

# Gender pay gap report 2020

**Bridging  
the gap**



ASTER  
GROUP

# Gender pay gap report

2020



To be a really good employer  
there are some very basic things we need  
to have in place and feeling comfortable at work and  
being paid fairly are important parts of getting those basics right.

Our Gender pay gap is one way we measure how well we're doing but there are a range of other measures that we use to look at how far we are on our diversity and inclusion journey – you can read more about what we've been doing in this report.

## What is a Gender pay gap



Although reporting on  
the Gender pay gap  
was suspended this  
year because of  
Covid-19 ...

it was still important  
to us to continue to  
demonstrate our  
commitment to  
bridging the  
Gender pay gap.

We also wanted to show that we are  
serious about creating an inclusive and  
diverse workforce where people can bring  
their whole selves to work each day.

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 similar work.

This report looks at Aster Group as a whole. There are supporting  
infographics for Aster Property and Aster Communities which can  
be found at [www.aster.co.uk](http://www.aster.co.uk).

# Today's workplace



Even in 2020, women are still faced with issues of Gender inequality in their lives, including the workplace.

The motherhood penalty is still unfortunately prevalent across almost all sectors. Not only does time out of work to raise a family have a potential impact on career progression or the amount women can earn compared to men, unconscious bias during recruitment for women of child bearing age and even things like interest on student loan repayments and the expense of child care all contribute to the inequality across the sexes.

For many, maintaining a healthy work-life balance is also difficult when structured around the traditional nine-to-five, office-based routine. Which is why for some time we've promoted a culture where working from home, under the hours that work for the individual is the norm.

We trust our people to work in the way they want and to tell us how we can make changes to facilitate that. It's about colleagues finding a way to make it work for them and this approach benefits those with children or carer commitments.

We've also looked at our employee offer for new parents and took the decision in 2018 to enhance our maternity/adoption, paternity and shared parental leave pay. We're also proud to be recognised by leading parental website MumsNet as a 'family friendly' employer and are one of 15 businesses supporting the national Flex Appeal campaign, which looks to make flexible working the norm in the UK.

## The impact of **Covid-19**



According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies working mothers have been disproportionately affected throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

With large numbers of women finding themselves redundant, furloughed, with their hours reduced or having to juggle the lion's share of childcare whilst balancing their work commitments, the challenges for women today are more noticeable than they ever have been in recent years.

Our flexibility principles, which includes truly flexible working and an innovative approach to leave, which essentially removes upper limits on the number of days leave our employees can take, was launched in 2020 and means our people are better able to balance the demands of home life, plus give their best at work. It's this approach that enabled us to respond immediately to the pandemic and the restrictions imposed by the government.

We are incredibly proud of the work we've done over the past six years to transform the business into an organisation that is not afraid to experiment and can adapt quickly to the changing needs of our people and customers. As part of The Aster Offer, the umbrella name for the things that make-up our offer to colleagues, we are looking at those basic elements of our offer to make sure things like pay, benefits, reward and recognition are fair for everyone.

# Our position

Like most in the sector, many of our trade roles, so jobs like plumbing, carpentry, roofing and grounds maintenance work for example are traditionally male dominated.

To help attract more women into these types of roles we've been working closely with local schools and colleges on targeted recruitment campaigns as well as looking at how we can support more women into workplace apprenticeships.

That said, with a workforce of over 1,200 we offer a wide variety of roles and the Gender split within Aster is roughly half and half (49% female, 51% male).

We aim to treat everyone fairly at work, across all levels and locations. This includes making sure everyone has the same access to opportunities for recognition, reward and career development.

Our average Gender pay gap has fallen year on year since 2017 and we are committed to seeing a positive decrease in these figures.

However, this year we have seen a slight increase in our average Gender pay gap from 8.96% last year to 10.21%. Whilst this is still below the national average of 17.3% this slight upwards movement is something that we are disappointed to see.

The Gender pay gap outcome is heavily influenced by the number of men and women in a workforce, and how they are distributed across the workforce. So, whilst our Gender pay gap figure is important, the focus for us is about creating fair pay for everyone.

49%

of our colleagues  
are **female**

51%

of our colleagues  
are **male**

Our **average**  
**Gender** pay gap is

**10.21%**

# Our **hourly** rates of pay

Our  
**mean**  
Gender pay gap is  
**10.21%**

**8.96%** in 2019  
**17.93%** in 2018  
**20.27%** in 2017

**mean**  
hourly rate  
for **female**  
colleagues is

£ **17.05**

+ £3.08 on last three years

**mean**  
hourly rate  
for **male**  
colleagues is

£ **18.99**

**median**  
hourly rate for **female**  
colleagues is

£ **15.26**

Our  
**median**  
Gender pay gap is  
**12.28%**

**11.12%** in 2019  
**18.92%** in 2018  
**25.17%** in 2017

**median**  
hourly rate for **male**  
colleagues is

£ **17.39**

# Pay bands

The number of colleagues employed in roles that mean they are in the lowest pay band of £12.87 per hour or less has remained more or less the same as the previous three years, however there is still a disproportionate number women in this category (66.36%).

This year we have also seen the number of women in the highest pay band of £20.15 and over decrease, altering the ratio of those paid the most within the business to a 60.25% male bias.



**66.36%**  
female colleagues

**Band A**  
£**12.87**  
per **hour** or less

**33.64%**  
male colleagues

**56.21%**  
female colleagues

**Band B**  
£**12.88** > £**16.32**  
per **hour**

**43.79%**  
male colleagues

**37.71%**  
female colleagues

**Band C**  
£**16.33** > £**20.14**  
per **hour**

**67.29%**  
male colleagues

**39.75%**  
female colleagues

**Band B**  
£**20.15**  
and above per **hour**

**60.25%**  
male colleagues

# Bonus

We are working hard to ensure that ...

we have a fair and inclusive culture for everyone and as part of The Aster Offer, we're in the process of creating a transparent business wide pay framework that focuses on attributing pay based on the requirements of the role not on the person that performs the role.

There's lots of work going on at the moment to analyse the 400 plus roles we have across the business with a view to having the pay framework in place in 2021.

Reward and recognition is another element of The Aster Offer that we are in the process of reviewing and whilst we don't award a bonus every year, everyone who was eligible for a bonus received a one off payment of between £375 and £750 this year depending on their length of service. This resulted in a mean Gender bonus gap of -18.59% and a median Gender bonus gap of 0% overall.

This year we have given a **bonus to:**

**83.73%**

**females**  
received **bonus** pay

**81.79%**

**males**  
received **bonus** pay

Our **mean**  
**Gender** bonus gap is  
**-18.59%**

Our **median**  
**Gender** bonus gap is  
**0%**



# Diversity & inclusion

Just focusing on  
Gender equality is not enough.

We're looking at more ways to bring about  
not only greater Gender balance but also increased  
inclusivity and diversity into our workforce to ensure that we recruit,  
support and retain our people to ensure inclusion at every level.

While we have made positive steps forward ensuring fairness in the way we support our customers and understand our colleagues, there is always more we can do.

We fully support the need for a fairer, more inclusive world that recognises and values people regardless of not just their protected characteristics but any difference.

Inclusivity and fairness is central to our purpose and a core element of The Aster Way, a set of cultural principles that underpin everything we do. Our strengths are our people and our ethical approach, and we will continue to work with all underrepresented groups to ensure fairness for all.

Diversity in people creates an environment of diverse thinking, this is where innovation flourishes and ensures we are fit for the future. As we look to the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic this will be key.

With the help of our Diversity & Inclusivity networkers, over the past year we've continued to work with Enham Trust, a disability charity based in Hampshire, to achieve the next level on the Disability Confident scheme, and we'll be launching our first LGBTQ+ network later this year with support from LGBTQ+ charity Stonewall.

We've also worked with colleagues and our Colleague Council to deliver a weeklong 'diversity and inclusion awareness campaign' which took place in October and is where we launched our diversity principles. A set of principles that focus on ensuring diversity is at the forefront of our thinking. The principles focus on three key areas:

- Knowing our customers and colleagues
- Delivering fairness for all and ensuring everyone has a voice, and
- Ensuring diversity of thinking.



To find out  
more about our  
diversity principles  
click **here**.



Having the right mix of people in our business will help us to not only make better business decisions it will also help us to understand the different backgrounds in our customer groups and communities.

The more diverse our people the more opinions we'll have to build an innovative and robust business fit for the future.



## The **next** **12** months

Over the next 12 months and beyond we will continue to explore ways to bring greater Gender balance.

More widely we will focus on our inclusivity agenda to ensure that we recruit without prejudice, support colleagues to bring their whole selves to work and retain our best people - ensuring a richness of ideas and opinions as we progress with our transformation journey.

### More about **our data:**

- Pay data comes from our April 2020 payroll
- Bonus data is based on bonus payments for the 12 months previous to 05 April 2019, and
- 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.**

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Jane Pound'.

**Jane Pound**  
People director

A S T E R  
GROUP