

# Public Document Pack



## Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority Human Resources Committee

**Date:** Friday, 23 June 2023      **Time:** 10.00 am

**Venue:** Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint Headquarters -  
Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP

**Members are requested to attend the above meeting to be held at the time, place and date mentioned to transact the following business**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. J. Taylor".

**Clerk to the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority**

<b>Agenda</b>	<b><u>Pages</u></b>
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<b>2 Declarations of Interests</b>	
<b>3 Minutes</b> Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2023, for confirmation.	3 - 8
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**Any councillor who is unable to attend the meeting and wishes to submit apologies should do so via the Executive Assistant to the Chief Fire Officer on 0115 8388900**

**If you need advice on declaring an interest in any item on the agenda, please contact the Governance Officer shown below before the day of the meeting, if possible**

Governance Officer:

*Catherine Ziane-Pryor, Governance Officer*  
0115 8764468  
*catherine.pryor@nottinghamcity.gov.uk*

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<https://committee.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CIId=217&Year=0>

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## **Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority Human Resources Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint  
Police Headquarters - Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 21 April  
2023 from 10.05am -11.03am**

### **Membership**

#### **Present**

Councillor Dave Trimble (Chair)  
Councillor Robert Corden  
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora  
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan  
Councillor Nigel Turner

#### **Absent**

Councillor Tom Hollis

### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Damien West – Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Matt Sismey - Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager  
Nick Linthwaite - Human Resources Manager  
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

## **19 Apologies for Absence**

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

## **20 Declarations of Interests**

None.

## **21 Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## **22 Human Resources Update**

Damien West, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report, which was presented by Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, and Nick Linthwaite, Human Resources Manager, and provides an update on key human resources metrics and equalities monitoring data.

General statistics consider activity between the 01 January to 31 March 2023 reporting period, with absence figures spanning the period of 01 January to 31 March 2023, and equality statistics spanning the period 01 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) During the reporting period 25 individuals joined the Service, and 17 left, resulting in the establishment holding 23 whole-time vacancies;
- b) With regard to the whole-year overview, spanning the 2022/23 financial year, two trainee courses were run to fill the whole-time establishment posts, which resulted in the recruitment of 24 whole time staff, who are scheduled to start in April and September;
- c) A service transfer recruitment period resulted in two successful candidates joining from other Fire and Rescue Services;
- d) The number of leavers was within the predicted numbers, with the rate slowing;
- e) A revised workforce plan will be presented to the next meeting;
- f) During the period of 1 October to 31 December, 102 sickness absence days were recorded for whole time staff, which is 17.3% lower than last year;
- g) As previously requested by members, appendix A to the report provides a breakdown of absence trends by year quarter, for the past three years;
- h) Appendix B to report provides a national fire service picture of sickness absence for whole time firefighters, retained firefighters, and green book staff, alongside all other Fire and Rescue Service reported absence;
- i) The Service continues to monitor trends, and where possible, take action to prevent further absence, including working with employees on long-term sickness absence;
- j) With regard to equalities, for the period 1st October to 31<sup>st</sup> March, there was very little change in the diversity of the operational workforce. The Support function is considered generally more representative of the county's population, however, there is still work to do;
- k) As previously requested by members of the Committee, the report sets out the percentage of protected characteristics within the whole workforce operational roles on-call roles and support roles, by percentage of the workforce;
- l) Work continues to further improve the diversity of the workforce and has included a rebranding of recruitment campaigns for all roles, and broadening recruitment engagement at jobs fairs public events and schools;
- m) Further information on the actual roles within the breakdown of the support work force by protective characteristic and grade was not available at the meeting, but could be supplied at a later date.

**Resolved to note the report.**

### **23 People Strategy Update**

Damien West, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, provided an update on the priorities for the People Strategy 2022-25, which is in line with the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and underpinned by the national standards and work of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) In addition to ensuring that the needs of the Service are met, the 4 key areas of the people strategy are:
  - i. shaping our workforce;
  - ii. positive workplace and culture;
  - iii. inclusion;
  - iv. health and well-being;
  
- b) with regard to Shaping our workforce,
  - i. During the 2022-23 the Service has undertaken a whole-time recruitment campaign;
  - ii. the 'Futures 25' efficiency planning and workforce review started during 2022/23, and is now entering phase 2, in which current structures and efficiencies will be examined to ensure that the Service can deliver to meet the needs of communities. A full update will be submitted to the Fire Authority;
  - iii. there had recently been a higher than usual turnover of staff, which has slowed and returned to expected rates. It appears that this was a national trend of resignations following the pandemic;
  - iv. as a result of an on-call firefighter recruitment drive, 33 applicants had been successful, but a 10% turnover is predicted. Recruitment and retention are a challenge but work is ongoing to address this;
  - v. it takes 2-4 years to train Fire Safety Officers but there is a national shortage as fire safety regulations and requirements continue to be extended;
  
- c) With regard to positive workplace and culture:
  - i. the Service maintains good two-way communication with colleagues and has introduced a revised behavioural framework to further support this;
  - ii. values and culture have been specifically highlighted as an important area by the review of the London Fire Brigade (LFB);
  
- d) inclusion is promoted throughout the Service and the communities it serves, with positive recruitment activity, but it is recognised that there is still work to be done;
  - i. much work has been done to develop employee networks;
  - ii. the Community Engagement Plan has objectives to enhance relationships with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, with work ongoing to

ensure that all communities understand the role of the Service, not only in attending incidents but also preventative work;

- e) Health and wellbeing is recognised as an essential element of creating a positive workplace, particularly with the physical, mental and emotional demands of the Service, and where fitness is integral to the role;
  - i. the extension of the working age to 60 for operational staff and 67 for other staff results in additional health and wellbeing requirements to maintain fitness;
  - ii. those in operational roles who are unable to maintain the required fitness levels, for whatever reason, may be offered the opportunity to transfer to non-operational roles to support their employment with the Service;
- f) sickness absence levels and causes are closely monitored and considered, with appropriate support provided to help staff return to work. It is acknowledged that further work is required to better promote the health and wellbeing support available for staff to self-refer or freely access, including peer support;
- g) All staff undergo medical examinations every 3 years and there is an externally operated Employee Assistance Programme which staff can access without the Service being informed, and is most commonly accessed for mental health support;
- h) The Occupational Health Team has now returned to full establishment numbers, following a period of high staff turnover;
- i) The Firefighter's Charity also provides valuable support on many levels and access to Blue Light support for emergency services is also accessible;
- j) It is not easy to gauge the success of the work to promote wellbeing as not all elements record engagement and report it to the Service to prove an increase in support uptake, but any increase would be considered positive.

Members of the Committee welcomed the report, the improvements made to date and proposed.

**Resolved to note the report.**

## **24 Whole-time Recruitment Process 2022**

Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, and Nick Linthwaite, Human Resource's Manager, presented the report which updates the Committee on outcomes from the whole-time firefighter selection process which concluded in October 2022.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) The target number for whole-time recruitment was up to 36;

- b) The process was delayed due to budget issues and awaiting the outcome of the Fire Cover Review;
- c) A 3 month programme of engagement and promotion undertook several routes of positive activity with a focus on attracting citizens with characteristics under-represented in the operational workforce, including women, BAME and minority ethnic groups, and LGBT potential candidates;
- d) To attract interest, the Service held a variety of events and activities, including multimedia promotions, 'have a go' sessions, and promotion of apprenticeship schemes offered by the Service;
- e) Of the 168 applicants who engaged with the positive action, 40 were women and 49 were from a BAME background;
- f) 18 of the 29 appointments (62%) who were involved in positive action were successful, 9 (31%) being female and four (13.8%) being BAME applicants;
- g) 10% of all applications were from LGBT+ applicants which was the highest group success rate;
- h) The report sets out a breakdown of the numbers of applicants that failed/dropped out at each stage of the process, including by characteristic;
- i) It is acknowledged that ongoing work is required to become more reflective of the community it serves;
- j) Further youth engagement work is proposed, including approaching schools, existing youth organisations and creating cadet schemes, which will also target under-represented groups;
- k) A lot of ground work has already been successfully laid with community leaders who welcome the Service's interest and engagement;
- l) In addition to new recruits, there were 2 transfers from other Services and 6 migrations from on-call to whole-time posts.

Members of the Committee welcomed the success of the innovative positive action recruitment activity.

**Resolved to note the report.**

## **25 HMICFRS Values and Culture Spotlight Report**

Damien West, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report, which informs the Committee of the recommendations from the spotlight review of the 'Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services', by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) Specific themes of values and culture (including bullying, harassment, and discrimination), training and skills, fairness and diversity, and leadership were considered;
- b) It is noted that during initial inspections of 2018, concerns around the long standing culture and values of some Services had been raised by HMICFRS, and whilst approximately half of all Services had made good progress in addressing concerns, the others still required further work and received an 'inadequate' rating;
- c) Some examples of bad behaviour were found in other Services where staff did not feel confident in challenging inappropriate behaviour;
- d) 34 recommendations were made, all of which are listed in Appendix A to the report, 19 of which were specifically tasked to CFOs, and are to be fully implemented within 12 months;
- e) Prior to the HMICFRS Inspections, NFRS was already working hard on equalities and was rated as 'Good' for People, Values and Culture, but there is no room for complacency, so the Service continues to work to improve its current position, with the dedicated Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Lead Officer and Strategy Team creating the EDI Plan;
- f) Progress of the EDI is monitored monthly by the Chief Fire Officer, who also receives regular updates to ensure the continued progress of embedding values and behaviours into the culture of the Service.

Members of the Committee welcomed the progress, ongoing activity, achievement of a 'good' rating and the ambition to achieve an 'outstanding' rating in this hugely important area.

**Resolved to:**

- 1) note the content of the report from HMICFRS;**
- 2) support the approach of the Chief Fire Officer in addressing the Service's continued cultural journey;**
- 3) accept to receive updates against the specific HMICFRS recommendations.**





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Fire and Rescue Authority  
Human Resources Committee

# HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 23 June 2023

**Purpose of Report:**

To update Members on key human resources metrics for the period 1 April to 31 May 2023, with the exception of absence data, which is for the reporting period 1 January to 31 March 2023.

**Recommendations:**

That Members note the contents of this report.

## CONTACT OFFICER

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of its remit, the Human Resources Committee of Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority receives regular updates on human resources (HR) issues within the Service. This includes issues such as sickness absence, formal discipline, grievance, employment tribunal cases and staffing numbers. These issues are collectively referred to as HR metrics.
- 1.2 Reports are on a quarterly basis and allow the Human Resources Committee to keep informed of ongoing issues and offer their guidance and scrutiny. Due to the timing of this Committee, the review period does not cover the whole of Quarter One but runs from 1 April to 31 May. Metrics from May-June will be reported as part of the next update.

## 2. REPORT

### STAFFING NUMBERS

- 2.1 During the period 1 April 2023 to 31 May 2023, 14 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels as of 31 May 2023 are highlighted below:

	Approved	Actual	Variance
<b>Wholetime</b>	431 (431 fte)	413 (412.3fte)	-18 (-18.7fte)
<b>On-Call</b>	192 Units	239 persons (includes 73 dual contracts)	-63.5 units
<b>Support</b>	163 (161.3 fte)	156 (145.23 fte)	-7 (-16.07fte)

- 2.2 There have been 18 leavers and 14 starters since the last report. This has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 807 (this includes 73 dual contractors). Leavers are broken down as follows: eight wholetime, three on-call and seven support roles.
- 2.3 As at 31 May 2023, wholetime strength stood at 413 operational personnel (412.3 fte) employees against an establishment of 431 posts.
- 2.4 During the period, the Service has appointed to eleven wholetime and three support roles.

### SICKNESS ABSENCE – Q4

- 2.5 The review period covers the three-month period between 1 January and 31 March 2023.

2.6 Target absence figures for 2022/23 are:

Wholetime:	9.05 days per person
Support:	9.35 days per person
On-Call Workforce:	13.2 days per person

(The average is affected by the numbers of employees in each work group and the average work shift and reflects national sector averages in 2021-22).

2.7 For the purposes of reporting, on-call absence analysis is shown separately to other workgroups due to the nature of their working arrangements. Absence related to Covid has been included in the total absence figures.

### **Workforce (Excluding On-Call)**

2.8 Total absence across the workforce decreased by 203 days (-12.2%) in Q4 compared to the previous quarter.

2.9 This also represents a decrease compared to the same quarter of 2021-22 of 459 days (-24%).

2.10 Absence related to Covid represents 88.54 working days lost, which accounts for 6.1% of total absence, compared to 9.2% in Q3.

2.11 Long term absence equated to 54.8% of sickness absence in Q4. It is notable that 71.7% of absence for employees undertaking support roles was long-term in nature.

2.12 Absence trends across the last three years are shown in the table set out in Appendix A.

### **On-Call Workforce**

2.13 For on-call staff, absence figures in Q4 decreased by 215 days (-17.9%) compared to the previous quarter.

2.14 This also represents a decrease compared to the same quarter of 2021-22 of 125 days (-11.2%).

2.15 Absence related to Covid represents 41 working days lost, which accounts for 4.1% of total absence.

2.16 Long term absence equated to 67% of sickness absence in Q4.

2.17 A summary of the reasons for absence by workgroup are attached at Appendix C.

### **Whole Year Review**

2.18 Absence overall decreased in 2022-23 by 11.47% compared to 2021-22 with reductions across all work groups, broken down as follows: 14.9% for

wholetime employees, 6.6% for employees undertaking support roles, and by 10.1% for on-call employees.

2.19 Average absence across work groups was as follows:

Wholetime employees:	9.73 days
On Call employees:	17.08 days
Support employees:	12.97 days

2.20 Long-term absence accounted for 61% of all sickness absence.

2.21 Absence related to Covid still accounted for 1182 days of sickness absence, equating to 11.75%.

## **NATIONAL ABSENCE TRENDS**

2.22 The Service contributes to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) sickness absence survey, which is undertaken quarterly and allows for comparison between contributing fire and rescue services.

2.23 Reasons for sickness absence at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) broadly mirror the national trends with musculo-skeletal and mental health related absences featuring significantly in all workgroups.

2.24 Appendix B reflects the national absence trends at the end of Quarter 4 (whole year). The three charts reflect wholetime, support staff (green book) and on-call the average of duty days/shifts lost per person for those fire and rescue services who contribute to the survey.

2.25 For wholetime staff, NFRS has an average of 9.75 days lost per employee, equating to 5.33% of lost working time, compared to a national average of 6.25%, which ranks the Service as 18 out of the 34 Services included in the survey. This figure is below the sector sickness average of 11.43 days per employee. The lowest average was 4.79 days and the highest 26 days.

2.26 For on-call staff, NFRS has an average of 17.08 days lost per employee which ranks the Service as 13 out of 21 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 16.44 days per employee. The lowest average was 4.33 days and the highest 41.01 days.

2.27 For support staff (green book) the Service has an average of 12.97 days lost per employee, equating to 4.97% of lost working time, compared to a national average of 3.7%, which ranks as 32 out of the 35 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 9.56 days per employee. The lowest average was 2.93 days and the highest 18.71 days.

## **OTHER WORKFORCE METRICS**

2.28 This section reviews the following activities: disciplinary cases, grievances raised, harassment cases raised, dismissals, appeals and active employment tribunal cases.

- 2.29 Over the period, there were no grievances, disciplinary or harassment investigations completed. It should be noted that a discrimination claim that has previously been lodged with the employment tribunal office and reported to this committee has now been settled. There has been an ill-health retirement during the period.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Authority's pay budgets cover the cost of the workforce, and these include budgets for overtime to cover sickness absence where operational cover is affected. The actual numbers of employees in post compared to the establishment can cause budgetary variances and these are reported to the Finance and Resources Committee.
- 3.2 Any increase in absence can have a direct impact upon the Service's operational pay budget as gaps in the ridership can lead to an increase in overtime pay to cover for long-term absence.
- 3.3 Any additional employment termination costs are included in revenue budget reporting to Finance and Resources Committee.

### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The human resources and learning and development implications are set out in the report.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

As this review does not impact upon policy or service delivery, no equality impact assessment has been undertaken.

### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

A regular reporting system on the management of human resources ensures that the Service and the Authority are aware of any developing workforce issues.

**9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

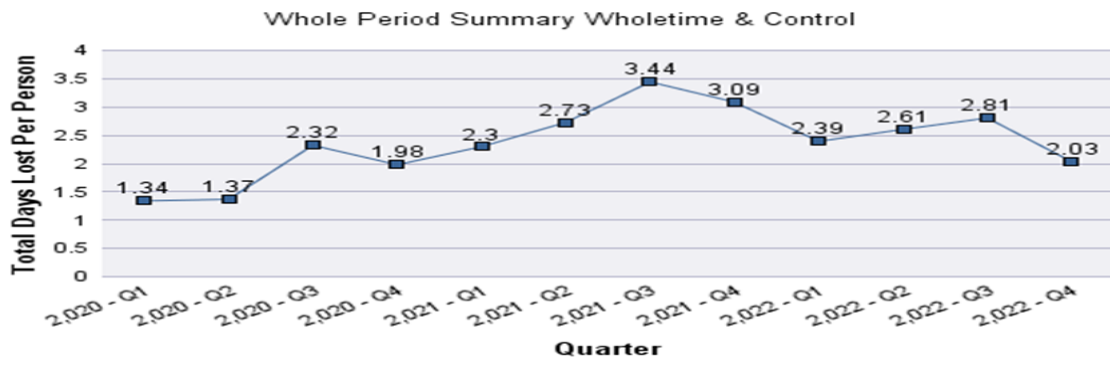
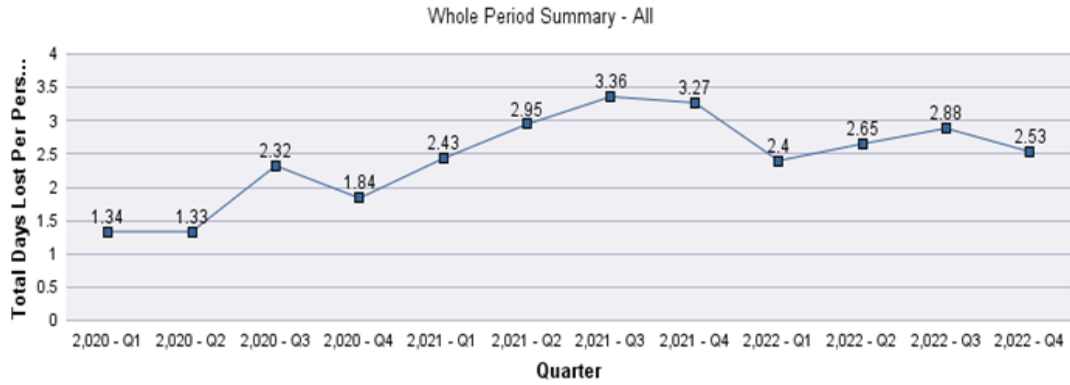
That Members note the contents of this report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

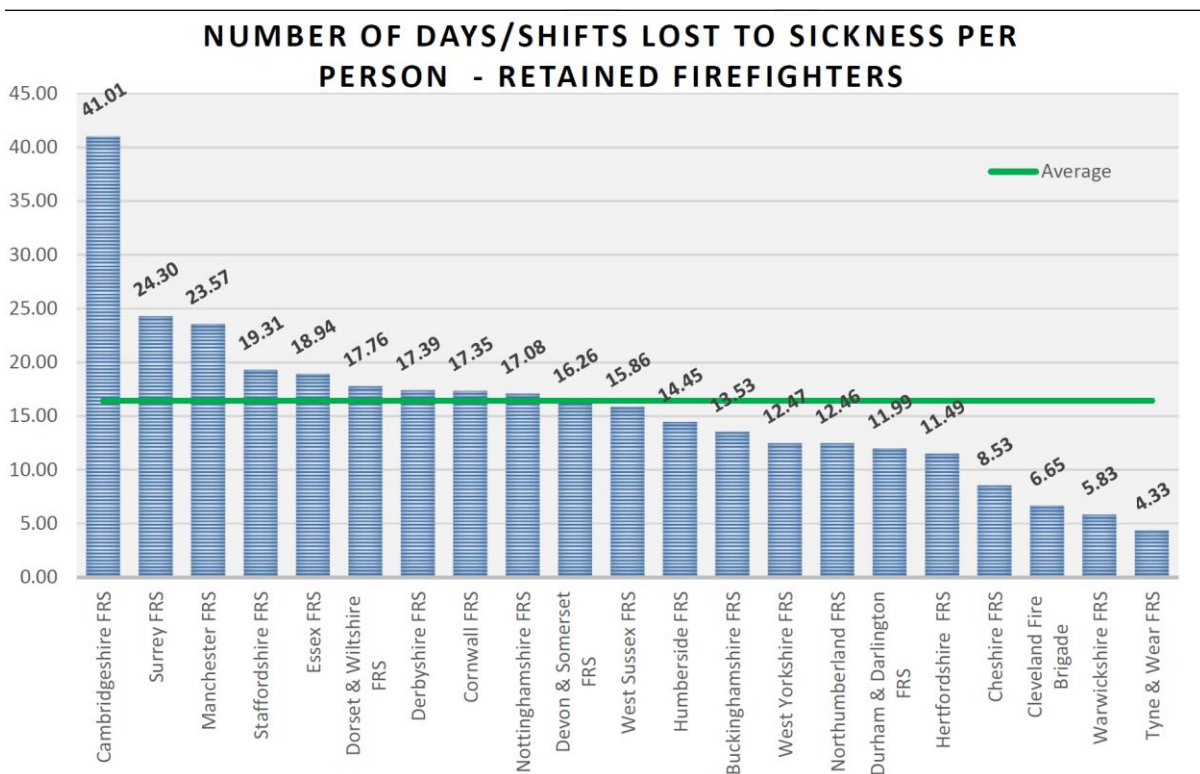
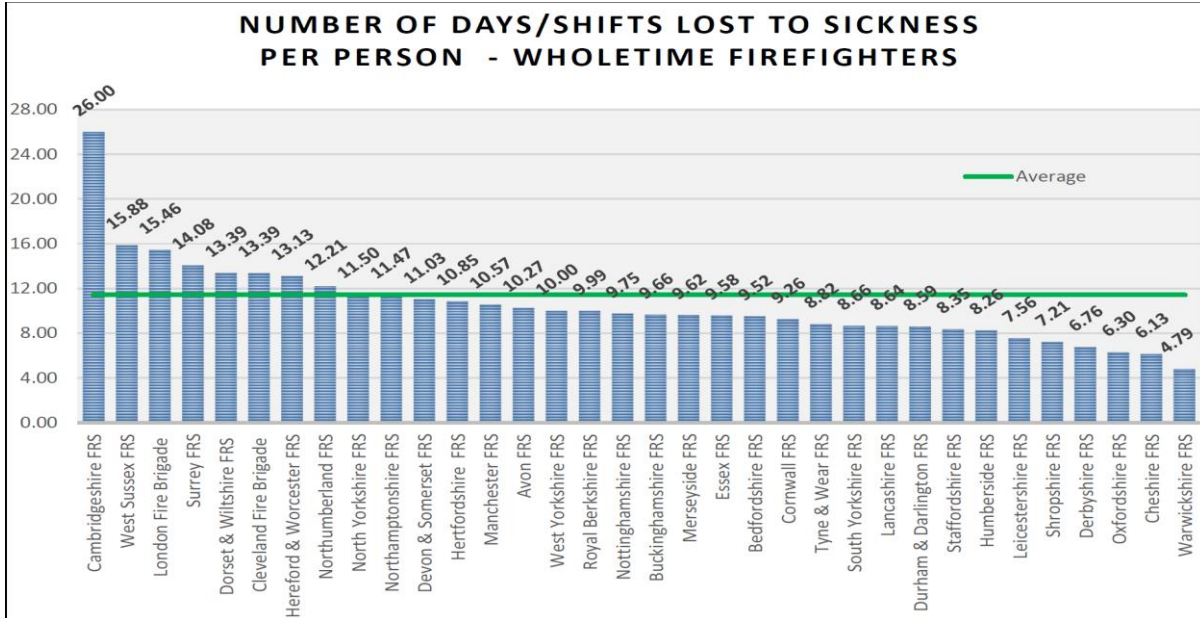
None.

Craig Parkin  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

# APPENDIX A

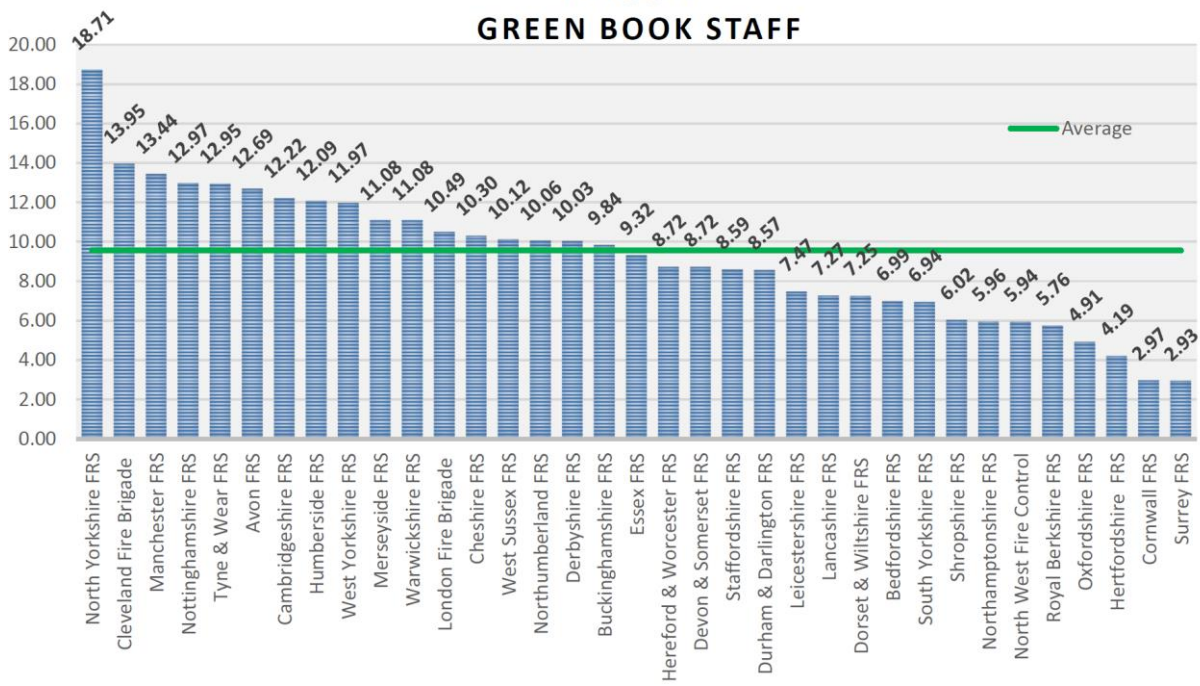


National Absence Survey





## NUMBER OF DAYS/SHIFTS LOST TO SICKNESS PER PERSON - GREEN BOOK STAFF



**Q4 2022/23 - Wholetime**

**Short Term Absences**

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health	8	213
Musculo Skeletal	27	191
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	24	90
Hospital/Post Operative	5	58
Gastro-Intestinal	18	54
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	18	50
Unknown causes, not specified	9	42
Other known causes (not specified in list)	7	28
Mental Health - Other	3	25
Virus/Infectious Diseases	7	25

**Long Term Absences**

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	23	119
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	24	90
Gastro-Intestinal	18	54
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	18	50
Mental Health	4	36
Other known causes (not specified in list)	7	28
Unknown causes, not specified	8	26
Virus/Infectious Diseases	7	25
Respiratory - Other	1	13
Ear, Nose, Throat	4	12

**Long Term Absences**

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absen	Days Lost
Mental Health	4	177
Musculo Skeletal	4	72
Hospital/Post Operative	2	51
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1	18
Unknown causes, not specified	1	16
Mental Health - Other	1	15

**Q4 2022/23 - On Call absence**

**Short Term Absences**

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	11	331
Hospital/Post Operative	5	204
Mental Health - Other	2	92
Respiratory - Other	1	90
Mental Health	4	71
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	10	59
Respiratory - Chest Infection	5	44
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	8	41
Gastro-Intestinal	7	19
Other known causes (not specified in list)	3	19

**Long Term Absences**

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	7	71
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	10	59
Respiratory - Chest Infection	5	44
Mental Health	3	42
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	8	41
Gastro-Intestinal	7	19
Other known causes (not specified in list)	3	19
Unknown causes, not specified	2	11
Hospital/Post Operative	2	9
Virus/Infectious Diseases	1	7

**Long Term Absences**

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	4	260
Hospital/Post Operative	3	195
Mental Health - Other	1	90
Respiratory - Other	1	90
Mental Health	1	29

**Q4 2022/23 – Support staff absence**

**Short Term Absences**

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health	8	212
Musculo Skeletal	6	121
Mental Health - Other	1	65
Other known causes (not specified in list)	4	47
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1	39
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	10	36
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	11	34
Hospital/Post Operative	4	22
Gastro-Intestinal	5	13
Respiratory - Chest Infection	2	10

**Long Term Absences**

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health	4	41
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	10	36
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	11	34
Gastro-Intestinal	5	13
Respiratory - Chest Infection	2	10
Headache/Migraine/Neurological	4	9.5
Other known causes (not specified in list)	3	9
Hospital/Post Operative	3	8
Musculo Skeletal	3	8
Virus/Infectious Diseases	1	4

**Long Term Absences**

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health	4	171
Musculo Skeletal	3	113
Mental Health - Other	1	65
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1	39
Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	38
Hospital/Post Operative	1	14



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Human Resources Committee

# **WORKFORCE PLAN 2023-2025**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 23 June 2023

**Purpose of Report:**

To review the Workforce Plan for 2022-24 and inform Members of the updated plan for 2023-2025.

**Recommendations:**

That Members note the contents of the report.

**CONTACT OFFICER**

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Assistant Chief Fire Officer

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Workforce Plan 2023-2025 forms part of the business planning process which supports the delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and is undertaken by the People and Organisational Development (POD) department to establish workforce trends, identify potential workforce planning issues and formulate an action plan to address these issues. The plan is based upon projections of anticipated turnover and information received from all departments regarding their workforce needs for the forthcoming year.
- 1.2 The plan seeks to forecast:
- Workforce reductions through retirement, projected turnover and other factors;
  - Workforce increases resulting from delivery of new Service requirements;
  - The need for succession planning for specialist and managerial roles;
  - Particular areas of concern within the Service;
  - Resourcing requirements.
- 1.3 By anticipating the needs of the Service through the business planning process, the Service can ensure that the foundations are in place to deliver on key Service objectives and commitments which will underpin the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) CRMP. These needs can then be factored into the budget planning process.
- 1.4 This Plan is developed and managed through the Strategic Leadership Team, and the Workforce Plan for 2023-25 is attached as Appendix A to this report.

## **2. REPORT**

### **REVIEW 2022-2023**

- 2.1 Overall staffing numbers have slightly reduced from 842 to 812 employees in post during 2022-23. This is mainly due to whole-time vacancies. There were 61 appointments to substantive or fixed-term roles and 89 leavers during the period, accounting for a turnover of 10.76%. This compares to a turnover rate of 12.78% in 2021-22. It is also lower than the average turnover rate in the public sector of 12.4%.
- 2.2 The number of leavers in operational roles during 2022-23 was in line with predictions. However, there were more leavers in support roles (21.6%) than predicted and this reflects the general increase in turnover across the national workforce. Whilst the number of leavers in support roles showed a marked slow-down toward the end of the period, this level of turnover in administrative, technical and professional roles has been identified on the corporate risk register and will continue to be kept under review during 2023-

24. Actions to address recruitment and retention have been put in place during the course of the year.

- 2.3 The Service undertook a wholetime recruitment campaign during 2022, which has resulted in the appointment of twenty-six new firefighter apprentices during 2023-24. The first trainee course commenced in April 2023 and the next will commence in September 2023. In addition, eleven appointments were made to the wholetime workforce through migration and transfer of competent firefighters.
- 2.4 Preparations for recruitment in early 2024 will commence during the summer to ensure that establishment numbers are maintained as operational employees retire or leave the Service for other reasons.
- 2.5 Two recruitment campaigns for on-call firefighters were undertaken, with the appointment of 33 firefighter trainees, who have now completed their initial training period. A further 12 trainees are due to commence in August 2023.
- 2.6 Further details of establishment figures, at the end of the financial year 2022-23, are set out below.

### **Wholetime Establishment**

- 2.7 As of 31 March 2023, the wholetime establishment has remained at 431 posts with no changes to establishment throughout 2022-23. This is against a workforce strength (headcount) of 409 (407.3fte) employees.
- 2.8 During the year, there have been 11 appointments to operational roles through migration or transfer processes.
- 2.9 Twenty-seven wholetime employees left the service, seventeen due to retirement and ten for other reasons. This represents 6.5% of the wholetime workforce.

### **On-Call (Retained) Establishment**

- 2.10 As at 31 March 2023, there were 244 on-call personnel working from sixteen on-call sections across the county.
- 2.11 The Service has continued to focus on recruitment to on-call roles during 2021-2022, running two campaigns with 33 new trainees appointed in 2022. A further 10 trainees will commence training in August 23. Two recruitment campaigns are planned during 2023.
- 2.12 Twenty-six on-call employees left the Service, five due to retirement, and twenty-one for other reasons. This represents 10.7% of the on-call workforce. Nine on-call employees were appointed to wholetime roles.
- 2.13 On-call recruitment and retention remain an ongoing challenge for the fire sector nationally due to the limitations of recruitment pools of applicants who live or work within the required five-minute response time of a station and the

commitment required to attend incidents and training whilst undertaking a primary employment.

### **Support Establishment**

- 2.14 As at 31 March 2023, the Service employed 159 (147.8fte) employees in support roles against an establishment of 161 (156.3fte) posts. However, it should be noted that, of these, nine are employed on fixed-term contracts.
- 2.15 Twenty-six appointments were made during 2022-23, with five of these to fixed term roles. Fixed term appointments are made to temporarily fill substantive vacancies or to provide short-term expert skills to support specific projects or priorities.
- 2.16 Thirty-six support employees left the service during 2022-23, which accounts for 21.6% of the support workforce.

### **Other Action Points**

- 2.17 In addition to succession planning, other key workforce objectives within the 2022-23 plan were centred on improving equality and sickness absence figures.
- 2.18 The HR Update report to this Committee in April included a detailed equalities monitoring report. This showed that:
- 9.3% (38) of the wholetime workforce, 4.5% (11) of the on-call workforce and 49.7% (80) of the support workforce are women. It is a stated objective for the Service to increase the number of female applicants and employees in operational roles.
  - 5.88% (24) of the wholetime workforce, 2% (5) of the on-call workforce and 9.3% (15) of the support workforce are from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. It is a stated objective for the Service to increase the number of BAME applicants and employees across the Service.
- 2.19 The positive action undertaken to encourage applications to the wholetime recruitment process was set out in a report to this Committee in April. This resulted in applications from 50 women (13%) and 55 (14.3%) from BAME applicants. Of these 9 women (31%) and 4 (13.7%) BAME candidates were successful in the process.
- 2.20 The Service does not set equality targets but aspires toward the local population census figure of 11.2% for BAME employees as a reflection of the community we serve. This will be reviewed following analysis of the latest census figures.
- 2.21 Sickness absence rate for Service employees saw a reduction of 11.47% compared to 2021-22. The HR Update report provides a detailed breakdown of sickness absence during 2022-23. The majority of absence (61.5%) was

due to long-term medical conditions which were certified by a GP and were longer than 28 days in duration. There have been two medical retirements during the year.

- 2.22 Progress against these targets, and other aspects of the Workforce Plan, are reported to the Human Resources Committee throughout the year.

### **Workforce Plan 2023-25**

- 2.23 The current plan has been revised to reflect projections into 2025 and a summary of current workforce planning is set out below:
- 2.24 **Wholetime establishment** – For the purposes of this workforce plan it is assumed that operational establishment will remain at its present figure of 431 posts.
- 2.25 Workforce projections suggest that the Service may lose between 49 and 69 wholetime operational personnel by April 2025, offset by new starters during 2023 and 2024. This is likely to include a migration and/or transfer process to meet immediate crewing requirements during 23-24. Figures are kept under regular review as part of quarterly workforce reporting to the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 2.26 There is still some uncertainty in projecting retirement levels due to the changes to the Firefighter's Pension Scheme. For this reason, assumptions have been made that 92 scheme members who attain 30 years' service (or reach the age of 60) will continue to retire and up to 50% of individual's who attain 25 years' service (at aged over 50) will still choose to retire early under their 1992 scheme provisions. The projection also takes into account leavers for reasons other than retirement.
- 2.27 Succession planning and leadership development programmes are in place to fill supervisory and middle manager vacancies in line with retirement forecasts.
- 2.28 In line with the recommendations arising from the Fire Cover Review, work will be undertaken during 2023 to introduce wholetime operational cover at Ashfield fire station, which will have workforce implications.
- 2.29 **On-Call Establishment** - Campaigning for on-call personnel runs constantly throughout the year, with events held at local stations to promote engagement with local communities, and with central support provided by the On-Call Support team.
- 2.30 It is anticipated that there may be up to 33 leavers per year from the on-call workforce in 2023 and 2024. The majority of leavers leave due to relocation of their home base or for reasons linked to their primary employment which result in difficulties in maintaining availability.
- 2.31 The focus will continue to be on increasing on-call firefighter appointments and to reducing the numbers leaving the Service.

- 2.32 **Support Establishment** – It is anticipated that up to 29 employees per year will leave the service in 2023 and 2024, either due to the expiry of a fixed term contract or to take up alternative employment. As this figure is predicated on historic turnover figures, and the number of leavers has been decreasing toward the latter part of 2022-23, this figure may not be realised and this will bring a greater level of stability during 2023-25.
- 2.33 During 2023, the next phase of the Futures 25 efficiency programme will be implemented. This is likely to have workforce implications in terms of restructuring delivery models and realigning resources across departments to ensure that the Service operates efficiently and can meet its CRMP commitments. Specific workstreams will include:
- Resource demands in corporate support, ICT, finance and community engagement roles.
  - A review of how Prevention activities are delivered.
  - A review of recruitment governance, process and systems review.
  - On-call pay and conditions.
- 2.34 Specific workforce issues by department are set out on pages 24-31 of the Workforce Plan.
- 2.35 The raising of the normal retirement age and pension scheme changes will result in an increasing age profile for those working in both operational and support roles, which will have implications for fitness, well-being and employee support. The impact of an ageing workforce will be considered alongside the impacts of an ageing population which will also have implications for the delivery of services to the community.
- 2.36 The need to make the workforce more representative and diverse will continue to be a priority for the Service, with the aim of improving the current workforce profile to better reflect the local population. Whilst targeted positive action measures will continue to be used, the Service will also use service delivery activities as opportunities to engage with local communities about a career with the fire service and to promote the Service more widely as an employer of choice.
- 2.37 There are a number of external factors which will impact upon workforce planning and these are set out within Appendix One of the Workforce Plan.
- 2.38 The Workforce Plan forms a key part of the Service's planning process and ensures that the Service has the requisite number of skilled employees, deployed to achieve and maintain the delivery of corporate objectives. The action plan sets out detailed departmental workforce issues and priorities linked to the delivery of the corporate strategy and business plans. These identify succession planning requirements and skill gaps to ensure that the Service has the requisite plans in place to meet delivery objectives.



### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The management of establishment levels is key to the overall management of staffing budgets which constitute 80% of the overall revenue budget. Accurate predictions are always difficult but are still essential to budget setting with issues such as the overall establishment, the distribution of staff within roles and the numbers of staff in development all having considerable influence on budgets.

### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The human resources and learning and development implications are contained within the report.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The equalities implications are contained within the report.

### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report

### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Workforce planning is key to ensuring that the Service has the requisite number of employees with the skills and competence to fulfil statutory obligations, meet Service objectives and ensure business continuity, within available budgets.

### **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

There are no collaboration implications identified within the report. However, the Service is actively engaged in identifying opportunities to collaborate with other public-sector bodies on the provision of services to increase effectiveness or efficiency. As such collaborative arrangements may have workforce implications, the POD department will provide professional advice and support to the Service to ensure that issues are dealt with in line with the requirements of employment law and local policy and procedure, and provide support for NFRS employees.

### **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the contents of this report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

Craig Parkin  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

# Workforce Plan

2023-25



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## **INTRODUCTION**

This Plan is designed to highlight issues relating to corporate “people” requirements over the next year, with a look-ahead to 2025, and links into Strategic Planning and Business Planning objectives to deliver the Community Risk Management Plan.

The report seeks to forecast:

- Workforce reductions through retirement, projected turnover and other factors
- Workforce increases resulting from delivery of new service requirements
- The need for succession planning for specialist and managerial roles
- Training requirements
- Impact of pension scheme changes to retirement decisions
- Particular areas of concern within the Service

By anticipating the needs of the Service through the business planning process, the Service can ensure that the foundations are in place to deliver on key service objectives and commitments which will underpin the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25. These needs can then be factored into the budget planning process.

This Plan will be developed and managed through the Strategic Leadership Team.

## Overview of Workforce Issues 2022-23

- 1.2 The last year has really been dominated by the uncertainty around finances and potential for significant savings to be found both within the 2022-23 financial year and the need to set a balanced budget for 2023-24. This impacted on decisions about the timing of recruitment, most significantly for the implementation of Firefighter recruitment. Whilst this ensured that salary underspends kept the Service within its overall financial envelope in 2022-23, it has had implications for workforce planning. At the end of the financial year, the wholetime ridership was 22 posts under establishment (this does not include other extractions from the ridership which, if included, meant that ridership was at -39 by the end of March).
- 1.3 During the course of the year migration and transfers have meant that 8 appointments were made to the wholetime workforce, and the Firefighter recruitment campaign undertaken in 2022 has led to a further 29 appointments during 2023-24.
- 1.4 The On-call establishment has increased slightly with 33 new starters and 26 leavers during the year. A further 12 trainees will commence in August 2023. There are 75 dual employment personnel (30.7%) in On-Call roles.
- 1.5 The Support establishment saw higher than predicted levels of turnover but less than in 2021-22 at 21.6% (36 leavers – of which 7 were FTCs). The situation has settled at the latter end of the year as the number of leavers has reduced. This level of turnover is highlighted as a risk within the Risk Register. Actions to enhance recruitment and retention have been put in place during the course of the year.
- 1.6 The Futures 25 programme has been implemented during 2022. This has significant workforce planning implications and the first phase of the programme was designed specifically to identify savings to support budgetary pressures and align resources to support the CRMP delivery. A review of support roles saw savings of up to £250k identified from the Green Book establishment, with two redundancies, and deletion of some vacant posts.
- 1.7 A Fire Cover Review was undertaken as part of the programme and reported to members of the Authority in February 2023. The proposals could have resulted in reductions to the wholetime establishment but, in the event, the Authority was able to balance the budget for 2023-24 without implementing any workforce reductions. However, the proposals may need to be reconsidered for the 2024-25 financial year. The review identified a need to provide additional full-time fire cover at Ashfield fire station, which currently operates a mixed-crewing model, and which will need to be implemented during 2023.
- 1.8 The next phase of the Futures 25 programme will have a wider remit and aims to co-ordinate a number of improvement workstreams designed to support the

Service to become outstanding by 2032. This includes continuing to drive productivity and efficiency through fundamental service redesign activities cross-cutting across departments. This is likely to have workforce implications in terms of restructuring delivery models and re-aligning resources alongside system improvements. This forms part of the Service's efficiency strategy.

## **2023-24**

### **Workforce projections**

- 1.9 Wholetime: Forecasts indicate that the Service could lose between 49-69 operational employees due to retirement or for other reasons before April 2025 (it should be noted this is a worst-case scenario). The Service therefore needs to plan for a recruitment campaign in early 2024 and for at least two acquisition courses in 2024-25. This will be reviewed in the light of actual turnover and budgetary constraints toward the end of 2023. However, positive action will need to commence in the summer of 2023.
- 1.10 On-Call: Projected turnover suggests that up to 33 On-call employees could leave the service in 23-24. A course is already scheduled for August 2023. Further recruitment campaigns need to be factored in by the On Call Support Teamteam to provide for this potential level of turnover.
- 1.11 Support roles: Projected turnover suggest that up to 29 employees could leave the service in 2023-24. However, as this is based on an average of three years of high turnover figures, it is likely to be less than this in reality and the number of leavers has noticeably decreased in the latter half of 23-24. Other than planning for known retirements, it is difficult to mitigate this eventuality. However, the Service does need to consider how it can develop internal talent and create development pathways – for instance, through the use of apprenticeships and career grades – as part of succession planning.

### **Other workforce issues**

- 1.12 As the Service moves into the second year of its Annual Delivery Plan for the CRMP, there are likely to be new demands for specific skills and knowledge to ensure delivery of CRMP objectives and to support the Service's ambition to be an Outstanding FRS by 2032. These will form part of the Futures 25 Phase 2 programme.

Specific workstreams will include:

- Address resource gaps in the Corporate function, ICT, Finance and Community Engagement
- A review of the Prevention function
- Delineation of resources and responsibilities for community engagement
- Review of recruitment governance, process and systems review
- Wholetime cover at Ashfield fire station
- On-Call pay practices

### **1.13 Additionally, departments have highlighted the following resource challenges:**

Response :	On-call recruitment and retention Development of specialist skills to meet new and emerging risks
Fire Protection :	Regulatory changes requiring new FP roles and structural changes Integration of Protection with Operational intelligence Additional specialist home safety check operatives
POD :	Dedicated well-being support Support for leadership and succession planning Additional role to support the pensions review
Finance:	Potential restructure to create a Deputy S112 post Work linked to the national pensions review Additional audit requirements (2 in one year)
Corporate/ICT:	Demands for ICT skills to support new systems and system reviews ICT and business intelligence input to the RMS project Defining role of EDI in corporate structure

### **Specific national workforce issues:**

- 1.14 In the light of the HMI Review of Values and Culture in the Fire and Rescue Service, 19 recommendations have been delegated to each FRS to progress within differing timescales but to be delivered before April 2024. The Service will need to resource and deliver this significant piece of work during 2023-24.
- 1.15 Implementation of the Fire Standard “Leading and Developing People” – undertake an initial assessment and define an action plan for improvement.

### **1.16 Local Workforce Priorities:**

- A focus on enhancing employee health and well-being provisions
- Implications of an ageing workforce on health and job roles
- Reduction in sickness absence
- Improving diversity



## REVIEW OF KEY WORKFORCE METRICS 2022-23

- The total turnover for 2022-23 was 10.76% which represents 89 leavers. This compares to 12.78% in 2021-22.

- Turnover by work group:

		<b>Comparative 2021-22 turnover</b>
Wholetime	- 6.5% (27)	7.6% (34)
On Call	- 10.7% (26)	12.5% (31)
Support	- 21.6% (36)	24.5% (43)

- The Service appointed 61 new staff during 2022-23. This compares to 65 new appointments in 2021/22;

- Starters by work group:

Wholetime:	2 (+ 9 migrations from On-call)
On Call:	33
Support:	26 (5 FTC)

### Established Posts

The number of established posts (excluding on-call roles), has remained stable, there has been a slight increase overall from 580.05 (fte) to 587.5 (fte) due to permanent changes to the establishment

Overall staffing numbers (headcount) has reduced from 842 to 812 employees in post (March 2023). This is mainly due to wholetime vacancies.

### CURRENT WORKFORCE

Work group	Establishment 31/03/2023 FTE	Actual 31/03/23 FTE (Headcount)	Establishment 31/03/22 FTE	Actual 31/03/22 FTE (Headcount)	Difference (Establishment) FTE	Difference (Actual) FTE (Headcount)
Principal Officer	3	2 + 1 T/ACFO	3	2 + 1 T/ACFO	0	0
Wholetime	428	406 (404.3 FTE)	428	424 (421.3 FTE)	0	-17
On-call		244		241		+3
Support	161 (156.5)	159 (147.8 FTE)	152 (149.5)	174 (163.61)	+9 (+7)	-15.8
Total	592 (587.5 FTE)	812 (802 FTE)	583 (580.5)	828.9 (842)	+7	-29.8

## **OPERATIONAL ROLES**

### **Wholetime workforce**

As of March 2023, the whole-time establishment remains unchanged at 431 posts, with no changes throughout 2022-23. This is against a workforce strength of 409 (407.3 FTE) at March 2023. A deficit of 22 operational roles. This figure is not reflective of extractions from the ridership for internal/external, temporary promotions, maternity leave, long-term absence or for other legitimate reasons which stands at -39 at the end of March 2023.

The deficit has arisen due to decisions around the potential impact of the fire cover review and budgetary uncertainty during 2022, which delayed the appointment to new Firefighter roles until 2023.

- Turnover during 2022/23 was 6.5% accounting for 27 leavers. This compares to a prediction of 29 leavers in the previous workforce plan;
- Average absence levels from April 2022 to March 2023 were 9.75 days per employee (excluding covid absence), which is below the 9.05 days performance target set and a decrease of 14.9% (704 days) from 2021/22.
- At the end of March 2022, the whole-time workforce was 22 fte below establishment.
- During the year, there have been 11 appointments to wholetime operational roles, accounting for 2 transferee Firefighters and nine migrations from On-call to Wholetime.
- There were 8 substantive internal promotions made to supervisory (3), middle (4) and strategic manager (1) roles during the review period.
- Three temporary appointments have been made to strategic roles (1 x ACFO and 2 x Area Managers) pending a review of strategic manager roles.
- A decision was made to delay the planned whole-time recruitment campaign in 2022 due to budgetary issues. However, a recruitment campaign was undertaken between August and December 2022 and 26 appointments made. The new Apprentice Firefighters will commence their appointments in April and September 2023. This delay in recruitment will lead to vacancies on the ridership pending the out-turn of the April course in July 2023.

## On-call Roles

As part of a strategy to increase the number of On-call personnel, there has continued to be a concerted effort to recruit to On-call sections during 2022-23 with 2 recruitment campaigns being run through the year. This has led to the appointment of 33 Fire-fighters, with a further 10 have commenced training and 12 due to commence training in August 2023. However, this must be off-set against turnover, which accounts for 26 leavers in the past year.

There are currently 244 On-call personnel providing cover across all On-call sections compared with 241 in 2021-22 (+3). A pilot programme trialling flexible cover arrangements, with the aim of improving recruitment and retention rates, ended at Bingham and Stapleford stations in August 2022 and is under review pending further evaluation.

At the end of March 2023, 61 units of cover were not covered.

- Turnover during 2022/23 was 10.7%, accounting for 25 leavers. This compares to a prediction of 26 leavers in the previous workforce plan;
- There were 10 substantive promotions to a substantive or temporary On-call Crew or Watch Manager supervisory position in 22/23, of these 7 (63.6%) were dual contract appointments. A lack of promotion opportunities for substantive On-call firefighters could impact upon back retention and resilience, and is a risk raised in previous workforce plans.
- Currently, there are 75 (30.7%) dual contract arrangements in place (whole-time firefighters undertaking secondary employment as on-call firefighters) providing 44.5 units of cover.
- The Service has implemented a restriction on the numbers of dual employment contracts per station to manage the potential risk to operational resilience once the numbers of dual contract arrangements have reached an optimum level.
- It is worth noting that 14 out of 17 (82%) On-call Watch Managers and 36 out of 43 (84%) On-call Crew Managers are employed on a dual employment basis.
- In addition, there are 13 temporary Crew Managers who are supernumerary to establishment to facilitate development and succession planning.
- In total, supervisory roles account for 24.7% of all On-call roles (30% including the development roles).
- Average absence figures during 2022/23 were 17.08 days per employee, which is above the target of 13.2 days per employee. This is a decrease of 10.1% (459 days) on 2021-22 levels.

- On-call recruitment and retention remains an ongoing challenge due to the limitations of recruitment from a pool of applicants who live or work within the required five-minute response time of a station and the commitment required to attend incidents and training whilst, quite often, undertaking a primary employment.

## Fire-fighters in Development

		31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2021
WDS	FF	22	28	9
	CM	0	3	0
	WM	0	0	0
	SM	4	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>10</b>
OC	FF	28	16	25
	CM	3	1	1
	WM	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>

The table above shows the number of firefighters currently in development along with historical data from the previous 2 years.

For Wholetime, this shows that the number in the development stage of their career has remained similar to 2021-22, with slightly fewer Firefighters in development. Accounting for 9.2% of all Firefighters.

For On-call, there has been a significant increase since 2021 as a result of appointments during 2022. Accounting for 16.5% of all Firefighters.

It should be noted that there will be a further intake of 24 Apprentice Firefighters into wholetime roles from April 2023, which will see this figures increase significantly. These will be supported through their apprenticeship programme.

- It should be noted that should there be an increase in recruitment activity, trainees may take between 26 months to become fully competent and this requires a resource commitment from both the Service Development Centre trainers and service delivery managers.
- Due to changes introduced from April 2023, the process for proving competence in role has been streamlined which should mean that the time in development will reduce.
- An increase in the number of operational personnel in development may create challenges for local managers who are responsible for managing the development period.

## **Support Roles**

The number of established roles has increased by 7 during 2022-2023 to 161 (156.5 fte) with a strength of 159 (147.8 fte). Of these, the Service currently has 12 personnel on fixed term contracts (excluding internal temporary moves) which are either held against establishment vacancies or are supernumerary to establishment. Three of these are to apprenticeship roles.

- Turnover during 2022/23 was 21.6%, accounting for 36 leavers. This compares to a prediction of 26 leavers in the previous workforce plan;
- The Service appointed 26 support staff in 2022/23, 5 of which were to fixed-term contracts;
- As part of the outcomes from the Workforce Review Phase One (Futures 25), there were two post deletions from the support establishment, resulting in two redundancies
- Average absence levels for support employees during 2022/23 was 12.97 days per employee (excluding covid absence), this is above the performance target of 9.35 days per employee, but a decrease of 6.6% (140.33 days) from 2021-22.
- Whilst there has been a slow down in turnover compared to 2021-22, the number of leavers is still higher than predicted. This increase in turnover has been identified on the corporate risk register and will be kept under review during 2022-23.
- A recruitment and retention review was undertaken during 2022 to enhance the service as an employer to potential applicants, to reduce the vacancy rate and to improve employee benefits as a retention aid. There has been a reduction in the number of leavers in the latter part of the year, which is encouraging and may indicate a more stable turnover rate heading into 2023-24.
- The first phase of a workforce review of support roles, under the Futures 25 project, concluded during 2022. The outcome of this review identified £250k of salary savings. Phase two of the review will continue into 2023-24 and will centre on the re-alignment of resources to release capacity and, potentially, achieve savings as well as seeking efficiencies through system improvements.

## **ANTICIPATED TURNOVER AND RECRUITMENT**

A key objective of this Plan, is to predict how many operational employees may opt for retirement over the 2 year review period and to plan resources accordingly. This succession planning ensures that there are sufficient competent employees available to provide operational cover.

### **Wholetime Duty System**

Whilst the transfer to the 2015 FPS was implemented from April 2023, the legacy arrangements for former members of the 1992 scheme mean that they can continue to retire under the 1992 scheme. This means that there is still a large degree of uncertainty around retirement dates and will continue to be for some years.

The assumption has therefore been made that 92 scheme members who attain 30 year's service (or reach the age of 60) will retire and that at least 50% of individual's who attain 25 years' service (at aged over 50) may choose to retire early under their 1992 provisions:

#### **2023-25**

- It is anticipated that the Service may lose up to 49 Whole-time uniformed personnel before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025: 31 due to retirement at 30 years' service; 2 due to ill-health and 16 for other reasons.
- A number of employees are opting to retire from age 50 , with 25 years' service. If it is assumed that 50% of those who could take early retirement before 30 years' service are factored into the workforce plan, an additional 20 uniformed personnel may choose to take early retirement during the period 2023-25.
- In a worst-case scenario, this takes the number of potential leavers to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 to 69 in total.
- Of these, up to 13 retirements will be at Firefighter level, with the potential for an additional 12 early retirements.
- Up to 9 retirements will be at supervisory level, with the potential for an additional 5 early retirements.
- Up to 6 at Middle Manager level with the potential for an additional 3 early retirements and, potentially, 3 at Brigade Manager level.
- Whilst current strength is at -22, the number recruited from the recent wholetime process will bring numbers closer to establishment levels by September. However any leavers during this period will take workforce numbers back into deficit.
- Based on the above, the Service will need to recruit to wholetime roles before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

- Actual numbers will be affected by the actual level of turnover and will need to be reviewed in December 2023. The impact of any decision about wholetime establishment numbers as part of the Futures 25 agenda may also affect future Firefighter appointments, particularly into 2024-25 and whether or not the Service undertakes further recruitment during 2024.
- Given that there is potential to lose up to 8 Crew Managers and up to 10 Watch Managers through retirement during 2023-25, it is critical that development of prospective supervisory managers is progressed in order to fill vacancies as they arise.
- Given that there is potential to lose up to 8 Station Managers and 2 Group Managers through retirement during 2023-25, it is critical that the development of prospective middle managers is progressed in order to fill vacancies as they arise.

## **On-call Duty System**

### **2023-25**

- The On-call section could potentially lose 14 individuals due to retirement at age 60+, increasing to 20 if 50% of eligible individuals choose to retire between the ages of 55 and 59, before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
- It is likely that 66 (33 per year) On-call personnel in total will leave (based on average turnover rates, migration and predicted retirements) before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Whilst the Service has committed to recruiting to On-call roles over the last two years, and has committed significant resources to support this, with an average of three campaigns per year, it has proved difficult to retain personnel at a rate that outstrips the number of new starters. This is a perennial problem that will require measures to support retention, as well as recruitment.
- As a result of campaigns in 2022-23, 10 new On-call trainees are completing their initial training and 12 trainees will commence their training in August 2023.
- Further campaigns and courses are at the planning stage and being led by the On Call Support Team team.
- The Service has completed two on-call recruitment campaigns during 2022-23, and appointed 33 trainee firefighters.

## **SUPPORT ROLES**

### **2023-25**

- There are likely to be 7 retirements before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. This is based on a pensionable retirement age of 66.



- Based on past turnover levels, it is likely that up to 58 staff will leave the service before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 (including retirements). This includes those linked with the expiry of fixed-term positions (currently 12). It should be noted that the high level of turnover during 2021-22 and 22-23 will have skewed the average 3-year forecast and that actual turnover should be lower than predicted.
  
- The high level of leavers from support roles has been highlighted as a risk for the Service if it continues at current levels, reflecting a loss of corporate memory as well as reduced resources to deliver on our objectives. The review of recruitment and retention undertaken during 2022 has sought to address issues through better applicant engagement, reduced vacancy times and enhanced benefits. Turnover has slowed down toward the latter end of 2022-23.

## **TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

### **Wholetime and on call acquisition**

It is anticipated that, based on estimated turnover figures, there is likely to be a need for up to two acquisition courses during 2024-25. There may also be a need for a transitional training if a migration and/or transferee process is undertaken.

On-call turnover is estimated at up to 66 (33 per year) for the period 23-25.

In 2023/24 we have planned two WT trainee courses (capacity 12 trainees per course) and two On Call courses (capacity 12 trainees per course).

The provisional plan is to deliver two WT and two On-Call again in 2024/25.

This model sees SDC running at capacity for this program and gives a maximum ability to onboard 48 WT and 48 On Call over this two-year period.

The Operational Training Team continues to work with the On Call Support Team to diversify acquisition training options to appeal to the broadest range of applicants possible.

### **Revalidation of Core Operational Competencies**

Core Operational Competencies comprise of Breathing Apparatus, Casualty Care, Command and Control, Extrication, HAZMAT, Water/Water Safety, Working at Height and Driving.

The Service aims to revalidate core competencies in line with industry standard. Where an industry standard has not been set, a three yearly revalidation frequency has been determined.

Revalidation requirements are outlined in the table below:

Core Competence	Standard	Revalidation Frequency
Breathing Apparatus	NOG BA Foundation	Every 2 years (broken down into 1 year)
Casualty Care	Currently First aid at work and IEC – soon to be FREC 3	Every 3 years
Extrication	Currently not revalidated, will start next year	Planned to be every 3 years
HAZMAT	Currently not revalidated, will start next year	Planned to be every 3 years
Water Safety	DEFRA- Concept of operations NFCC Boat code	Every 3 years
Working at Height	SW@H Regulations	Every 3 years

Driving	NFCC Emergency Response Driver (inc. adopting section 19 of road safety act)	Every 5 years
Incident Command	NOG and NOS.	2 Yearly

### **Specialist roles**

Technical rescue specialist capability requirements are detailed in the Technical Rescue Crewing and Capability Policy- 2219 Appendix 4.1

The table below covers specialist training requirements:

Specialist Competence Area	Standard	Revalidation Frequency
ALP operators (Mansfield and London Road stations approx. 32 persons)	Initial in house course In house CPD	N/A
CSU operators (Edwinstowe and Mansfield Station approx. 56 persons)	No national standard in this area. In house CPD plan	N/A
EPU operators (Stockhill station approx. 28 persons)	No national standard in this area. In house CPD plan	N/A
Water/ Foam Carrier (Worksop On Call- approx. 12 persons)	No national standard in this area. In house CPD plan	N/A
ELS Operative (Mansfield Station approx. 28 persons)	ELS will remain an NFRS asset until April 2025. In house CPD	N/A
HVP Operatives (Ashfield, Newark, Blidworth, Tuxford, Collingham stations Approx 15 persons)	In house CPD	N/A 4 x Instructors are revalidated every 3 external course
Fire Investigation (2 x hydrocarbon dogs) (3 specialist FI roles) (Officers approx. 8)	Monthly CPD days	N/A
NILO (Officers approx. 12)	National training standard. 6 weekly CPD is required, with 80 hours required per year.	N/A
HMEPA (Officers approx. 13)	Monthly CPD day	N/A
DIM (Officers approx. 2)	National qualification and CPD requirement Quarterly CPD day	N/A

Waste Fire Tac Ad (Officer- 1)	National qualification and CPD requirement	N/A
CBRNe (Officer 1)	National qualification and CPD requirement	N/A
Flood Tac Ad (Officer 1)	National qualification and CPD requirement	N/A

### **Corporate Training Needs**

Generic training gaps for the workforce have been identified as:

- Functional skills (literacy and numeracy)
- Digital skills
- Equality and Inclusion

These will be areas of focus during 2023-24.

### **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Turnover predictions**

During the review period, it is anticipated that up to 18 supervisory managers and 8 middle managers may need to be promoted or recruited to role. Additionally, projected turnover of support staff is likely to lead to vacancies at a managerial level. This will be supported through the different levels of leadership development:

#### **Aspiring leaders**

In order to promote an interest in future leadership roles, Aspiring Leaders programmes will be run in 2023-24 for all employees.

A 'Look Ahead' programme for prospective Crew Managers for those who may wish to apply for their first supervisory role will be run during 2023 ahead of the promotion process in 2024.

An Aspiring Middle Manager programme will run in 2023 for those interested in the next step up to Station Manager or equivalent support role.

#### **Development programmes**

The ILM3 Award in Leadership has been replaced from April 2023 by the NFCC Supervisory programme. This programme is for supervisory manager (operational and support staff) and provides development at the first level of line management.

The ILM 5 in Leadership has recently been re-tendered and will commence from September 2023 for newly promoted middle managers or those in role with development needs.

These programmes will be supplemented by in-house workshops and operational training relevant to the role.

At a strategic level, the Leadership Transformation Programme which is led by Nottingham City Council and delivered via Nottingham Trent University will continue to be the development route for existing and prospective strategic managers. This is aimed at Group Manager and equivalent level for those with the aspiration to be our future strategic leaders. Access to the NFCC Executive Leadership Programme and to a higher level Apprenticeship in Senior Leadership will be made available in individual cases subject to application.

### Talent Management

During 2023-24, a pilot Talent Management programme will commence with the aim of identifying and developing future leaders. This work will assist the Service in proactively identifying and developing people to maintain effective succession planning and for personal development. This will utilize the tools developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council, such as a talent management grid and undertaking structured career conversations.

## **WELL BEING**

The Well-being strategy is a focus for ensuring that we support our employees to maintain good physical, emotional and mental health. This will be refreshed during 2023. The Service will maintain its commitment to providing the highest level of support for its employees through access to occupational health expertise, employee assistance and health programmes and referrals to external support, such as counselling, where this is appropriate.

During the course of this plan, we will work to reduce factors which lead to the highest instance of long-term sickness absence – musculoskeletal injuries and mental health issues – through effective prevention, intervention and support – with the aim of reducing sickness absence levels overall year on year. Absence levels have reduced across all working groups since 2021-22.

The Service has reviewed its post incident support procedure and will be introducing an enhanced programme of support during 2023. It has also recently signed up to a regional mental health programme which will formally review how the service supports mental health and assist with establishing a network of mental health champions and provide refresher training for managers.

The Service will also be introducing a suicide prevention helpline through the Firefighter Charity/NFCC initiative which will become available during 2023.

Promoting a culture which recognizes the importance of well-being acknowledges the link between high performance, high morale and optimum health. The need for good communication, coaching skills in managers, skills in dealing with difficult issues will be equally important in creating a workplace in which people can perform at their best. This will align with other initiatives to address cultural issues, which is linked to the HMI Values and Culture review.

## **Sickness Absence**

The last year has seen a reduction in sickness absence levels compared to 2021-22. There was an overall decrease of 1303.53 days, or 11.5%.

An absence review group has been established, chaired by an Assistant Chief Fire Officer, during 2022 which has undertaken scrutiny of absence figures on a quarterly basis. This has supported a greater understanding of underlying issues behind sickness absence and will continue into 2023-24. A working group also meets on a regular basis to take an overview of long-term sickness absence.

A priority for the next year will be to continue to seek a reduction in sickness absence levels, with the aim of meeting or improving on the national sector average, with an emphasis on prevention, early intervention and support.

## **EQUALITIES METRICS AND AIMS**

A breakdown of the ethnic make-up of the workforce is set out at Appendix two.

Workforce profiling tells us that women and employees from BAME backgrounds are under-represented in the operational Wholetime and On-call workforce. Women represent 9.3% (38) of the Wholetime workforce and 4.5% (11) of the On-call workforce. BAME employees represent 5.88% (24) of the Wholetime workforce and 2% (5) of the On-call workforce.

BAME employees are also under-represented in support roles at 9.3% (15) of the workforce. Women make up 49.7% (80) of those in support roles. In the last year, 24.6% (15) of new starters were women and 4.9% (3) were from BAME backgrounds.

The gender pay gap tell us that the average pay differential between male and female employees is 19.12% and the median pay differential between male and female employees is 9.48%. This represents an increase in pay differentials on 2021-22 figures. This gap reflects the lower number of women in higher paid roles, and particularly in operational management roles. This means that whilst men and women are paid the same pay for the level of role they undertake, more men than women are employed in more senior roles.

The Service does not set equality targets but aspires toward the local population census figure of 11.2% for BAME employees as a reflection of the community we serve. This will be reviewed following analysis of the latest census figures.

### **Aims**

We are committed to making the workforce more reflective of the communities we serve and this is reflected in our Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25. Attraction rates of women, LGBT applicants and people from BAME backgrounds to firefighting roles need to improve further in order to make a marked difference to the make-up of the workforce in the future.

We undertook positive action activities ahead of the recent Firefighter campaign and will do so ahead of the 2024 recruitment process with the aim of engaging with prospective applicants, including those who are currently under-represented in operational roles, to improve their fitness and understanding of the role. In this way we hope to encourage more applications from women and BAME candidates.

The Service has a long-standing commitment to promoting equality, diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in service delivery and within its workforce. The Service undertook an independent review of equality in 2021 and is working toward implementation of its key recommendations. The London Fire Brigade Independent Review and more recent HMI review of culture and values also provide a number of recommendations that will be given priority in the delivery of our CRMP Year 2 objectives

We will seek to close the gender pay gap by encouraging women to apply for more senior roles and establishing more flexible working arrangements for our employees.

This will be supported by the introduction of targeted career conversations with women and also with BAME employees.

We are already a Disability Confident employer and will continue to provide employees and job applicants with ready access to reasonable adjustments which will help to support them at work, or to apply for job roles with us.

We will promote the benefits of a diverse workforce and ensure that our policies and recruitment practices are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

Through our links to Stonewall, we will seek to establish a workplace where employees can be open about their sexual orientation and our practices are supportive of the LGBT+ communities.

Through adherence to our core values, we will promote a fair and inclusive workplace through education, challenge where appropriate, active engagement and recognition of the difference we can make within our own workforce and to our communities.



## **BUDGETARY POSITION**

Whilst the service has set a balanced budget for 2023/24 this has required £1.1m of savings (some of which are temporary) to be made and still requires £4.4k to be funded from reserves. The financial position remains uncertain beyond 2023/24 due to the prevailing economic climate and one year funding settlement.

There is an expected £1.1m deficit in 2024/25. Work within the Futures 25 Efficiency Strategy is being progressed with an aim to make the Service more efficient in its working practices and to reduced the budget deficit for 2024/25 onwards.

The Service has and will continue to place priority on engaging with employees and trade unions to find ways to mitigate the need for compulsory redundancies, and to find these savings through greater efficiency, a review of activities and re-alignment of services.

## **WORKFORCE ISSUES BY DEPARTMENT**

### **Response**

As of April 2023, the Wholetime (WDS) Response Ridership is 356. The decision to delay recruitment in 2022; the predicted higher than average turnover through retirement due to the outcome of the McCloud/Sargeant tribunal; and current extractions due to long-term absence, maternity leave, and temporary secondment / promotion; means that the crewing of appliances requires careful consideration and prioritisation throughout the life of this Workforce Plan.

The use of auxiliary crewing, migration from On-Call, external transfers and other mechanisms will all be considered to stabilise the WDS Ridership until the point when new trainee firefighters will arrive on station from the Summer of 2023. In addition, promotion processes at Supervisory and Middle Manager level will be run to ensure that the numbers of suitably qualified Incident Commanders are maintained.

As described earlier in the plan, recruitment and retention of on-call personnel is an ongoing priority as the level of turnover remains high. The on-call model depends on having enough appropriately trained firefighters within a few minutes of the fire station and issues in the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters is a challenge across the sector. Following the 2021/22 trial of banded contracts, a review of On-Call ways of working will take place in 2023.

Emphasis remains on developing the skills of both WDS and on-call operational employees. These include specialist skills to meet new and emerging risks (such as terrorist incidents and those associated with changing climate) alongside the maintenance of traditional fire and rescue service core competencies. In May 2022 the outcome of a review into the provision of Special Appliances was published. The findings of this review will continue to be implemented in 2023 and will lead to additional localised training requirements.

From April 2023 a new rostering system for WDS, on-call and Flexi-Duty officers will be introduced. This will enhance the Service's ability to efficiently move resources between locations when any shortfalls are identified and reduce the burden of dual-entry systems for users.

Balancing the demands of operational training and development with the response to incidents, the delivery of CRMP commitments (for example the completion of 14,000 Safe and Well visits and 1,000 Business Safety Checks in 2023/24) and the gathering of intelligence related to risks in the community and built environment, remains a challenge for Response.

### **Prevention, Protection and Fire Investigation**

#### **Protection**

Staff retention, particularly in fire protection roles, remains an issue. There is a national shortage of Fire Safety Inspectors (FSI) available in the jobs markets due to

changes in legislations. The National Fire Chiefs Council, supported by funding from the Home Office, are investing in recruitment and retention initiatives to assist with workforce planning.

The Building Safety Act has now been implemented, which has required the Service to seconded a FSI to the regional multi-disciplinary team. This will result in a vacancy within our existing team, with a new individual having to be developed into the existing role.

The CRMP makes a strategic commitment to improve fire safety in the buildings people live and work in, supported by our statutory powers.

Over 2022, the Fire Protection Department have significantly improved their performance in terms of the number of fire safety audits they have completed. In addition to this increased output, they have been supporting operational crews to undertake business safety checks in commercial premises.

This increased workload will require structural changes within the department. It is proposed to change the role of the existing Information Support Officer into a Fire Safety Adviser to assist with this increased workload, subject to the budget being available.

The Fire Standards for Protection also require the Service to have a 24/7 ability to deliver enforcement action in line with our statutory requirements. It had been proposed for the Watch Managers within the Department to undertake this role. Unfortunately, due to changes in personnel this will not be possible in the short term and alternative proposals are being developed, subject to funding.

The Department had a fixed term apprentice Business Engagement Advisor who completed her apprenticeship at the end of 2022. The apprentice has been retained by the Service and is currently covering a vacant fixed term position.

The further integration of Protection with Operational Intelligence will be required to fully utilise the information the Service now receives under the new Fire Safety Regulations. It is proposed to transfer existing resources from Risk and Assurance to Protection to give a fully integration approach to operational intelligence.

## Prevention

The Prevention department structure will be reviewed as part of the Futures 25 project to ensure that we better understand community needs and support those individuals who are at the highest risk from fire.

Early work has identified that the existing On Call budget for community safety activities can be re-prioritised to recruit two further Specialist Home Safety Check Operatives in 2023.

The Prevention department have had several vacant posts over the last 12 months which have been left unfilled due to the financial challenges on the Service, these are -

- Grade 6 District Prevention Manager
- Grade 3 Youth Engagement Co-Ordinator

These posts have now been deleted to assist with the Service`s budget deficit, with their duties being re allocated within the department.

The Occupational Therapist (OT) role has become a vital in link with Health in offering a multi-agency problem solving approach to dealing with complex needs. It is hoped that the OT post can be substantiated, on a secondment basis, as part of the Futures 25 review. The existing fixed term funding is due to expire in Autumn 2023.

It is anticipated that three Firefighters and one District Prevention Officer will retire from the Service in 2023. The replacement of these roles will link in with Futures 25 workstream.

Our existing Youth Engagement Officer has commenced a funded 12 month secondment to the National Fire Chiefs Council. Her existing work has been redistributed within the Education Section, with a financial saving for the Service.

### Fire Investigation

The new ISO Standard for forensic investigations has been delayed until 2025. We have also requested that the Police support the increased financial burden of the new regulations as they are directly connected with their statutory responsibilities.

The outcome of this funding request will impact on the future direction and the establishment of the Fire Investigation Team.

The Team currently have a substantive vacancy for a Grade 6 Fire Investigation Officer . This vacancy is currently being held to support the financial challenges within the Service.

The Service has recruited two fixed term regional Hydrocarbon Dog handlers, on a job share basis. These posts are funded from contributions from the East Midlands Fire & Rescue Services. The posts will only be substantiated once we have clarity on future funding arrangements.

## **Risk, Assurance and Operational Training**

### **Risk and Assurance**

The specialist nature of some of the Green Book roles within Risk and Assurance, such as; H&S advisor, BC Manager, CAD operator and Environmental Advisor have been hard to fill due to demand across the sector and wider industry. This means vacancies are often open for some time. It also means a high risk for any leavers.

As of April 2023 all vacancies have been filled. This will be the first time the team has been at full strength for around 12 months.

This team often has to flex to react to significant events such as COVID, national events such as Grenfell or Manchester arena inquiries, industrial action, or any internal H&S or BC events. The ability to flex is limited by the high-capacity demands aligned to pre-planned business as usual workstreams. This means that carrying any vacancies notably impacts capacity.

Complex work processes and systems are compounding resourcing challenges with time consuming workflows, system rebuilds and data transfer leading to duplication of work and effort.

Managing turnover within the department remains challenging both for green and grey book roles.

### **Operational Training**

Operational Trainers are required to have nationally recognised instructor qualifications against a number of core skills areas as well as a teaching qualification. This makes good workforce planning essential. The risk of not having appropriately qualified Trainers means that risk critical training cannot be provided. Risk critical training is an essential risk control measure for operational staff.

The demographic of the current Trainer profile means that there will continue to be retirements in forthcoming years. Two are predicted in the 2023/24 business year.

Additionally a number of Trainers have also indicated an intention to transfer out of the department, having been a Trainer for a number of years, or are seeking promotion which could see them posted to other workplaces.

In Jan 2023 a Trainer specific recruitment process had to be conducted. This was not ideal as it was outside of the wider service CM/WM process. It did however ensure that newly appointed trainers could access the relevant national trainer courses, which are in high demand. This ensured we could maintain the delivery of high-risk, core skill training. Better workforce planning is required to ensure that SDC Trainers requirements are building into to service promotion processes.

In 2023 the concept of the 'Trainer Lifecycle' is to be developed. This will see a much more structured lifecycle for a Trainer. It will also cap the time that can be served as a trainer to a maximum of five years. This will help with workforce planning and also promote a turnover of staff that promotes specialist skills going back into response as opposed to retirements. This better utilises the investment that is put into Trainer roles.

Also in 2023 a review of the current trainer model will be looked at. This will seek to explore an opportunity from a better balancing of roles (WMs and CMs). It will also look to explore the possibilities for Trainer roles for Firefighters, as well as exploring the use of Green Book staff as Trainers in the specialist areas of SW@H and water rescue.

Challenges around the workforce are further compounded by the training demands in 23-24 which will see a requirement for 2 wholetime trainee courses and 3 On-Call courses. This will likely require additional trainer capacity to be introduced into the department over and above the substantive establishment.

Recruitment and retention of green book driver training posts remains difficult due to pay grades not reflecting market rate for these critical posts, coupled with a competitive recruitment market due to a shortage of LGV drivers and trainers nationally. This is an area of risk to the Service. There is minimal resilience around a vacancy to a Driver Trainer.

### **Corporate Support, ICT and EDI**

In 2022, the Service implemented a temporary structure that brought together the roles of EDI with Corporate Support and ICT. This temporary role facilitated the release of personnel to fulfil a temporary organisational structure which included the Futures25 programme of work. This temporary structure also allowed the closer inclusion of EDI within organisational business planning and performance. This arrangement is due to be reviewed in 2023 and will present an opportunity to ensure that resources are effectively aligned to organisational demand as part of the Futures25 workstream.

The structure of performance and planning in the Service is now embedded and presents capacity to continue the progress started in Year One of the current CRMP. The Business Intelligence Manager post has been substantiated and posts across the planning and performance function are now substantively where capacity currently requires. As 2023/24 progresses, the Service will enter the planning phases for the next CRMP. This will present additional demand on the capacity of the teams in this department and also the wider SLT.

Autumn 2023 will also see the third full inspection process by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). This process places additional requirements upon the team and will be supported through the temporary additional resource of a seconded Watch Manager from Service Delivery.

The Service's ICT team has expanded with the addition of temporary resources to assist in the facilitation of improvements to systems and processes. This additional post will support the Futures25 workstream through the exploration of automation of processes.

The Replacement Mobilising System (RMS) project with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service presents significant challenges to resourcing across these teams with the currently unquantified demand on internal resourcing. The current and foreseen demands, on particularly the ICT and Business Intelligence capacity of the department, presents a risk and challenge to business planning and capacity to progress agreed Year Two projects in the Annual Delivery Plan. Work to understand these challenges and the demand on resources is ongoing and will need addressing as the year progresses.

The risk of cyber-attacks continues to be a present threat to the Service and work is being undertaken to ensure that the Service presents a safe and secure environment for communications and working practices. The recruitment of an apprentice role to this area of work will initially draw capacity from the ICT Security Manager but will, once they are up-to-speed, add to the capacity of the team.

The workstream of the Emergency Services Network (ESN) has been paused in Spring 2023. This presents the Service with a situation whereby previously completed work is now put on hold. This situation has allowed the Service to redirect resources to supporting the RMS programme and also addressing the demand presented by the current mobilising system and withdrawal from Tri-Service by Leicestershire FRS.

The loss of personnel with specialist skills, and the turnover of staff, has slowed in recent months and the teams across the department are starting to have a stability to personnel in roles. This presents the opportunity to develop and diversify the skills of the teams to meet the organisational needs that are ahead of the Service. Development of personnel will be a key area in 2023/24 as the Service aims to be more effective and efficient in its processes.

### **People and Organisational Development (POD)**

A major challenge over the past year has been the number of new starters within POD, which has included all roles within the Occupational Health team. Whilst this did cause some initial challenges, the team is now more settled and operating effectively to support the Service.

The Organisational Development and Inclusion team temporarily transferred to the strategic planning team in September and a decision will be made as to whether this is a permanent move as part of the realignment of resources under the Futures 25 review.

A major challenge for 2023-24 is i-trent systems development with the aim of automating many manual processes and restructuring the way that we manage the establishment. This is a significant project for the i-trent team. However, it will bring efficiencies to current ways of working and streamline many of our current processes.

The impact of pension changes will also be a significant challenge. This is a complex exercise which has already generated considerable work, and this will increase over the next two years. An additional post will be created to supplement current resources during 2023.

A focus for the team over the next year will be implementing changes and improvements linked to equality and inclusion and embedding cultural change. New initiatives, such as an independent reporting helpline, will need to be implemented and supported.

Employee well-being is also a key focus which will require some additional resourcing. An independent review of current mental health provision will be undertaken in 2023 which will identify any gaps in current provision. It is intended to establish a network of well-being champions to embed good practice and to act as referral points across the service. The post incident support procedure will also be updated, with additional coordination roles to ensure that employees understand the support that is available and are able to access this quickly.

We will refresh our leadership and talent management provisions and ensure that development pathways are understood and that potential future leaders are identified and encouraged through the introduction of career conversations and talent management development programmes.

### **Procurement and Resources**

The past year has seen stability across the Department with the Engineering and Procurement Teams at full capacity and increased productivity, especially within the Hydrant Maintenance Team. The Estates Team suffered most of 2022 with vacant posts but is now fully staffed. The change to the Estates Team establishment with the addition of an Estates Administrator will prove invaluable meaning both the Estates Manager and newly appointed Estates Officer can concentrate on the technical duties of their respective roles.

### **Engineering**

The Engineering team now has 3 distinctive workstreams with two Hydrant and Equipment Maintenance Technicians ensuring greater resilience. The Services ability to keep Breathing Apparatus (BA) equipment serviceable has been greatly improved by all technicians undertaking basic maintenance courses to support the Breathing Apparatus (BA) Officer who now forms part of the Equipment Team supervised by the Asset and Equipment Officer.

The Fleet Maintenance Manager has taken Flexible Retirement reducing his hours from 37 to 22.2. The Teams output and productivity has recently been reviewed concluding that some additional duties normally carried out by the Fleet Manager will require to be picked up by both the Fleet Management Data Coordinator and the Transport Coordinator. Management is currently reviewing the situation where some remuneration or regrading may be needed.

### **Estates**

With the closure of Bestwood Lodge the requirement to provide out of hours cover and early and late shifts to open and lock up are no longer required. As a result, it was decided to remove one of the Handyperson posts from the establishment and replace it with an Estates Administrator.

### **Procurement**

The team is now recruited to full establishment and is currently going through the process of adding an apprentice.



## **Finance**

The finance department consists of Payroll, Creditor payment, Debtor control, Accountancy and System Administration. In total it employs 13 members of staff, most of whom are part time. There are currently 2 vacancies in the team which are being held vacant while the team structure is reviewed to better reflect the challenges currently being faced by the team.

The age profile of the team is of concern given that 75% of the team is aged over 50 and have predominantly been with the organisation for many years. This requires considered succession planning, especially given the difficulties in recruiting appropriately trained staff in the current recruitment climate.

The increasing complexity of pension legislation, the implementation of McCloud Employment Tribunal remedy outcome and response to the Matthews / O'Brien legal case have placed an additional burden on the Payroll and HR Teams. The service procures specialist advice from Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service to help mitigate risk in this area. In addition, a part time pensions post was authorised by Fire Authority in May 22 to undertake pensions management work but the Service has been unsuccessful in filling this post due to a national lack of expertise in this area. The post is being reviewed in an attempt to resource the work in a different way.

Changes to the audit regulations have significantly increased the burden of work on the team to facilitate the audit of the Statement of Accounts with the audits now taking in excess of 6 weeks. This is further complicated by the resourcing issues being experienced by the External Auditors which has meant that the 2021/22 Accounts have not yet been audited. This will increase the pressure on the team as the External Auditors catch up and we are faced with 2 audits in one year.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy and future budget planning will be a key piece of work for the team in order to ensure that funding is aligned with the priorities outlined in the CRMP and reflects the Futures 25 Efficiency Plan and funding levels that are not keeping pace with inflation.

The increase in workload relating to strategic planning, increased audit work and management of pension related risks in recent years have meant that the teams resources need reviewing. The team only has 2 qualified accountants. CIPFA recommends that provision is made to deputise for the section 112 role. This needs to be filled by a chartered qualified accountant. It is proposed to restructure the team during the coming year to use the current vacant posts to address the lack of a deputy section 112 officer post and to address the gap in resourcing the pension workload.

**INTERNAL DRIVERS: WORKFORCE ISSUES**

Corporate issues which underpin the workforce during 2023-24 include:

- Delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25
- Budgetary constraints
- Service improvements – arising from the HMI inspection outcome
- Workforce sustainability – succession planning/future leaders
- Employee Well-being
- Reduction in workforce absence
- Promoting Diversity
- Developing a values-led culture

**EXTERNAL DRIVERS: WORKFORCE ISSUES**

National influences on workforce issues during 2023-24 include:

- Fire reform White Paper
- Fire-fighter Pension scheme changes – impact of McCloud appeal judgement on early detriment cases and the Matthews (part-time workers) case
- Outcomes from Grenfell Public Inquiry/impact on Fire Protection
- National Pay Review/Broadening of Role Maps/Potential for Industrial Action
- Skills Shortages
- Increased collaboration with partners
- Recommendations from the HMICFRS Review of Values and Culture in the Fire and Rescue Service
- Outcomes from the LFB Independent Review

**NFCC**

- Review of the NFCC People Strategy (under development)

- Health and Well being Strategy (under development)
- NFCC Inclusion Strategy
- NFCC Leadership Strategy
- NFCC Professional standards and code of ethical practice

## APPENDIX 2

### EQUALITIES PROFILE

Gender :

#### Workforce by Gender

Gender	Wholetime	On-call	Support	Total	%
Male	370	232	79	681	83.76%
Female	38	11	83	132	16.24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>813</b>	

- As of March 2023, women constituted 16.24% (132 of the total workforce which is a slight decrease of 17% from 2021/22. Of these, 49 women are employed in operational roles (including management roles), which represents 7.5% of operational roles undertaken.
- 3.43% (7) of Crew and Watch Managers are women and there is one female Station Manager at middle manager level. As at March 2023, one principal officer is female and two are male, all operational area managers are men, although there are three non-operational female Strategic Managers (Area Manager equivalents) within the Strategic Leadership Team.
- Within the support workforce there continues to be more women (83) than men employed (79). However, it should be noted that men occupy higher numbers of senior organisational positions at Grade 8 and above (71.4%) than women (28.6%).

Ethnic origin:

1

Ethnic Origin	Wholetime	On-Call	Support	Total	%
<b>BAME</b>	24	5	16	45	5.53%
<b>Not declared</b>	22	6	11	39	4.8%
<b>White British</b>	342	218	132	692	85.1%
<b>White Irish / White Other</b>	20	14	3	37	4.55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>813</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Please note – to protect the identity of those in minority ethnic groups, a classification of BAME has been used to denote employees defining their ethnic origin as Asian British, Indian, Pakistani, Asian Other, Black, Black British, Black Caribbean, Black Other, Chinese, Mixed White Asian, White Black British, Mixed Other, Other Ethnic group

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- As of March 2023, employees from BAME groups constituted 5.53% (45) of the workforce (excluding employees who defined themselves as Irish and White Other). Of these, 4.45% (29) were employed in operational roles.
- In comparison 2021/22, the overall number of BAME employees has increased by 1 (0.12%) to 45 in total.
- It should be noted that 39 people have chosen not to define their ethnic origin which is a slight increase from 35 in 2021 which may indicate that employees feel less comfortable in disclosing their ethnicity.
- There continues to be a low number of employees from BAME backgrounds in operational supervisory roles at 6.1% (8) in wholetime roles and 1.33% (1) , and there are no middle managers or senior operational managers from BAME backgrounds.

### Sexual Orientation:

	Wholetime	On Call	Support	Total	% Total
<b>Bisexual</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<b>Gay/Lesbian</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1.35</b>
<b>Straight/Heterosexual</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>85.4</b>
<b>Declined to specify</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>11.7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>24311</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>813</b>	

- A number of employees (11.7%) have chosen not to state their sexual orientation, however, it should be noted that this increased from 10.6% in 2021/22. Work is already underway through a series of webinars and e-learning packages to raise awareness of issues faced by employees that identify as LGBT and an LGBT+ employee network has become established over the last year to raise awareness of issues.
- Numbers of employees who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual has increased from 2.7% (23) to 2.95% (24) of the work force, however this is low compared to the expected national population of 5 - 7% quoted by Stonewall.
- The Service continues to work with Stonewall to improve its performance in relation to LGBTQ+ issues.

### Gender Identity

In July 2018, the Service started to monitor gender identity and gender reassignment. Declaration is voluntary and, to date 31% (228) of employees have provided gender reassignment data. However this shows an improvement from 2021-22 when only 22.9% (193) made a declaration. 44.5% (327) have provided

gender identity data compared to 34.4% (289) in 2021-22. Whilst these figures are too low to provide any meaningful analysis, it does show an improvement in declaration rates. Work continues to raise awareness of this reporting mechanism and why the Service collects the data in an effort to improve declaration levels.

According to monitoring data the Service does not have any employees who identify as Trans.

### Disability:

	Wholetime	On Call	Support	Total	% Total
Disability	12	5	15	32	3.94
No disability	393	236	139	768	94.5
Not specified	3	2	8	13	1.6
Total	408	243	162	813	

- The declaration rate of disability at March 2023 is 3.94% (32) of the total workforce.
- The declaration rate amongst support employees is at 9.26% which is just below the working age population in the UK that is disabled, which is approximately 10%. When operational employees are included this figure reduces to 2.6%. This is due to the fitness, strength and other functional aspects, such as sight and hearing standards, which are a requirement of operational roles. It should be noted that as a workforce gets older disability issues are likely to increase.
- Whilst disability declaration rates remain relatively low, the Service continues to raise awareness of disability issues such as dyslexia and mental health.
- It is acknowledged some employees who meet the definition of disability under the Equality Act may not consider themselves as being disabled, thus monitoring of reasonable adjustments is being considered for future reporting.

### By Age:

	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	65+	Total
Wholetime	7	76	163	139	23	0	408
On-call	16	66	82	54	25	0	243
Support	9	26	31	44	49	3	162
Total	32	168	276	237	97	3	813

<b>% Total</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>0.36</b>	
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- The largest age group is those between 36 – 45 years old who make up 34% (276) of the workforce.
- As the typical retirement age for operational personnel is between 50 and 60, the number in this age group has implications for projected turnover for the next five years, and the associated loss of experience and knowledge to the service. Succession planning is in place to account for this projected level of turnover.
- At the other end of the age scale, 3.9% (32) of all employees are aged 16-25.
- The largest group for the on-call workforce (74) are aged between 36-45 which represents 33.7% of all on-call firefighters. It is important that this group is developed and retained in Service to sustain workforce numbers and replace supervisory managers as they leave the service.
- Members of the Firefighter Pension Scheme (1992) may opt to take early retirement from 50 if they have at least 25 years' service; members of the 2006 and newly constituted 2015 pension schemes have a retirement age of 60 (with the option to retire from age 55 with a reduction in pension benefits). This means that the age profile of the operational workforce will steadily increase over the coming years. This will inevitably raise issues around maintaining fitness and other age-related medical issues which may arise in an ageing workforce. The Service has already begun undertaking work to address these issues through strength and conditioning programmes to build core strength and maintain fitness during the natural ageing process.

## APPENDIX 3

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2023-25

<b>NBR</b>	<b>IDENTIFIED RISK</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>
<b>Succession Planning</b>			
1	Potential loss of up to 13 Fire-fighters due to retirement after 30 years' service before April 2025 Additionally, up to 9 FFs could take early retirement (with 25-29 years' service)	Maintain an overview of projected retirements against established roles during 2023-24.	Head of POD
		Intake of up to 24 FF Apprentices during 2023-24.	Area Manager (Response)
		Migration process may be required in 2023/24 subject to decisions about recruitment	
		Consider the transfer of competent FF from other FRA's as part of recruitment strategy.	
2	Loss of up to 9 Crew & Watch Managers due to retirement after 30 years' service before April 2025. Additionally, up to 5 Crew and Watch Managers could take early retirement (with 25-29 years' service)	Undertake effective succession planning, including identification of specialist roles, and promote Aspiring Leaders programme.	Head of POD
		Plan for a Crew Manager promotion process in 2024.	Area Manager (Corporate)
		In-band progression to fill WM roles in 2024.	Area Manager (Response)
		Consider the transfer of competent supervisory managers from other FRA's	
3	Potential loss of up to 6 Middle Managers due to retirement after 30 years' service before April 2025. Additionally, up to 3 Middle Managers could take early retirement (with 25-29 years' service)	Station Manager and Group Manager selection process scheduled for summer/autumn 2023.	Head of POD
		Undertake effective succession planning, including identification of specialist roles.	Area Managers (Delivery)
		Continue Aspiring Middle Manager Programme throughout 2023	



		Consider green book conversion for specific roles	
4	Potential loss of 18 operational personnel for other reasons before April 2025 (resignation, ill-health retirement, transfers, dismissal)	Maintain an overview of turnover and build into succession planning and recruitment activity.	Head of POD
5	Improve current On Call vacancy levels and plan for the potential replacement of 33 leavers per year	Maintain an overview of projected retirements against established roles during 2023-24.	Head of POD
		Plan for a minimum of 3 On Call recruitment campaigns per year	SoOC team
		Undertake local recruitment campaigns	
<b>Corporate Workforce Issues</b>			
6	Phase 2 of Futures 25	Deliver workstreams and implement changes in line with scoping document	Leila Henry
7	Undertake a review of the flexiofficer collective agreement	Negotiate and implement any changes to the CA	ACFO Mick Sharman
8	Undertake a review of sickness absence levels and seek to decrease current sickness absence average	Review current processes, revise target to align with national sector average, monitor absence levels through CRMP Board	Head of POD
9	Wholetime recruitment	Undertake positive action and commence whole time recruitment in early 2024	Head of POD
10	Review implications of an ageing workforce	Consider health and job impacts of increasing retirement ages	Head of POD
<b>Inclusion</b>			
11	Implement values and culture review	In line with the HMICFRS recommendations	TBD
12	Seek to improve the diversity of the workforce	Undertake positive action initiatives to increase the number of applications and success rate of BAME applicants.	OD & Inclusion Manager
		Develop community engagement opportunities	Area Manager Prevention & Protection

13	Seek to increase the number of female operational personnel in supervisory and management roles	Identify potential female candidates for promotion and provide development opportunities.	Area Manager (Response)
14	Seek to increase the number of BAME employees in senior or managerial roles.	Targeted career conversations.	Area Managers
<b>Training and Development.</b>			
15	Wholetime recruitment	Plan for two acquisition courses in 2024-25 and support for new Apprentice Firefighters	Area Manager RAOP
16	On-Call recruitment	Plan for up to 3 acquisition courses during 2023-24	Area Manager RAOP
17	Manage the forecasted increase in operational personnel in development	Monitor the volume of employees in development	Area Manager (Response) / Area Manager Risk, Assurance and Operational Training
		Ensure capacity to support employees in development.	
<b>Health, Fitness and Well-Being</b>			
18	Aim to maintain absence levels at or below the national sector average.	Promote healthy lifestyles and support via Occupational Health interventions.	Head of POD
		Manage long term sickness interventions	
19	Undertake a review of mental health support	Review and improve mental health support to meet the standards of the MIND Blue Light Together programme Undertake independent review of mental health support	Head of POD
20	Undertake a review of Musculo skeletal injury	Identify any underlying issues and trends and seek to address them	Head of POD



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority  
Human Resources Committee

# **HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES, AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 23 June 2023

**Purpose of Report:**

To present Members with an update on the Service's response to the 2021 inspection of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.

**Recommendations:**

That Members note the actions undertaken to date.

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Fire Authority in September 2022, Members were presented the report from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following the recent inspection of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS).
- 1.2 Accompanying the report, Members were presented with a paper detailing the four 'Areas for Improvement' (AFIs) that had been highlighted by HMICFRS.
- 1.3 It was agreed that scrutiny and monitoring of progress of these actions would be facilitated through the Fire Authority Committee structure, with progress reports being presented to Members.
- 1.4 Of the four AFIs, one has been aligned to the Human Resources Committee for scrutiny.

## **2. REPORT**

- 2.1 Each of the AFIs have been allocated to a lead officer with clear milestones and expected outcomes. Within the Service, progress against these timelines is monitored and reported through the monthly Community Risk Management Plan Assurance Board (CRMP AB), chaired by the Chief Fire Officer.
- 2.2 Since the HMICFRS report was published in July 2022, the Service has undertaken a gap analysis against areas of work that were already being progressed under the current CRMP. This has assured that work to address the AFIs was either already planned or has now been included in the Service's annual delivery planning.
- 2.3 The AFI delegated to this Committee is:
  - AFI 3 – the Service should assure itself that staff understand how to get well-being support.

### **AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 3**

- 2.4 The Service currently has information about a range of well-being and employee support provisions on the well-being page MyNet (the intranet) however, feedback from HMICFRS and the internal staff survey highlighted that some employees were unaware of the support available. The inspection from HMICFRS also highlighted concerns raised by operational crews that there was a lack of consistency in post-incident support.
- 2.5 This committee received an initial report at its meeting on 13 January 2023 setting out the actions to be taken to address the issues highlighted by HMICFRS.

2.6 A range of steps have been taken since the last report, these are summarised below:

- A review of Post Critical Incident Support (PCIS) by the Head of People and Organisational Development and Head of Delivery to update the PCIS procedure and formalise support mechanisms, including the introduction of PCIS co-ordinators and clarifying the role of the CRISIS support team.
- Updates on well-being provision, including the Employee Assistance Programme and employee benefit platform.
- Information on how to seek information and support for mental health issues.
- An independent employee survey commissioned via Derby University to assess mental health provision, which will result in an overview report with recommendations during 2023.
- A daily briefing on mental health information during mental health week (15-19 May) on MyNet. This included a call for employee mental health advocates and the creation of a new Mental Health Network.
- The Service has signed up to the Suicide Prevention Crisis Line developed via the NFCC and The Firefighters Charity which will become active later in the year.
- The Your Care personal health portal launched. This is provided by the Service's benefits provider and provides access to personal health and fitness plans including assessments, well-being tools and self-help advice, and allows employees to set and monitor personal health and fitness goals. This is available as an app so that employees can access it via their mobile phones.
- The Service is extending its employee benefit provision to home and electronics purchases for "big ticket" items to be purchased and paid for via salary deductions. This will be available from September and is aimed to help employees manage their finances in recognition of the stress caused by cost-of-living pressures. This supplements the Cycle to Work scheme and discounts platform.

Future actions planned or in progress during 2023:

- Review of the well-being strategy in order to clarify the support available to employees.
- Briefings on the revised Post Critical Incident Support process to Command Groups to clarify the role of duty officers.
- Training in debriefing, demobilisation and defusing techniques to be included within the curriculum for supervisory officers from 2023-24.

- Training for Mental Health Advocates.
- The Occupational Health Team will promote and deliver a well-being message, for instance by holding clinics at station locations and a rolling out a well-being roadshow to raise visibility and access.

2.7 Improvement against the AFI will be evaluated through the staff survey which asks about employee understanding of current well-being provision and will provide feedback. Engagement events will be evaluated to gauge satisfaction with existing provision.

2.8 Regular updates will be provided to Members on progress against the AFI when there is pertinent information to share.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The costs relating to the actions outlined in this report have been contained within existing budgets.

### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Human resources implications are set out within the report.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the information contained in this report does not relate to a change in policy or procedure.

### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places a duty on NFRS in respect of the delivery of its services to communities.

7.2 The Local Government Act 1999 places a statutory duty on NFRS to '*secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised*'. The reporting of Service Delivery's performance ensures that the Service is focusing on key objectives as set by the Fire Authority and continuous improvement. This ensures that Members can apply effective scrutiny to be satisfied that statutory obligations are being met.

7.3 The Police and Crime Act (2017) Chapter 4 Section 11, outlines that the English inspectors must inspect, and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of, fire and rescue authorities in England.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

## **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

Where possible, the Service will seek to work with the well-being team from Nottinghamshire Police to share activities and messaging.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the actions undertaken to date.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

Craig Parkin  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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