

# **Gender Pay Gap Report 5th April 2023**



# Foreword

**We are pleased to provide an update on our progress in addressing the gender pay gap at VCCP Group and are encouraged to report a reduction in our median gender pay gap from 23.1% to 19%.**

**We recognise that there is still work to be done and are dedicated to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace environment that enables everyone to thrive.**

## **What's driving the gap:**

There are two main drivers of our gender pay gap.

The first is that we have a higher representation of women in entry-level roles at 70%.

Secondly, we have a lower representation of women in our upper quartile at 38%.

While we are proud to attract talented women to our industry, and to VCCP Group, it is imperative that to close our gender pay gap we need a higher representation of women in our upper quartile. We have set ourselves a target of reaching 45% in the next 3 years and this report explains some of the initiatives that will help us to achieve this.

## **How we're closing the gap:**

To close the gap we need to create an environment which retains and develops our people. Thrive, our employer brand, sits at the heart of our approach and encompasses everything from providing opportunities to learn and grow, supporting wellbeing and creating an inclusive culture where everyone feels at home.

This year, to increase the representation of women in the upper quartile and upper middle quartile, we have focussed on a number of new initiatives and partnerships. We were delighted to work with Back2Businessship who run an incredible returners programme, supporting

women re-entering the workforce after extended career breaks due to caregiving responsibilities. We also continue to welcome back our parents returning from maternity leave and we are proud to say 100% have returned in the last year. We have also launched our menopause policy and our wellbeing team are working towards being a menopause friendly accredited employer with Henpicked.

We remain committed to closing the gender pay gap and fostering an inclusive workplace where all individuals have equal opportunities for growth and advancement. Through our ongoing initiatives we are confident in our ability to drive positive change and create a more equitable and diverse environment for everyone to thrive.



**Chief People Officer**

# Gender Pay Gap Explained

## What is the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average earnings of all men and women across an entire organisation, by expressing women's pay as a percentage of men's pay.

This is a separate issue to equal pay, which is the legal requirement for people carrying out the same or similar work to be paid equally, regardless of gender. In simple terms men and women doing the same jobs, being paid the same salary. We are required to express our gender pay gap in two ways, by calculating the 'median' and the 'mean' values.

## What is a median pay gap?

The median pay gap is calculated by finding the midpoint in all employees' hourly pay, then comparing the midpoint for men with the midpoint for women. The difference between the two is the median pay gap, shown as a percentage.

## What is a mean pay gap?

The mean pay gap is the average gap. It is calculated by adding all employees' hourly pay and dividing it by the number of employees. The difference between the mean figures for men and mean figures for women is the mean pay gap. This is also shown as a percentage.

## What is a pay quartile?

This is the hourly pay for both men and women arranged from the lowest to the highest and then divided into 4 equal quartiles. The proportion of men and women is calculated for each quartile.

## What is the bonus gap?

The bonus gap is the difference in bonus pay received by male and female employees in the 12 months ending in March 2023. This is shown as both mean and median figures.

# Our Results

## VCCP GROUP EMPLOYEES



### HOURLY PAY GAP



## % WHO RECEIVED BONUS PAY



### BONUS PAY GAP



\*The mean and median bonus gaps are higher in this report because we awarded a one off cost of living bonus to those employees who were in entry level positions. As we know from our results we do have more women in entry level positions which mean more women received this cost of living bonus which therefore creates a bigger median and mean bonus pay gap.

If we were to run the results again removing the cost of living bonus we would have a median pay gap of 0.6% and a mean pay gap of 27.9%.

## % WOMEN & MEN IN EACH QUARTILE

### UPPER QUARTILE



### UPPER MIDDLE QUARTILE



### LOWER MIDDLE QUARTILE



### LOWER QUARTILE



# A closer look at **how we are closing the gap**

**Our people and our culture are our biggest assets; we continue to strive to create a culture and environment where everyone can thrive and do their best work. Thrive, our employer brand, is designed to ensure everyone can flourish and grow at VCCP Group.**

## **New partnerships:**

In 2023, we worked with Back2Businessship who run an incredible returners programme, supporting women re-entering the workforce after extended career breaks due to caregiving responsibilities. We hosted a cohort of 30 women at VCCP Group, where Back2Businessship ran the second week of their programme which is aimed at enhancing their skills and confidence to transition back into the workplace. VCCP Group also contributed to the programme with our very own Peter Gasston giving an insight into the developments of AI in our industry and the launch of our very own agency, faith.

We have continued to work with Back2Businessship and in 2024 we are a headline partner and sponsor for this amazing programme.

## **Support for Parents and Carers:**

VCCP Group recognises the importance of supporting employees throughout their various life stages, and helping them to continue to build their careers. We have enhanced our parental leave provisions and introduced back-to-work coaching for all parents returning from parental leave. We are pleased to report a **100% return rate for parents taking maternity leave in the past year.**

To further support parents and carers within VCCP Group, we have relaunched our "Parents and Carers" initiative, aimed at facilitating connections and sharing experiences among parents and carers at VCCP Group. This initiative is complemented by our improved family and care policies, including provisions for time off for dependents, and fertility support.

## **Wellbeing Initiatives:**

We have established a dedicated wellbeing team to promote a culture of wellbeing throughout VCCP Group. As part of our commitment to supporting all employees, a focus for the team is on individuals going through menopause, evidenced by the launch of our menopause policy and our partnership with Henpicked to become an accredited menopause-friendly employer. Our policy extends beyond the individual experiencing menopause to encompass support for their partners, friends, and family members.

# Attracting people from underrepresented backgrounds

**We have a number of initiatives in place to improve the experience and representation of individuals from underrepresented backgrounds.**

## **VCCP Stoke Academy**

Following the opening of our VCCP Stoke Academy in 2021, we have continued to build momentum and provide training, work experience, mentoring, paid internship schemes and apprenticeship opportunities in Stoke-on-Trent. As the challenger agency we are determined to challenge the perception that the only way to get into our industry is to live in London. In 2023, we are proud to have supported young people through the Academy with a record **10,000 hours** of work experience. This included mentoring through an eight-week virtual work experience scheme, a four-week paid summer internship and various talks and events at local colleges and universities. More than 120 of our employees participated in VCCP Stoke Academy initiatives.

## **Ad School**

We **welcomed over 40 students** to our Ad School programme, a week long experience scheme with a difference. Ad-schoolers get a jam-packed week giving them a genuine insight into life in an integrated creative agency.

They have a timetable of talks from industry leading specialists, armed with all the information required to pull together their very own campaign, as well as mentorship from the best in our agency to deliver a team pitch for a live brief.

## **The Table**

The Table is our paid entry-level, year-long scheme for anyone who wants to kickstart their career in advertising. Each year we welcome around **14 new Tablers** who are each placed in one of our client teams in the VCCP Group London office for a full year, gaining invaluable experience and working on live briefs for some of the world's biggest brands. We also provide a thorough training programme to give our new talent all the tools they need to thrive in their new roles, as well as 1-2-1 career coaching. We are delighted that at the end of the year our Tablers are offered a full time job with VCCP Group.

## **The Den**

The Den is our home for all budding creatives to play, learn, practice and grow, with a view to coming up with some amazing ideas and getting their first job in the industry.

At VCCP Group we only look for the best creative talent, but we firmly believe that can come from anywhere. Placement creative teams get 3 month paid contracts where they'll be put on the same briefs and get the same opportunities as everyone else in the department. **Many of our creatives were hired off the back of their time in The Den** and have gone on to make some of the agency's most successful work.

# Retaining our people

**To support all employees, we have implemented various initiatives aimed at nurturing their talents, fostering their success and ensuring they feel at home at VCCP Group.**

## **Career development**

We recently introduced our **“Bear Essentials” training programme**, accessible to all entry-level employees. This programme is designed to provide comprehensive training, mentorship, and foster a sense of community among our entry-level talent.

We are delighted to report that over 100 individuals have enrolled in this programme.

In addition to our focus on entry-level talent, we are proud to have conducted our **“Future Leaders” programme** for the second time. **Notably, 77% of the cohort comprised female participants**, all of whom successfully completed the programme and half of the cohort has been promoted to leadership positions so far.

We also want to ensure we create a positive experience for Black talent at VCCP Group and show that we are committed to helping our brilliant Black talent rise into leadership roles. This is why we took part in the inaugural **BRiM Sponsorship Programme**, a cross-industry programme for mid-senior level Black talent designed to support them developing into future leaders. There were a total of 7 VCCP Group employees who took part in this pilot programme - all of whom were paired with a member of the VCCP Group c-suite who have become their internal champions. As well as having an internal senior sponsor at VCCP Group, the participants also took part in numerous training and mentoring sessions with peers across the industry to support their development on the programme. We are looking forward to continuing this relationship with BRiM and ensuring these development opportunities are available to Black talent across the industry.

As part of our thrive programme last year, we delivered over **2,600 hours of training** for our people, ranging from presentation and negotiation skills, to a full AI training programme and inclusive recruitment.

We also continue to offer 1-2-1 career coaching with our in-house coaches which has been instrumental in supporting the career development of our people.

## **Our award-winning DE&I Collective**

DE&I is at the heart of our approach to investing in and retaining our people. Our award-winning DE&I Collective have continued their amazing work to create a culture of inclusion and belonging for all. In 2023 they launched new policies including the 3-in-1 Shooting Talent Policy with Girl&Bear, and celebrated events such as Pride Week, Black History Month and International Women’s Day, whilst continuing to champion underrepresented groups. Cultural education and training has always been at the heart of our DE&I strategy. Over the last year, training and initiatives were designed to support specific departments on their DE&I journey, increasing engagement and creating better, more inclusive work. For example, new Inclusive Language Training in our creative and planning departments. We also made Inclusive Recruitment training and Inclusive Leadership training mandatory for all hiring managers. Our DE&I Collective were once again shortlisted for Campaign’s Talent Management Team of the Year.

Our Accessibility Collective also continued the brilliant work that they do to ensure our digital products and services are accessible to all and shine a light on the difficulties people face across the 5 differences of accessibility: Sight, hearing, touch and physical, speech and language and neurodiversity.

## **And finally...**

We remain committed to closing the gender pay gap and fostering an inclusive workplace where all individuals have equal opportunities for growth and advancement. Through our ongoing initiatives we are confident in our ability to drive positive change and create a more equitable and diverse environment for everyone to thrive.

But don’t just take it from us, hear what some of our brilliant colleagues have to say.

# Sophie Maunder

**Having worked at VCCP Group for 20 of its 21 years, my heart has always been in strategy and brand planning. I have been Head of Planning, leading the O2 account for 8 years, and also led the agency as CEO in data and direct and customer experience, currently working as a CSO role on one of our leading global accounts.**

I first came here attracted by our 10 core values and principles - way ahead of their time then and still hugely relevant today, which gives VCCP its unique culture. Our principles give everyone an unprecious, honest and approachable way to work (to name 3 of the 10!), where every voice should be heard.

How we engender those principles has evolved over time as the agency has grown and matured, and I am proud to have felt able to lead the way on some of those evolving needs of our staff. As the first woman to go on maternity leave and return, the first person to take flexible working with a 4 day week, and the first female partner, I have always felt supported and encouraged to do and be my best at work.



**Executive Partner  
VCCP Group**

As one of the first working mums at VCCP, and a single mum at that, I unwittingly became the go-to person for 'how to have it all' - a deeply ironic phrase which I am always quick to debunk. More recently, I have developed this as my side hustle by qualifying as an executive coach and specialising in maternity coaching - coaching our brilliant women, into mat leave and back into work again to make this massively transitional time as easy, effective and positive as possible.

At the other end of the rollercoaster that being a working woman entails, I am proud to have become the senior sponsor for our Menopause Awareness and support team. This group aims to engender better understanding, empathy and openness around the issues caused for women going through menopause, supporting all those affected by it - themselves, a partner or loved one.



# Alex Dalman

## **A year ago, I wasn't running a creative AI agency. And now I am.**

I think this pretty much sums up why I recently celebrated my 10th anniversary at VCCP Group earlier this year. The continuous evolution of the agency, the restless passion of the leadership and its focus on developing homegrown talent, is what for me, has kept me inspired a decade on. If you want to do something at VCCP Group, there is very little stopping you, and that entrepreneurial spirit has meant for me that there is always something around the corner to pique my interest.

## **Ideas. Innovation. Instinct.**

I am most proud of the creative innovation work that I have done for some of the biggest brands in the world - putting The O2 in Fortnite, creating easyJet's Look&Book, launching O2 onto TikTok and building VCCP Group Towers in Roblox. None of these ideas or initiatives, anyone asked for, and that is part of the joy of working at VCCP Group and the support you get - going with your gut, taking a risk, and doing something different.



## **Managing Partner / Head of Social & Innovation**

## **Taking that leap of faith**

And probably the biggest risk in recent times that we took as an agency, was challenging the narrative around Generative AI. I'll never forget being asked to launch an agency in a day, and what followed ended up being one of the best career rollercoaster experiences I have ever had, working with some of the most talented people in the agency. And it is only the beginning.

## **Arts & Sciences**

There is still a lot more to be done to encourage more women into technology and innovation roles, but hopefully being in the role that I am, it will encourage others to consider this unconventional path in the future. The world is only moving one way, with creativity and technology more common bedfellows.

# Kenny Dada

**My journey at VCCP started in 2021, when I joined the account management team on the Virgin Media O2 account. Throughout my time on the account, I have been given numerous opportunities to develop my skills via VCCP Group's challenger ethos.**

In 2022, I was given the once in a career opportunity to work on the pitch for the consolidated Virgin Media O2 account, a key moment in VCCP Group's history that resulted in the agency retaining its founding client. As well as the pitch, I have worked on various VMO2 trading, brand, Priority and rugby campaigns and I have truly appreciated the wide range of experiences that these have enabled me to have.

I am so grateful for the various ways that VCCP Group has championed and supported me over the years and as a result of this, I have been able to thrive not just with recognition at VCCP Group but across the industry. Some key examples include how I was listed as VCCP Group's 'Star Player' in the 2023 Campaign School Report for making real industry change, shortlisted for a Female Frontier Award in Rising To The Top (Advertising), recognised as a BRIM Changemaker, and a big highlight of the year and of my career to date was winning a WACL Talent Award in 2023, all with VCCP Group's support. I was also further recognised for the Patricia Mann Award, which is given to someone who is championing change and challenging the status quo as well as making a positive impact on the marketing and advertising industry.



**Account Director / Joint  
DE&I Collective Lead**

I am particularly honoured by how VCCP Group has trusted me to be the account management lead for the VCCP Stoke work that is growing from strength to strength - over 400 Staffordshire students to date have taken part in VCCP Stoke's tailored activities, and I have been invited to speak on several IPA panels re the work that VCCP Stoke is doing to challenge the lack of socio-economic diversity in our industry. I am also proud to be part of VCCP's DE&I Collective, which leads the charge internally to ensure that the agency's output and culture is as inclusive as possible.

The past three years at VCCP Group have been the best years of my career to date and I am so excited for the many more opportunities to learn and grow that working at VCCP will bring my way.

# Olivia Packshaw

**Peculiar. That's probably how best to describe my career journey, a little peculiar. Peculiar because it started and continues here at VCCP Group. I suppose you could say that I'm VCCP Group born and bred, starting my career as a bright eyed and bushy tailed grad on what was then the 2012 Graduate Programme. And in more peculiar form, I spent my first 6 months at VCCP Group working on easyJet, an account that nearly 12 years later I have the pleasure of still being involved with.**

I've been lucky enough to dip my toe in a lot of different brands and sectors over my years here from financial services, FMCG and not for profit. I've learnt the importance of building trusted relationships and the buzz I get from making great work. I am now proud to oversee two of VCCP Group's leading brands, easyJet and PepsiCo, as well as turning my hand to a small but important charity, Prostate Cancer UK.

Beyond the variety of brands I've been fortunate enough to be exposed to the draw of the agency culture, I've remained motivated by new and exciting challenges that have always been just around the corner. In 2015, VCCP Group entered me into the WACL Future Leaders Award which I was fortunate enough to win, unlocking additional training and networking opportunities outside of VCCP Group. In 2017, I had the opportunity to work abroad and get a taste of the Big Apple, spending 4 months on secondment in VCCP Group's New York office. In 2019, I was able to lead the transition of the graduate programme into the agency through to



**Business Director /  
Joint Head of Account  
Management**

a broader entry-level programme open to everyone, renaming it The Table and I am delighted to see this programme still thriving today.

My latest challenge came when I became the Joint Head of Account Management at the end of last year. In equal parts rewarding and challenging, this new opportunity has given another texture to an already varied job. Now, everyday, I get the pleasure of interacting with the most amazing and talented bunch of legends you could ever imagine. Surprising, dynamic and bloody funny, this slightly dysfunctional Account Management family brings me no end of joy every day.

# Agatha O'Neill

**I've been at VCCP Group for just over 18 months now. It's my first job as a creative, and I was incredibly lucky to be hired straight out of ad school.**

**It wasn't as easy and cleancut as that for me to get here though. Life didn't quite go as I had planned - by the time I was 28, I was a single mum, raising a baby boy on my own.**

It also took me years to even discover the world of creative advertising. I was well into my 30s and unhappily working as a designer, when I was handpicked to take part in the first ever Creative Equals, creative comeback programme - a free programme for women in between careers who need a bit of support to get back to work. I learnt about art direction and copywriting there, and I became completely hooked - this was the job I had been looking for. Via the programme I secured a designer role in an agency, deciding to make the transition from designer to art director there. I worked like crazy - on open briefs, 'stolen' briefs, worked ad hoc whether I was asked to or not, talked to CDs, creatives, CCOs and anyone who would listen. After months of this, I was finally told the only way to succeed was to go to ad school.

Quitting my job to commute into London and pay thousands of pounds for an ad course whilst bringing up my son solo was not an option. I was heartbroken, and I felt stuck.

It was during the pandemic that I was able to work and study full time at SCA to change my career. It was impossibly hard and I burnt out several times. But I was passionate and obsessed and in love with this new career I felt I was finally heading towards.

I am going into the details of my journey into advertising for a reason. A lot of us do not have a clear simple path into finding the job that fulfils us. The challenges on the way make us more resilient of course and ultimately help inform



## Junior Creative

more diverse ideas that are so clearly needed in the advertising industry, but in order to get there, agencies need to pave the way by offering better salaries, support and flexibility for those of us who need it.

After ad school, my partner Sarah and I secured a placement at VCCP Group. We were excited to start somewhere so big that had such an impressive roster of clients to work with. Our ideas were liked, and after a few months we realised how lucky we were to be surrounded by such amazing creative talent. Not only that, but people are kind at VCCP Group - and supportive. I felt heard (at last), not only as a creative, but as a parent too. As a single mother I am in the minority, and as a junior single mother I am completely alone. It is not an easy position to be in, and not one I could survive in any old agency.

Deciding to change careers at such a late stage in life, and in such challenging conditions has been tough. But it has also meant that I am selective when it comes to where and with whom I work. It is essential for me to be in a nurturing environment - somewhere that is flexible, that encourages and supports. There are so many horror stories of women being made redundant during maternity leave or workplaces not giving enough flexibility for parents to be present for their children. It is something I have always been very aware of and have always fought for.

The journey into advertising can be made a little easier if agencies like VCCP Group have the intelligence and the heart to actually hear the needs of those from diverse backgrounds.