

GENDER PAY GAP
Report

AS AT APRIL 2018

ASTER
GROUP

BRIDGING THE GAP



What we believe



Creating the right culture...

Creating a culture that truly supports our colleagues to be creative, innovative, empowered and above all themselves doesn't happen overnight.

We've spent some time looking at what equality, diversity and inclusivity looks like for our business and we've made some real progress in ensuring that regardless of gender, age, sexuality or race, everyone is able to have a good day at work and feels fairly rewarded for the work they do.

We believe that someone's ability to do their job is what's important and we are serious about creating an environment that removes barriers and allows our people to be the best versions of themselves.

Whilst we have made fantastic progress, we know that there is still more we can do to bridge the gap and we will continue to make improvements both large and small that will bring us one step closer to closing the gap for good.



What is a gender pay gap?

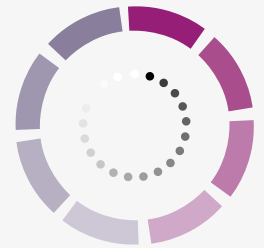
In line with recent legislation, this is the second year that we've published our gender pay gap.

A gender pay gap is the difference between the gross hourly earnings for both men and women regardless of the roles that they have. It is very different to equal pay, which is about making sure men and women are paid the same for like work.

This report and the key facts infographic shows the average pay gap in Aster between men and women, expressed as both a mean and a median average.

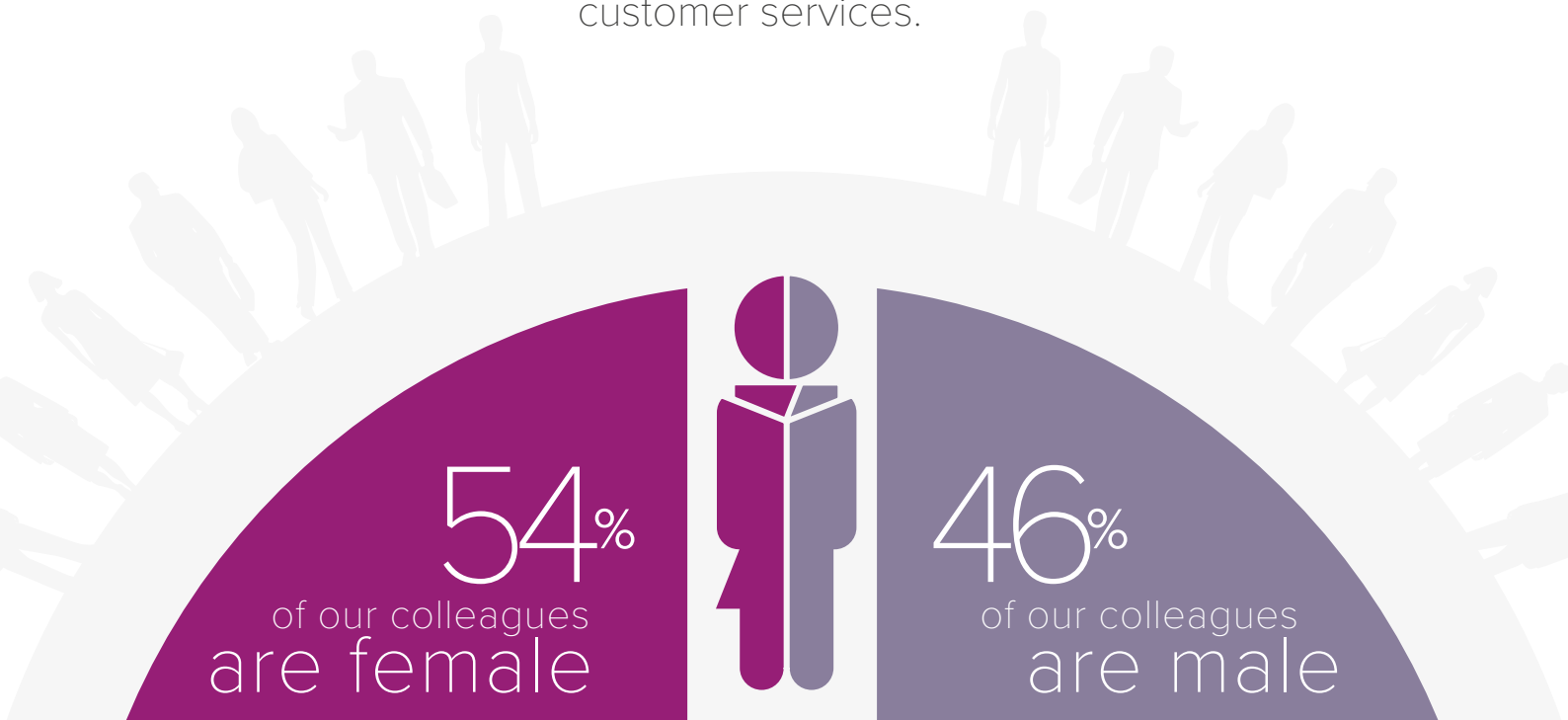


Our progress



We employ...

over 1,300 men and women in a wide variety of roles - from carers to electricians to finance and customer services.



our average gender pay gap

2.34%

decrease against last year

We aim to treat everyone fairly at work, across all levels and locations. This includes making sure everyone has the same opportunities for recognition, reward and career development. However, we are also faced with many of the same challenges and issues as others in the sector, issues like gender bias. For us, this isn't an excuse, rather it means that we need to work harder to address these issues and to support and retain our people.

The work we have done over the past 12 months has helped us to start to bridge the gap around our gender pay gap – and we are pleased to say that our average gender pay gap has fallen from 20.27% last year to 17.93% in 17/18.

Our progress



Whilst our gender pay gap is now less than the UK mean national average of 18.4% to us this is still not good enough and we will continue to do all we can to ensure a year on year reduction over the next five years.

We have reduced our median gender pay gap from 25.17% to 18.92%. And whilst we are pleased to see this reduction we want to reduce this still further. By applying a gender balanced approach to recruitment – and specifically looking at our work placement

and apprenticeship opportunities, we will continue to blur the lines of what are traditionally seen as male dominated roles and hope to attract more women into careers like plumbing or carpentry which will help us to continue to bridge the gap.

our mean
gender pay gap is
17.93%

mean
hourly rate for
female colleagues is

£14.74

median
hourly rate for
female colleagues is

£13.24



mean
hourly rate for
male colleagues is

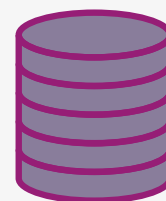
£17.96

median
hourly rate for
male colleagues is

£16.33

our median
gender pay gap is
18.92%

Pay bands



Broadly the number of colleagues employed in roles that mean they are in the lowest pay band of £10.88 per hour or less has remained the same as in 17/18, however there is still a disproportionate number of women in this category (77.63%). This is largely due to the number of women employed in care and support roles, which funded by local authorities, tend to be, on a national level, lower paid roles.

77.63%
female colleagues

BAND A
£10.88
per hour or less

22.37%
male colleagues

59.12%
female colleagues

BAND B
£10.89 > £14.51
per hour

40.88%
male colleagues

38.03%
female colleagues

BAND C
£14.52 > £18.67
per hour

61.97%
male colleagues

39.08%
female colleagues

BAND D
£18.68
and above per hour

60.92%
male colleagues

There has been no significant changes in the female to male split in other pay bands, with each band remaining largely the same as last year, although there are now marginally more women receiving between £14.52 - £18.67 and more than £18.68 per hour than the same time last year.

Bonus



we gave all our colleagues a one-off

bonus

which resulted in our median gender bonus gap being reported as 0% for 2017/18

81.32%
females
received bonus pay



86.43%
males
received bonus pay

our mean
gender bonus gap is

22.49%

our median
gender bonus gap is

0%

Fairness from the start



We apply...

a gender-neutral approach to all our recruitment activity and we strive to ensure a gender balance on all of our interview shortlists where we can.

During our recent round of non-executive director recruitment, we worked hard to ensure that our proposition appealed to people from all walks of life and as well as ensuring a gender balanced shortlist we also employed the 'Rooney Rule' to ensure diversity and equality within the selection group.

The more perspectives, backgrounds and experiences we can incorporate into our business, the better we are able to ensure we provide our customers with a good, reliable service and achieve our vision that everyone has a home.

Tackling the 'Motherhood Penalty'

Over the past 12 months we've taken a closer look at the factors that cause our gender pay gap and have found that it isn't really at the point of recruitment where the gap exists. We are confident that we pay all our colleagues fairly for the work they do, it's for those women in the middle of their careers, those looking to start a family or to return to work after a career break where the gap is more prevalent.

We know that the externally coined 'Motherhood Penalty' is one reason why the gender pay gap continues to exist and it isn't unique to us, but argue that without any significant societal, organisational and governmental changes it is likely to remain. For many, maintaining a healthy work-life balance can be difficult when structured around the traditional nine-to-five, office-based routine. Which is why we promote an environment where working from home, under the hours that work for the individual is the norm.

It's about colleagues finding the right balance and this agile approach benefits those with children or carer commitments and helps our colleagues to balance their work and family life.

At the same time, we've also looked at our employee offer for new parents and in May enhanced our maternity/adoption, paternity and shared parental leave pay for all colleagues. The next step is to further enhance the support parents, especially mothers, receive when returning to work for example by pairing colleagues with a buddy in the business to help them ease back into the world of work.

This commitment to making working lives for parents across our business easier, was recognised by leading parental website MumsNet and we received the sought-after 'family friendly' employer accreditation in June this year.

Expanding our approach



Whilst this report looks specifically at the gender pay gap, we recognise that there is more we can do on broader scale to promote diversity and equality at Aster. Which is why we continue to champion the work of our active Equality and Diversity committee and are pleased to see the network recruit new members over the past 12 months two of which are male.

The committee is currently trialling 'lean in circles' across the business and whilst they started in the US as a peer to peer support network for women, we believe that these shouldn't be exclusive and have extended the membership of these groups to everyone.

We have also started looking at how we can ensure we apply a fair and consistent approach to reward across the business and will be reviewing our full reward package over the next few months to help shape our new offer.

Equality from the top



We are proud...

to say that our two leadership teams have a good gender balance. Our executive board has a strategic focus, and is the highest paid team within the business and consists of six colleagues. 50% of this group are women.

Our operational Leadership team oversees the day to day performance of our business. It consists of nine people and 60% of those are women.

Good corporate decision making comes from considering different points of view, from people with different backgrounds, experiences and ideals.

Our strong female representation at a senior level demonstrates that women can achieve success in our business and reinforces our commitment to recognising talent regardless of gender.



Bridging the gap



We became...

100

the official partner of the History of Parliament Trust's Vote 100 campaign, commemorating the anniversary of some women getting the vote – and even though as a society, we've made significant progress in 100 years - it remains the case that there is still a long way to go before we reach total equality regardless of gender, age, race or sexuality.

We will continue...

to explore ways to bring gender balance to our workforce to ensure that we recruit, support and retain our people to ensure inclusion at every level and remain committed to seeing further reductions in our gender pay gap over the next 12 months.

More about our data

- Pay data comes from our April 2018 payroll.
- Bonus data is based on bonus payments for the 12 months previous to 05 April 2018.
- Full pay equivalent colleagues are colleagues who are NOT on reduced pay due to sick or maternity leave.

I confirm the data reported is accurate.

Dawn Sowerby

Transformation director –
People

