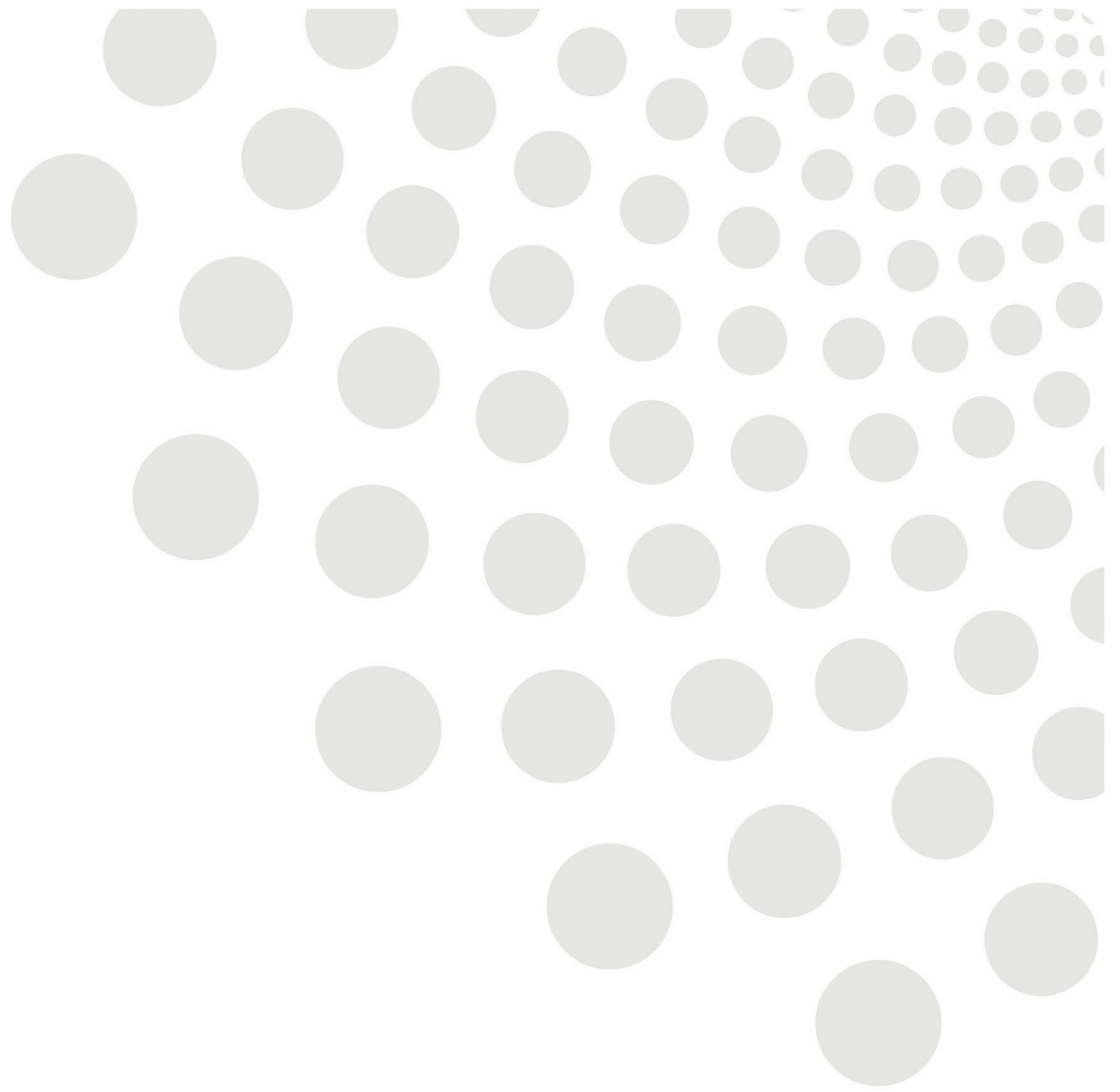




What are we doing to close our gender pay gap

March 2022

www.lancashire.gov.uk



Introduction

We remain committed to addressing our gender pay gap and accept that actions need to be taken in order for us to understand and address the disparities in pay across our organisation. We accept that slight increases year on year is something that we can't rely on and that bigger strides need to be taken in changing the gender distribution of our workforce.

The coronavirus pandemic has once again meant that our priorities over the last 12 months have been focussed on supporting council services with their COVID-19 response, ensuring that critical roles continued to be undertaken to support the people of Lancashire at this difficult and worrying time.

As a result of this, we have been unable to actively progress the actions we set ourselves in last year's action plan. Neither have we been able to collate and analyse the comparator data from inside and outside of the organisation, as we had hoped, in order to try and identify the reasons for the difference in pay between our male and female workforce.

We have therefore rolled across the actions we set out in last year's action plan to this year and have added to this, to take account of the improvements in management information and reporting that will be realised when we move across to a new updated cloud-based HR and Payroll system in summer 2022, and a review of our Working Flexibly Policy and Procedure that was launched in November 2021 to assess how well working flexibly is being embedded across our organisation.

Our 2022 action plan is set out below.

Action plan

What we will do	How are we going to do this	When we will monitor our progress
Review of our Working Flexibly Policy and Procedure	A new Working Flexibly Policy and Procedure was launched in November 2021, to help support the roll out of new ways of working across the council building on the best practice we've learnt during the coronavirus pandemic in terms of how, when and where work can be undertaken. We were forward thinking in our approach when we developed the policy and procedure by allowing all employees to have access to flexible working from day one of employment (instead of requiring that they have 26 weeks' continuous service under the statutory process in order to submit a flexible working request), with requests not restricted to one per 12-month period if an employee's circumstances change. We are keen to see how well working flexibly is being embedded across our organisation, and will be engaging with our employees, managers and recognised trade unions using a variety of different methods to obtain their feedback, to understand the basis for this feedback and to look at any areas for further development. Our findings from this will help us with our improvement journey as a council and to promote our working flexibly approach as a key benefit of working for us to potential job applicants.	February/March 2023

What we will do	How are we going to do this	When we will monitor our progress
Utilise improved management reporting functions/tools within Oracle Fusion	The move across to Oracle Fusion (a new cloud-based HR and Payroll system) in summer 2022 will offer us significant improvements from both a system and data integration perspective. The use of Dashboards is a new function that will enable us to publish live reports that will be available to all managers for their existing teams/services. An easy-to-use report writing tool will also allow us to build specific reports/dashboards and publish these, giving managers real time workforce information. Managers will therefore have a greater oversight of the structure and breakdown of the workforce, and this will help to inform better and faster decision making in everything we do across the organisation, including actions under this action plan in future years.	February/March 2023
Promote the benefits of working for us and developing our employer brand	We host a dedicated page on our Job Site to promote the benefits of working for the council to potential job applicants. We will make reference within our job adverts to the benefits of working for us and the opportunities that are available to our employees for: - flexible working – for dedicated part time work, job shares, term time roles and flexibility in terms of working hours and work location; and - training, learning and development (including apprenticeships and funded qualification training). We will continue to promote our family friendly policies (for	January 2023

What we will do	How are we going to do this	When we will monitor our progress
	parents and working carers) along with the fact that we are a Foundation Living Wage employer, so offer a competitive minimum level of pay that exceeds the government determined National Living Wage.	
Review our recruitment and selection policy and processes	A review of our recruitment guidance was undertaken in early 2022 and we plan to have reviewed our recruitment policy and procedure by the end of March 2023. We will take steps to reduce unconscious bias by utilising diverse recruitment practices. We will ensure that effective targeted adverts that "sell" our jobs are used, to widen the pool from which we recruit. We will ensure that gender-neutral language and job titles continue to be used in our adverts, job descriptions and recruitment material. We will make sure that our established practice of structured interviews continues to be used – with the same general questions being asked of all candidates with supplementary follow-ups based on the response that is given – to allow candidate responses to be compared and scored in a fair, objective and evidence-based way.	February/March 2023
Continue to develop new ways to make it easier for candidates to apply for our jobs	We do not want our application process to put off people from applying for a job with us. We want to make the process quick and easy.	January 2023

What we will do	How are we going to do this	When we will monitor our progress
	Job applicants can now apply for our jobs on mobile devices, and we are looking to extend the use of a "guided" application, currently used for a number of front-line roles, to other job roles where specific questions relating to the job are asked in order for candidates to build their application, rather than complete a traditional application form.	
Continue to monitor recruitment statistics and act on candidate feedback	We already analyse and report on applicant monitoring but candidates who apply for a job with us are now asked to provide feedback on (their user experience of) our recruitment process. We will actively encourage feedback from our job candidates and will act on any feedback we receive that may help us to improve our recruitment practices.	January 2023
Challenge stereotypes within our job roles	The diversity of our workforce features as part of the improvement journey we have embarked on, to create a council for the future. We will consider career pathways and succession planning as part of this project alongside our gender pay gap. We will work with managers to challenge gender norms in our service areas, such as encouraging men to consider a career within the care, catering, cleaning sectors, and women within highways and engineering.	January 2023
Work with our employees to better understand their work preferences and why they work	Through the use of pulse surveys and focus groups we want to understand more about why our employees work the way that they do. For example, if someone works in a part time	January 2023

What we will do	How are we going to do this	When we will monitor our progress
the way that they do	role, is this because part time working is something they choose to do as it fits in with their personal lifestyle/caring responsibilities or are other job roles seen as being too restrictive (in terms of working hours, how and when work is undertaken) and is this preventing them from applying for other job roles or progressing their career within the organisation. Our findings from this will be used to inform future action planning.	
Develop our employees	We are committed to supporting our employees in their career development. We will promote the wide range of learning and development opportunities we have on offer, both in-house and externally in the case of apprenticeship and funded qualification training. We will encourage managers to consider options for employees to "act up" into higher graded roles or be paid more money for taking on higher-level duties and/or responsibilities where situations arise, subject to the use of fair selection criteria. This will enable employees to gain valuable experience to better equip them to apply for future job promotions, where these become available. It will also help services in terms of their career pathways and succession planning. We will continue to promote our coaching and mentoring	January 2023

What we will do	How are we going to do this	When we will monitor our progress
	offer to support employees in their development, to reach their potential and plan for their future work goals, alongside opportunities for work shadowing. We are looking to introduce mutual mentoring opportunities as part of a relaunch of our coaching and mentoring programmes.	
Raise the profile of fairness and inclusion	We have relaunched our employee equality networks and are looking to re-establish a group specifically for working carers and a new group for younger workers. We will consider setting up a women's focus group, to identify barriers or perceived barriers to recruitment and progression, as part of this work. We have a fairness and inclusion ambassador, from our corporate management team, who is promoting the activities of the employee equality networks and helping to raise the awareness and profile of these groups, alongside wider fairness and inclusion issues, within our organisation. This work is supported by a workforce equalities group, a corporate fairness and inclusion working group and the launch of a fairness and inclusion website for all staff across our organisation.	January 2023
Promote a better understanding of the menopause	With the support of our Wellbeing Team, we are promoting a better understanding of the menopause and its symptoms, to support an environment in which our employees can openly and comfortably hold conversations about the menopause and be supported at work. Menopausal women are the fastest growing population at work, and this is reflected in our own workforce, and so we felt it was	January 2023

What we will do	How are we going to do this	When we will monitor our progress
	important to recognise this and make sure that our staff can access appropriate support. A menopause guide and workshop were launched last year to coincide with World Menopause Day, with guidance and information for both employees and managers, and a peer support forum called "Meno-Pause for Thought" has been set up to give those affected by menopause a chance to talk and hear other people's experiences and understand more about menopause in the workplace.	