

Pulsant Ltd Gender Pay Gap Report – 2023/2024

Introduction

At Pulsant we are committed to being fair and inclusive and our values, selected by our people, are at the heart of everything we do, with “People First” being paramount. A fundamental behaviour that underpins this value is being inclusive and embracing the opportunities created by diverse teams. Our aim is to ensure we have an open and honest environment, that allows people from different backgrounds and with diverse perspectives to be themselves, to thrive and help us to deliver a great service to our clients and to support one another. We want to attract, develop, and retain talented people from a wide range of backgrounds and with varied skills and experiences to drive improvements and ensure we operate as effectively as possible.

Like many organisations in the technology sector, we are aware of the ongoing and historic challenges with the under representation of women within the sector. We recognise that there is still some way to go, but we are committed to addressing the gender imbalance within Pulsant and seek to encourage applications and to broaden our reach and appeal.

About this report

In line with the Gender Pay Gap Regulations, all organisations with over 250 people have been legally required to report annually on their gender pay gap. The gender pay gap provides a snapshot of the gender balance within an organisation. It measures the difference between the average earnings of all males and females, regardless of their role or seniority.

The gender pay gap is different to equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay difference 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.

This report follows the guidance set out by the Government Equalities Office based on a snapshot of pay data on a set date. This year’s report is the fourth annual report that Pulsant has published.

The following six measures are reported in line with the gender pay gap reporting legislation and the calculations are based on a snapshot date of 5th April 2023:

- **Mean (average) and median (midpoint) gender pay gap** - the difference between the average and midpoints of hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees
- **Mean (average) and median (midpoint) bonus gender pay gap** - the difference between the average and midpoints of bonus pay paid to male relevant employees and that paid to female relevant employees
- **Bonus proportions** - the proportions of male and female relevant employees who were paid bonus pay during the relevant period
- **Quartile pay bands** - the proportions of male and female full-pay relevant employees in the lower, lower-middle, upper-middle and upper quartile pay bands.

Our Gender Pay Gap

Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap				
	Mean (Average)		Median (Mid point)	
	2022	2023	2022	2023
Gender Pay Gap	-0.8%	2.6%	-5.3%	7.9%

Pulsant continues to employ a higher proportion of males compared to females, which is common within the technology sector. It is however worth noting that during the four years of reporting the gender pay gap, Pulsant has seen the percentage of females increase from 12.9% in April 2020 to 16.2% in April 2023, which is very encouraging, and we have an ambition to increase the percentage of females to 20% by the end of 2024. Gender diversity is a Strategic KPI monitored by our board and as of February 2023, we have female presence on our board, with our Chief People Officer appointed as a board director.

Whilst both the mean and the median pay gaps have increased in this year's report, the way we are required to calculate these measures indicates that the figures are subject to significant fluctuation. With the snapshot date being a point in time, in April 2023, the hourly pay gap calculation is a representation of a single month's view as opposed to an all-year-round perspective. Also, in the month of April, commission payments are made, and these payments are required to be included in the calculation of average hourly pay. Whilst commission payments are paid at varying times in the year, the amounts can vary significantly throughout the year.

Our average gender pay gap has increased from last year. Last year saw Pulsant review pay in a more substantial way, considering the external high inflationary environment and ensuring a good level of minimum pay rises across our teams, as well as us reflecting performance in line with our performance related pay philosophy. This review resulted in strong pay rises across the board and as a result of having a higher proportion of males, compared to females, this has had a greater impact on the average hourly pay rates for males when compared to our female ratio.

The median hourly pay rate similarly has increased for both male and females compared to 2022 and, as already mentioned, with more males receiving a substantial pay review at the start of 2023 recognising the inflationary external market and our decision to have a minimum level of increase, this when compared to rises for the smaller female population has led to a shift from -5.3% in favour of women in 2022 to 7.9% in favour of men in 2023.

The figures continue to help illustrate that although we do have a lower number of females, they are fairly represented at all levels of the organisation. A factor which contributes to our gender pay gap movement year on year, is that we do have a number of females in Sales positions who receive variable commission, which in turn has contributed to changes in the average hourly pay rate.

Although gender in no way influences our pay or hiring decisions, we are committed to ensuring that our opportunities are promoted widely in the market and that we take steps to try to attract more women into both technical and senior leadership positions, with our hiring decisions always being based on the best candidates for the roles. Noting that although we have a lower ratio of female representation in our senior leadership positions there are female appointments on our board, Executive Leadership team and Senior Leadership team. We do not expect the long term and technology sector challenges related to attracting women into technical and senior leadership positions to be a quick fix, but will do our best to attract women to Pulsant and our ambition is to increase the proportion of women over time and to bring greater diversity of thinking.

Our Gender Bonus Pay Gap

Bonus Gender Pay Gap				
	Mean (Average)		Median (Mid point)	
	2022	2023	2022	2023
Bonus Pay Gap	-42%	-83.2%	-62%	-152.3%

In the 2020 and 2021 reporting, at the defined point in time that the bonus pay gap was measured, in addition to those earning commission or eligible for management bonuses, the majority of our people were eligible to receive a discretionary bonus based on individual performance. This was a set amount and with it being for the largest portion of our people, it meant that our median figure of 0% was reported in those two years. By the end of Q1 2021, Pulsant had taken the decision to roll the bonus into our people's base salary. Therefore, in the last two reporting periods, Pulsant have had less people receiving a bonus, which is reflected and discussed below in the percentage of men and women receiving a bonus payment.

For this reporting period, all bonuses refer to those in Sales receiving commission payments, and specialist and leadership roles on bonus schemes.

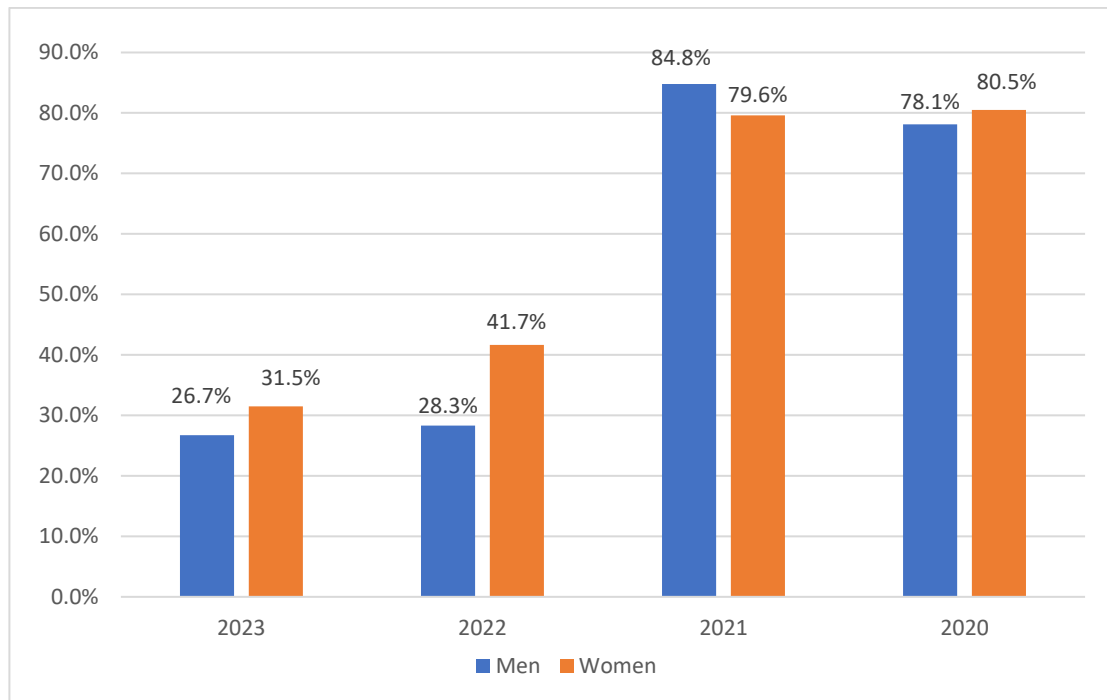
The mean bonus gap for 2023 is again in favour of women by reporting -83.2%. Whilst in 2022 the mean was already in favour of women; this year has extended that gap further in favour of women. Although we have fewer women within Pulsant, of that smaller number, the women who are receiving a bonus are predominately in the Sales function and on a variable commission-based scheme, or in a leadership position.

As already noted, now we have fewer people in the organisation receiving a bonus/commission, it has meant that the median figure has changed significantly from last year. There is a substantial shift which means this year's median figure is -152.3% in favour of women. This is predominantly related to the female members of the Sales team earning more commission compared to the previous year.

Whilst these figures demonstrate another year of improvement in favour of women, we are very aware that as we have fewer women in the organisation, a small change can have a significant impact on these figures at the defined point in time the bonus pay gap is measured and important to us to do further detailed analysis to understand the full picture and trends.

Bonus Proportions by Gender

Percentage of men and women receiving bonus pay



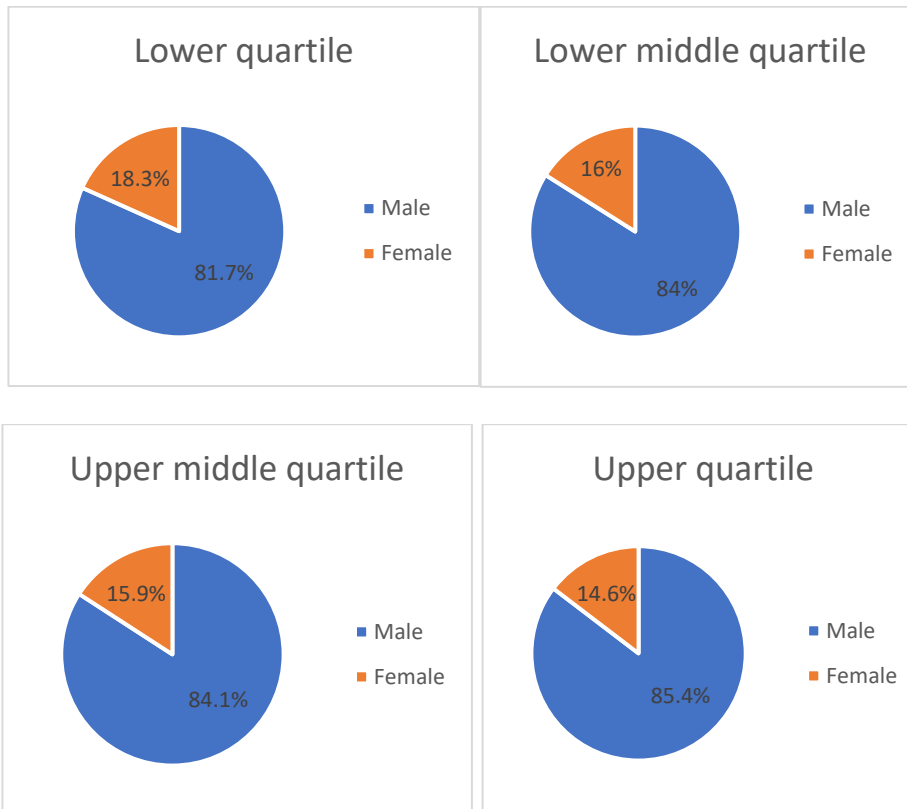
As discussed in the previous section, Pulsant took the decision to roll the individual performance bonus into base salary during 2021. This was a set amount for all, and it was believed this would be more beneficial to our people to have this as part of their base/pensionable salary. This therefore meant that a smaller population of the organisation would receive bonus/commission payments, and this is reflected in the percentage figures noted in the chart above for 2022 and 2023.

Although the percentage of men receiving a bonus decreased by only 1.6% in 2023 and the percentage of women receiving a bonus decreased by a larger amount 10.2% in 2023, there remains a higher percentage of women receiving bonus pay than men. Whilst Pulsant have a lower number of females, it is noted that 31.5% of them are either in a commission-based role or in a specialist or leadership role where the bonus schemes remain in place.

Pay quartiles by gender

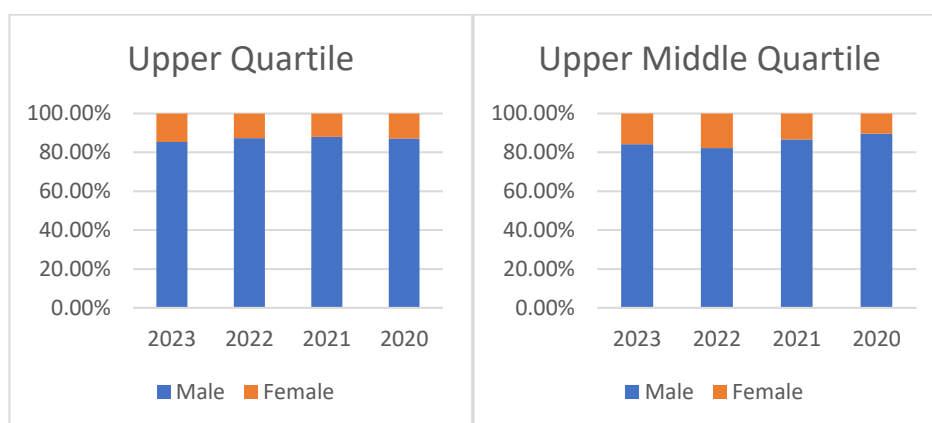
A quartile is one of four equally sized groups created when you divide a selection of numbers that are in ascending order into four. The "lower quartile" includes the lowest paid 25% of our people and the "upper quartile" includes the highest paid 25% of our people.

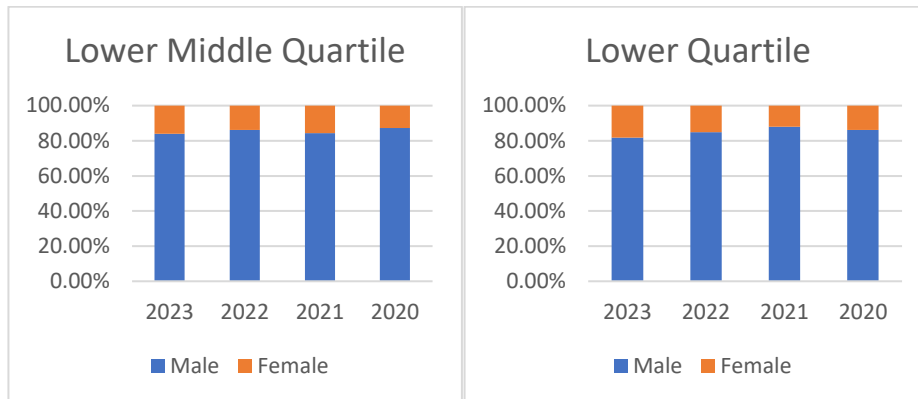
The charts that follow outline the proportion of men and women in each pay quartile, based on the hourly pay rate.



These results show that each pay quartile has a higher proportion of men than women. This is consistent with challenges faced by many organisations across the technology sector, due to the relatively low female representation in the industry. Whilst these graphs show a fairly equal representation of women across the quartiles, when looking at the positions held, similar to last year, females are predominately in functions such as HR, Finance, Administration, Sales & Marketing, with less female representation in our technical positions.

The next set of graphs show the year-on-year change since reporting for each quartile.





When comparing the change over the years from 2020 to 2023 an upward trend can be seen from 2021 to 2023. There has been a rise in the number of women in all but one quartile between 2022 and 2023, with the upper middle quartile being the only one to decrease, albeit by just 1.8%. The biggest change from 2022 to 2023 is the increase in number of women in the lower quartile (3.1% increase). Across all quartiles there is a fair distribution of women.

Next steps / Closing the Gap

The figures in this report show that whilst there has been some improvement from 2022 to 2023, there is still more for us to do to achieve an enhanced gender balance and that a small number of factors can have a significant impact on these figures at the defined point in time the pay gap is measured.

Some of the key areas we have already made progress on and continue to focus on include:

Recruitment

We continue to review our hiring practices to ensure they are rigorous and consistent. We have in early 2024 hired an in-house recruiter to replace our currently outsourced provision in aim to drive forward our ability to influence how we attract a diverse array of talent and evolve our processes, tools and the training provided to current and new hiring people leaders on how to assess candidates fairly and to understand the impact any personal bias may have in the process. We continue to use structured interviews for recruiting externally and any internal promotions to reduce the impact of unconscious bias.

Ensuring we are 'People First' and have a culture where we look after our people and their well-being is very important to Pulsant. By increasing our social media activity to drive brand awareness of our culture is important and we regularly promote our well-being initiatives across all our social media channels.

Our results show that we have less women represented within technical fields, so we continue to work to ensure our recruitment strategy focuses on informing, engaging, and attracting more females into this field and ensuring our flexible working practices can also support opportunities.

Career progression

We continue to offer a Leadership Development Programme which is open to all people leaders, which covers all areas of people management, including diversity, equality, and inclusion with training around mitigating personal bias. We have expanded the programme so that aspiring leaders who are not currently people leaders can participate, to allow them to develop their skills and to learn about management skills and to develop their self-confidence. We have noted that there have been a few female non-leaders who are now participating in the programme, and we are actively supporting them and others to develop their knowledge and skills.

As part of our internal review process, we encourage our leaders to have conversations with their direct reports to understand their career aspirations and what we can do to support their development and progression within Pulsant.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I)

We are fully committed to broadening our reach to bring enhanced diversity of thinking into Pulsant and to ensure it is somewhere where our people can be themselves and feel included. We want to be a place that not only welcomes and encourages differences but truly draws on it. A place where everyone feels they belong. We have an understanding of our mix within and are building our strategy to ensure we build on our ambitions across all areas and ability to support various communities.

As we continue to focus on gender diversity, our ambition for 2024 is to increase diversity to 20% of females (this has just reached 19% at point of submission). We look to build on the Women in Technology initiatives and continue to celebrate events such as International Women's Day and attend events such as Women in Technology Festival.

Flexible working

We continue to review our flexible working provisions, to ensure that men and women alike are able to take on roles regardless of their caring responsibilities and we can do our best to support them.

We are continuing to drive our flexible working policy to encourage women to return to work following maternity leave and other family-related leave for both men and woman, such as shared parental leave and offer part-time working where appropriate.

We remain committed to attract more women and diverse talent to join Pulsant and ensure we have inclusive and consistent practices in place to recognise and reward all of our people, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or other protected characteristics.

Declaration

We confirm that Pulsant Ltd has produced its Gender Pay Gap calculations in accordance with the requirements of The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 and that the calculations are accurate at the time of publishing.

Signed: 

Name: April Clark, Chief People Officer

Signed: 

Name: Rob Coupland, Chief Executive Officer