has always offered flexibility in working arrangements and during the pandemic we have actively encouraged our People to communicate with us if they were struggling with home responsibilities to enable us to support them in managing these.

We now look forward to a future where virtually all roles can be considered for flexible working on a permanent basis. The ability to work flexibly in terms of location and hours opens the opportunity to attract a more diverse workforce bringing with it all of the cultural, societal and financial benefits this offers. We will be working with our Leaders to ensure we gain maximum benefit both in attracting more women to Chess and in encouraging our existing Chess women to use this flexibility to further develop their careers and grow their skills and knowledge.

We continue to work with The Prince's Trust and will this year be supporting the Government's Kickstart initiative in partnership with them. Opening up the technology sector to young people has always been part of our Culture and as with our flexible working, we will be working hard to ensure that this opportunity is made available to as diverse a group of participants as possible.

Testimonials



Emma Stott
Customer Service Director - Retail

Working in an industry which is dominated by males could be intimidating for some. However, at Chess I know I am valued in my role.

Chess values diversity, allowing me to develop as a senior leader within the business whilst being a single mum. The reality and logistics of this can put pressure on daily life but I am given the flexibility to work from home which means I'm available to support my son through school and I am there when he needs me and never miss a Family Assembly or Christmas Nativity.

By Chess empowering people to live the balanced life that they choose it has helped me gain confidence, be more courageous and comfortable in my own skin by identifying how my strengths play a huge part in our business growth plans.

Being a single mum doesn't stop me from succeeding in the workplace, I am continuously encouraged to do so daily, and I hope I can inspire others to achieve what I have.



Kerri Lendon
Customer Service Director - Partner

My biggest challenge has been imposter syndrome, not feeling my worth in a business space that is male dominated. Chess gave me access to courses that allowed me to acknowledge this and build techniques to overcome this. I now speak more willingly in a meeting, and feel confident in my position. This wasn't a quick process, it takes a lot of hard work, knockbacks and continued trying!

As a working parent we refer to guilt as a feeling of being required to commit 100% every day. It's a fear of letting our children down, not being there for important moments. I have struggled with this often. As a leader of people, I recognise we must provide flexibility to help to manage a good work/life balance. Good organisation and time management is key for this to work, and I pride myself on this.

Believe in yourself and don't give up! You have to remind yourself of the positives about you, your achievements along the way no matter how big or small, and take that forward with you.



Carla Thrower

Government Relationship Manager

Building a career in sales and 'earning my stripes' has not always been easy - it's taken years of proving myself in a male dominated field. There have been some real challenges and bitter disappointments along the way, and equality has sadly been elusive in some organisations. I wouldn't change it though, it's taught me a great lesson, to fight hard and to not accept less as a female.

In the Cyber Security Team here at Chess, we have a 50% female workforce and that's the highest I've ever seen, generally in previous jobs, it's only been me as an Account Manager in a sales team and that's been pretty tough.

Joining Chess has been a defining moment for me, being seen for the skills I bring and not my gender has been truly worth the wait.



Stephen Dracup

Chief Operating Officer

International Women's Day was recently celebrated at Chess by recording many of the stories of the women who work in our business.

I was hugely impressed by the range of experiences on show and glad to hear about the positive role our business has played in the careers of these and many more women who work at Chess.

I am proud to say that half my team are women and I collaborate with many more every day. I know that I, and our business, are so much the better for listening to the diversity of their voices, experiences and ideas and am delighted that so many women occupy a pivotal role in our business.

We are still on the journey to true gender equality in the UK generally and business in particular, but the stories I heard show that we are heading in the right direction. [Listen to Chess Women >](#)



Elena Doncheva

Head of Marketing

Working in a male-dominated industry can be challenging, but my experience at Chess has made me feel part of an incredible community and helped me find my voice. I get to collaborate with inspirational women, successful in their careers and constantly challenging the glass ceiling. Their work ethic inspires me to push the limitations that quite often we put on ourselves.

My leader is an ally and puts a lot of effort into understanding the challenges I experience as a woman in the tech sector and mentoring me to overcome these without taking away from my wins and successes.

Working for a technology company has many benefits, and for me, one of the key perks is the ability to work from anywhere. As an early adopter of remote working, Chess has enabled me to travel and spend more time with my family than ever before.

Our Gender Pay Report

At Chess we are committed to creating a fair, ethical and diverse place to work. In 2019 we added a diversity statement to our BluePrint so that it is documented for all to see:

“To be fair, inclusive and treat others as they would wish to be treated, showing respect for differences in race, ethnic origin, religion, faith, marital status, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, social and educational background, creating a culture where all forms of diversity are valued.”

UK companies with over 250 staff are required to report on their gender pay gap

It's a very important step forward because if companies are transparent about pay, and can find the root cause of any pay gap, they can build businesses that reflect society.

The Gender Pay Gap is the difference between the earnings of all men in our business, compared to the earnings of all women in our business, regardless of their role.

It's different to equal pay which means that men and women who do similar jobs are paid the same. It's a legal requirement to pay people equally and something that we review regularly at Chess.



Introduction to the Figures

Like many other companies in the technology sector, there are some key drivers behind the Gender Pay Gap at Chess. We have more men in specialist technical roles (which attract higher salaries) than women.

More of our women work part time and we have less women in Technology, IT and Development roles which again attract higher salaries. These factors make it more difficult to address the gender pay gap.

We hope that over time more women will develop the technology skills to work in the senior technical roles, this must come from education, training and a change in perception.

Overall Pay Gap

Mean



29.0%

The mean gender pay gap is the difference in the average hourly pay for women, compared to men.

Total of all
Male Salaries



Number of Total
Male Employees



Average Pay
for Men



Difference
between the two
= Mean gender
pay gap

Total of all
Female Salaries



Number of Total
Female Employees



Average Pay
for Females



Median



22.3%

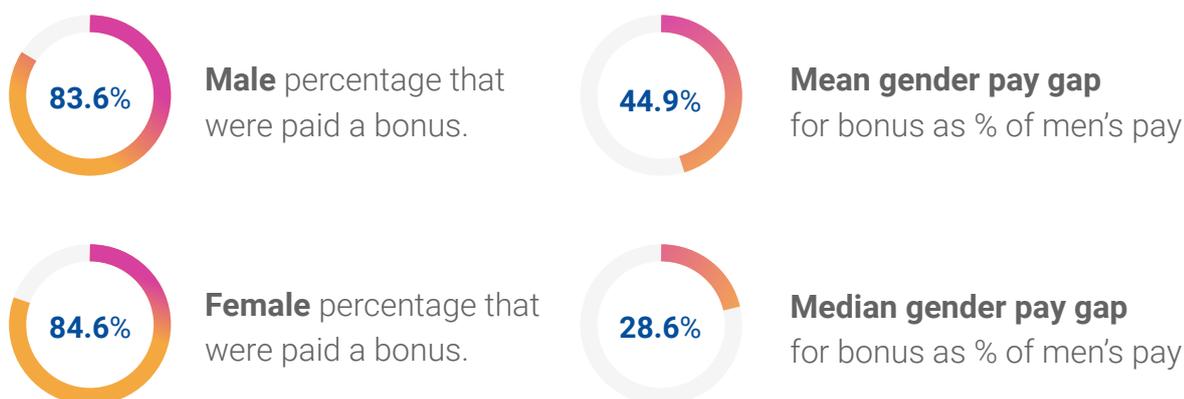
The median is the midpoint when you line up all men and women's pay in our business separately, from lowest to highest and compare the hourly rate of pay for the middle woman, compared to the middle man.

Gender Profile by Pay Quartiles

	Proportion of Male Colleagues	Proportion of Female Colleagues
In our Lower Pay Quartile	64.5%	35.5%
In our Lower Middle Pay Quartile	52.4%	47.6%
In our Upper Middle Pay Quartile	75.5%	24.2%
In our Upper Pay Quartile	82.9%	17.1%

We can see that there is a high number of men in the upper quartile where salaries are higher. The lower quartile has an even split of men and women but it shows that there is room for improvement in supporting females to move to the middle and upper quartiles.

Bonus Gap & Payments



From the data, we can see that there's minimal difference in the percentage of men and women who received a bonus. But we can see a big gap with our mean data. Again, this boils down to us having more men in senior and specialist roles earning higher salaries, which has lowered the average bonus for women compared to men. Bonus payments also include sales commission and historically technical sales is an area where there are more men than women, though Chess is working pro-actively to attract and recruit women in these areas.

Our Gender Pay Gap

Chess has a mean pay gap of 29.0% and median pay gap of 22.3%. The latest available Gender Pay Report from the Office for National Statistics reports an average pay gap of 15.5% for UK businesses with over 250 employees. At Chess we know we must continue to work hard to improve our pay gap. We know where our biggest areas of disparity are and we're committed to making a difference. At Chess one third of our workforce are women and this is similar in our more senior roles in the middle quartiles, which we know attract higher salaries. In 2020 there has been an increase in the number of women moving from the lower pay quartile into the middle quartiles, this has improved the gender pay gap in that quartile. We know we must continue this trend to ensure we balance the number of men and women in our more senior and specialist positions.

