



THE7STARS

GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2024



Creating an Inclusive Workplace

At the core of every great company is a culture that strives to be inclusive, equitable, and diverse. This is a belief that we have held since our inception in 2005, and it has fuelled our drive to welcome talent from all walks of life into an agency that provides everybody with an equal opportunity to grow in their career, regardless of their gender identity.

With 292 members of staff at our agency, we are now in a position to report on the findings of our gender pay gap analysis externally, but this has been an internal practice that has existed for many years. We have always valued transparency in every facet of our approach to culture, which has included being open with our team on how we are working actively to minimise our gender pay gap as much as possible.

With over half of our team consisting of women, as well as over 40% of our shareholders consisting of women, we are confident that we are heading in the right direction when it comes to increasing the representation of women at all levels in the agency. However, we also understand that there is much more work to be done to continue this much-needed progress, and we are proactive in working together as an agency to continue welcoming a diverse array of new talent and supporting the career growth of existing talent at the agency.

The journey to creating an agency, as well as an industry, that levels the playing field for all talent – regardless of gender identity – is one that we have been and always will be fervently committed to.

- Jenny Biggam, CEO



Overview

Introduction

As part of our commitment to fostering transparency and addressing gender imbalances, we present our Gender Pay Gap Report for 2023, marking our first mandatory reporting cycle. While we have not hit the threshold of 250 employees on our payroll in previous years, we have continuously made a considered effort to maintain our transparent approach by sharing details of our gender pay gap internally.

What is the Gender Pay Gap?

Launched in 2017, the gender pay gap is the difference between the average pay of men and women in any organisation. All organisations with 250 or more employees are legally mandated to report their gender pay gap from the 'snapshot date', which for this report was 5th April 2023.

As an agency that has always had transparency and inclusion at the core of its values, we have continuously analysed our gender pay gap data and shared the results internally with our team, making the data understandable to all and outlining the actions that we are taking to further close this gap.

As we share this externally for the first time, we will be open about how we plan to continue being proactive in our journey to creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace for all of our employees.



Who will be included in this?

All employees on the7stars' payroll on 5th April 2023 will be included, covering a total of **292 employees** as of the snapshot date.

Gender Split



What will we be reporting on?

- Median gender pay gap at the snapshot date.
- Mean gender pay gap at the snapshot date.
- Breakdown of males and females into four groups (quartiles) ordered from lowest to highest pay at the snapshot date.
- Median bonus pay gap at the snapshot date.
- Mean bonus pay gap at the snapshot date.
- Proportion of males and females eligible to receive a bonus payment.

Gender Pay Gap

What does all this mean?

The median gender pay gap shows the difference in the middle points of the ranges of hourly rates of pay for both men and women at the7stars by ordering the rates of pay by gender from lowest to highest, and then comparing the middle value. According to the Office for National Statistics, the average median gender pay gap across the UK stands at **14.3%** (in favour of men) as of April 2024.

The mean gender pay gap, however, is calculated by taking the hourly pay of men and women at the7stars and dividing this by the total number of each gender, then comparing the mean male pay against the mean female pay. According to the Office for National Statistics, the average mean gender pay gap across the UK stands at **10.7%** (in favour of men) as of April 2024.

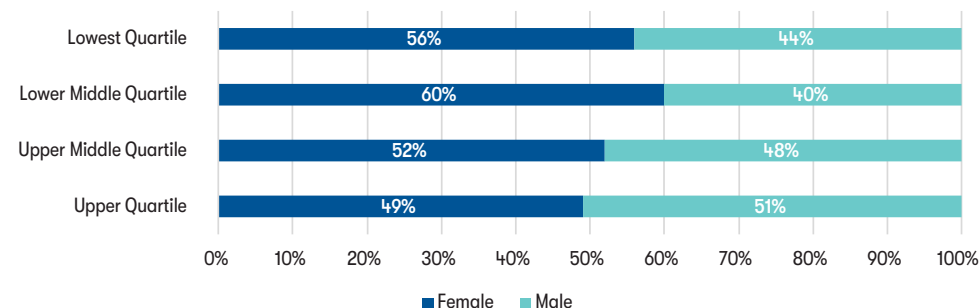
Our Gender Pay Gap

Snapshot as of 5th April 2023:



From 5th April 2023, our median pay gap rose to **8.15%**, a modest increase from 7.84% in 2022. Additionally, our mean gender pay gap reached **13.82%**, an improvement from our 2022 figure of 15.55%. Whilst we welcome this progress, we understand the importance of continuing in our efforts to foster greater gender equality and inclusion in our workplace.

Quartile Analysis



When looking at our gender pay gap in the quartiles above, we can see that both the Lowest and Lower Middle Quartiles slightly skew in favour of women (with women making up 56% and 60% of both quartiles respectively). It is important to note that this is due to our increased recruitment in junior positions over the past year and graduates over the past year, with mostly females being recruited for these positions and this having an impact on the average in these two quartiles.

Whilst many may not see these differences as substantial, we continue to endeavour to foster an environment where people are welcomed according to their talent, and not their gender identity. With this, we plan to continue striving towards fairer representation in roles across the entire agency, with all genders being given equal opportunities to grow in their careers and salaries.



Bonus Pay Gap

What is included as a bonus?

We factor in our annual Christmas and Summer bonuses, as well as our New Business Bonus, Bump Bonus, and Return-To-Work bonus into our bonus pay gap reporting. Some senior-level employees may also receive Dividend/Shareholder bonuses, at the CEO's and Finance Director's discretion.

Our Bonus Pay Gap

Snapshot as of 5th April 2023:

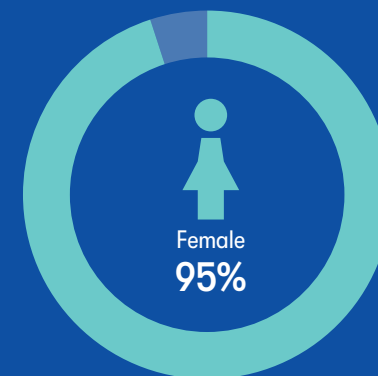
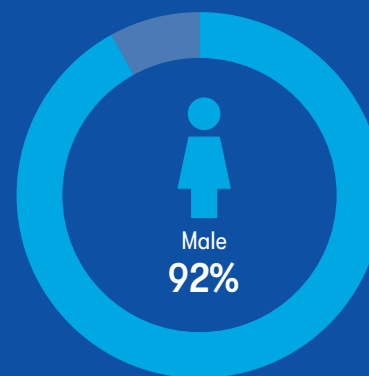


From 5th April 2023, our median bonus pay gap stood at **0%**, whilst our mean bonus pay gap came up to **47%**, as a result of an annual bonus paid in lieu of dividends to six shareholders at the agency.

At the7stars, we currently have 7 shareholders in total (3 of whom are female including our CEO, and 4 of whom are male), most of whom have been at the agency since its inception and receive an annual bonus in lieu of dividends (at the discretion of our Finance and CEO alone). During this reporting period, our CEO did not receive a bonus which has contributed to the mean average figure above.



Proportion of bonus by Gender



As the diagrams above show, almost all of our team received bonuses over the course of the past 12 months (with **92%** of males receiving bonuses, and **95%** of females receiving bonuses).

These bonuses range from our annual Christmas bonuses given to all staff, as well as an equal profit share bonus (assuming targets are met) to all staff, which is graded based on tenure at the agency. We also implement bonus schemes throughout the year, including a **New Business Scheme** (given to staff who deliver new business opportunities for the agency), as well as our **Bump Bonus scheme** (offered to expectant mothers) and **Return-To-Work Bonus** (given to colleagues returning from long-term parental leave).





How We Are Closing the Gap

As an agency that is proactive in creating an inclusive and equitable workplace for all, we know that minimising the gender pay gap requires a comprehensive and sustained effort. By implementing the strategies below, we hope that our multi-faceted approach will enable us to make significant strides in reaching our ambition of having no gender pay gap:

Equal Pay Audits and Equal Pay Charter

We conduct regular pay audits to identify and rectify unjustifiable gender pay disparities, and ensure that salaries remain aligned with market standards.

We also endeavour to ensure that new talent is not paid more than talent that has been in the business for a number of years. By upholding our Equal Pay Charter, we hope to curb the belief that staff must move to other companies to be paid fairly for their talents.

Flexible Working Policies

We have introduced flexible working arrangements to accommodate diverse needs and help our team maintain a healthy work-life balance as much as possible.

We are also committed to promoting a culture that values delivering great output and results for our clients, as opposed to upholding traditional working hours. This is why we have always embraced a 'no timesheet' approach to working, allowing our team to create great work in a way that they are most comfortable.

Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion

Since inception, we have been passionate about creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace culture that welcomes talent from all walks of

life. We know that everyone at our agency plays a crucial role in ensuring this, which is why we have an internal Inclusivity team (made up of people from across the agency) that supports the organisation's commitment to educating, communicating, and celebrating all elements of diversity.

We also encourage the hiring and advancement of women across the agency into leadership positions through equitable recruitment processes.

Training and Education

We ensure that all staff and managers undergo training such as Active Bystander and Anti-Racism training to allow us to eliminate stereotypes and preconceptions across the board.

Family-Friendly Policies

We implement family-friendly policies such as industry-leading parental leave support, flexible scheduling, and nursery benefits as we believe that delivering great work should not come at the expense of enjoying family life.

For both birthing and non-birthing parents, we offer enhanced family leave, and we have also put commitments in place to best support working parents. From return-to-work coaching to our Parent Buddy system, community groups, educational resources, financial advice, bonus

schemes, and more, we go above and beyond to ensure that all working parents are given the support they need to thrive, both personally and professionally.

We also encourage shared parent responsibilities to minimise the impact of raising a family on women's careers.

Mentorship, Coaching, and Sponsorship Programmes

We offer access to coaching for all staff at the7stars, as we believe that everyone should have the opportunity to unlock their potential and grow in their career.

We also implement sponsorship programmes that actively advocate for women to be considered for career-advancing opportunities, which allows us to increase the number of women in leadership positions going forward. This goes hand-in-hand with mentorship programmes that seek to support the career development of women at the organisation.

Regular Review of Recruitment Practices

We have employed a variety of practices to ensure that our recruitment processes are fair and free from biases. From utilising testing as a filter for success with our junior positions (as opposed to judging candidates based on their CVs) to eliminating gender-specific language and

requirements from our job descriptions, we ensure that people from all walks of life are welcomed from the very start.

Employee Engagement and Feedback

We actively seek feedback from all of our employees on how we can better our workplace policies and practices, adopting an 'always on' approach to feedback and utilising an open surveying tool to hear our team's thoughts and feelings on our business activities.

We also create multiple channels for open communication (offered anonymously or via our outsourced HR team) to better understand the concerns of our team and address them promptly.

Continuous Monitoring and Adjustment

We regularly monitor and analyse pay data to identify and address emerging disparities, allowing us to be effective in creating an equitable working environment.

We also maintain an agile approach when adjusting our strategies to accommodate the evolving needs of the workforce and changing industry standards.

Whilst we are proud to present a gender pay gap that is below the national and industry average in some cases (particularly in median pay), we acknowledge that our work is not done and there is so much more that can be done to close the gap.

Our commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace remains unwavering, and we will continue to welcome initiatives that support the career growth of people at all levels of the organisation.

This report reflects our dedication to transparency and accountability in achieving gender equality at the7stars. We will continue to actively monitor and reassess our strategies to ensure continued progress in the years to come.

Jenny Biggam

Jenny Biggam
CEO, the7stars UK LTD

Date: 4th April 2024

