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

Date: Friday, 10 November 2023 **Time:** 10.00 am

Venue: Joint Fire / Police HQ, 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 read "M. J. [unclear]". The signature is written in a cursive style.

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

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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:

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The agenda, reports and minutes for all Human Resources Committee meetings can be viewed online at:

<https://committee.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=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
Headquarters - Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 23 June 2023
from 10.05 am - 11.02 am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Nick Raine (Chair)
Councillor Robert Corden
Councillor Tom Hollis
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan

Absent

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Candida Brudenell - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Damien West - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Tracy Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

None.

2 Declarations of Interests

None.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held 21 April 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4 Human Resources Update

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented the report which informs the Committee of the 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.

Following points were highlighted and Members' questions responded to:

- a) Paragraph 2.1 of the report sets out the approved and in-post staffing figures for Wholetime, On-Call, and Support staff, it being noted that while 18 people left the Service, 14 have joined, but there still remains 18 vacant Wholetime posts, a deficit of 63.5 units of On-Call posts, and 7 vacant Support posts;
- b) Recruitment was paused last year with the potential need to cut services to enable the Authority to produce a balanced budget, against a predicted deficit. This has now been resolved and recruitment has commenced;
- c) Sickness absence has decreased in the last quarter and from the same period last year and is currently just below the national Fire Service average;
- d) Covid related sickness absences are included in the overall figures but also separately at 11.5% of the overall figure;
- e) Work-related sickness absence is generally fairly low, further detail can be provided to a future meeting;
- f) Overall, there has been a whole-year sickness absence decrease of 11.5% across all groups, with long-term sickness absence accounting for 61% of the overall figure;
- g) The report provides further detail of sickness absence for staffing groups, and a comparison to the national Fire Service trends;
- h) The Service maintains an Occupational Health Team on site which enables staff experiencing health issues to be brought into the system quickly and given appropriate support, which may include counselling, physiotherapy, or a range of support mechanisms;
- i) Appendix E to the report sets out the most common reasons for sickness absence, in which mental health and musculoskeletal issues rank high in most groups and so preventive measures/support have been put in place;
- j) The sickness absence statistics across all services nationally do not present a like-for-like comparison.

Members welcomed the additional 12 apprentice firefighters starting the two-year apprenticeship in September, with another Wholetime recruitment campaign commencing in 2024 for a total of 40 posts.

Identifying areas of work-related stress in the workforce could help prevent stress related sickness absence.

Resolved to note the report.

5 Workforce Plan 2023-2025

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the updated Workforce Plan, which contributes to the business planning process, which, in turn, supports the Community Risk Management Plan.

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

- a) The Workforce Plan looks ahead for up to two years at what will be required at that time and ensures that the workforce needs can be met;
- b) The Plan takes into consideration the following with regard to future planning and ensuring that staffing numbers are stable:
 - i. Workforce reductions through retirement, projected turnover and other factors;
 - ii. Workforce increases resulting from delivery of new Service requirements;
 - iii. The need for succession planning for specialist and managerial roles;
 - iv. Particular areas of concern within the Service;
 - v. Resourcing requirements
- c) Recruitment is a national issue for Fire and Rescue Services, particularly with On-Call roles and specifically in some areas of the county. However, the On-Call working model will be reviewed to try and address some of the issues to better suit modern living patterns;
- d) The Service aims to maintain full complement of 431 full-time firefighters, including increased cover at Ashfield Fire Station;
- e) As part of Futures25, the initial focus was on ensuring the Service could set and operate within sustainable budgets. The next phase will look at change and models of delivery across the Service, ensuring efficiency and sustainability;
- f) Workforce diversity is an ongoing issue for the sector as a whole, but the Service continues to try and diversify the workforce. One of the aims for the coming year is to improve engagement with and understanding of communities, and in addition to promoting the range of services provided and strengthening prevention work, to also promote the service as an employer of choice across a range of roles;
- g) The full Workforce Plan is attached as an appendix to the report;
- h) With regard to increasing diversity in the appropriate cohort, there is some evidence that potential applicants who engage in the Service's pre-recruitment positive action activity are successful in the recruitment processes. Work will continue to ensure that more people from diverse backgrounds are attracted to roles in the Service.
- i) Members should be assured that the Service will be focusing on communities in more deprived areas in forthcoming recruitment activities.

- j) The Service needs to ensure that the breadth of the roles available within the Fire Service is better understood by citizens, beyond that of frontline firefighter. It is anticipated that this will then support interest applications from the wider community.

Comments from Committee members included:

- k) The more the Service goes into communities, the better the response and awareness of the work it does will be. The Vice-Chair is working with members of the Equality Team to ensure the Service accesses a wide range of community events and activities to raise awareness of the Service and the potential opportunities;
- l) Whilst the City may have a broader range of BAME citizen diversity, other areas in the county, such as Ashfield and Mansfield, have a greater inequality in economic diversity. The Service also needs to focus on engaging with the longer term, lower income communities to promote prevention and protection work, but also the opportunities within Service;
- m) Members are asked that if they are aware of any community events, such as the Ashfield day or the Filipino Barrio Fiesta event in Nottingham, would they please inform the Service's Community Engagement Officer, so the Service can ask to be involved and have an engagement presence.
- n) The Chair agreed that the inclusion of social economic background as a target group engagement and recruitment was a valid point, adding that progress would be welcomed;
- o) Consideration should be given to the methods used by other Services and their achievement in broadening their engagement and recruitment. This includes the social media campaign to recruit more male nurses and female medical staff, or even the successful promotion of women's sport, such as football and cricket, and strengthening public support.

Resolved to note the report.

6 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, Areas For Improvement

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented the report, which updates Members on the 'area for improvement' (AFI), which has been allocated to this Committee to address.

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

- a) The Service should assure itself that staff understand how to get well-being support;

- b) The report summarises the work undertaken so far, including:
- i. Review of post critical incident support;
 - ii. Updates on well-being provision;
 - iii. Information on how to seek information support;
 - iv. An independent employee survey;
 - v. A daily briefing on mental health information during mental health week;
 - vi. Suicide prevention crisis line developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council and The Firefighters Charity (to be launched later in the year);
 - vii. Provision and promotion of the 'Your Care' portal and app;
 - viii. Extended employee access to salary deducted purchases of home electronic equipment;
- c) Further proposals include:
- i. Review of the Well-Being Strategy;
 - ii. Briefings to duty officers on the revised post critical instance support process;
 - iii. Training for mental health advocates;
 - iv. Promotion of well-being by the Occupational Health Team, including easy access to clinics and a roadshow;
- d) Progress will be measured through a staff survey which is undertaken every two years, but engagement will be monitored regarding the numbers of people that services are supporting;
- e) The current added pressure of the cost of living crisis is acknowledged. The Service provides trauma counselling, anonymous counselling sessions, and support teams are in place to provide help and advice in confidence for broader mental health concerns. The feedback from peer support is that it has been really helpful to those engaged.

Members welcomed progress and emphasised the need to ensure that staff are aware of the different options available for mental health support.

Resolved to note the report.

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 10 November 2023

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on key human resources metrics for the period 1 July to 30 September 2023, with the exception of absence data which is for the reporting period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023. This includes equalities monitoring data for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 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.

2. REPORT

STAFFING NUMBERS

- 2.1 During the period 1 June 2023 to 30 September 2023, 41 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels as of 30 September 2023 are highlighted below:

| | Approved | Actual | Variance |
|------------------|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Wholetime | 431 | 417 (416.6fte) | -14 (-14.4fte) |
| On-call | 192 units | 245 persons (131.5 units) (includes 72 dual contracts) | -60.5 units |
| Support | 163 (157.15 fte) | 162 (150.3fte) | -1 (6.85 fte) |

- 2.2 There have been 25 leavers and 41 starters since the last report. This has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 824 (this includes 72 dual contractors). Leavers are broken down as follows: 11 wholetime, 7 on-call and 7 support roles.
- 2.3 As at 30 September 2023, wholetime strength stood at 417 operational personnel (416.6 fte) employees against an establishment of 431 posts.
- 2.4 During the period, the Service has appointed to 16 wholetime, 13 on-call and 12 support roles.

SICKNESS ABSENCE – Quarter 1 and Quarter 2

- 2.5 Due to the timing of the previous committee meeting, the review period covers both Quarter One (April-June) and Quarter Two (July-September).

2.6 Target absence figures for 2023/24 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).

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 In Quarter One (Q1), total absence across the workforce (excluding on-call) decreased by 222 days (-15.3%) compared to the previous quarter, at an average of 2.23 days lost per employee. In Quarter Two (Q2), total absence across the workforce increased by 278.16 days (+22.5%) compared to the previous quarter, at an average of 2.69 days lost per employee.

2.9 This represents a decrease compared to the same quarter of 2022-23 of Q1 of 142.6 days (-10.4%) and a decrease of 45.1 days (-2.9%) in Q2.

2.10 In Q1 absence related to Covid accounted for 57 working days lost, or 4.6% of total absence, and 87 working days, or 5.8% of total absence in Q2.

2.11 In Q1, long term absence equated to 57.3% of sickness absence and for 59.1% in Q2.

2.12 Absence due to work related injury accounted for 167 days, or 13.5% of all sickness absence in Q1 and for 222 days, or 14.7% of sickness absence, in Q2. The main reason for absence in both quarters were mental health issues.

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

On-call Workforce

2.14 In Q1, absence figures decreased by 244 days (-24.7%) compared to the previous quarter, at an average of 3.12 days per employee. In Q2, absence increased by 263 days (+35%) compared to the previous quarter, at an average of 4.2 days lost per employee.

2.15 This represents a decrease compared to the same quarter of 2022-23 of 237 days (-24.1%) in Q1 and an increase of 117 days (+13%) in Q2.

2.16 In Q1 absence related to Covid accounted for 29 working days lost, or 3.9% of total absence, and 26 working days, or 2.6% of total absence, in Q2.

2.17 Long term absence equated to 72.6% of sickness absence in Q1 and 66.5% of sickness absence in Q2.

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

NATIONAL ABSENCE TRENDS

- 2.19 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.
- 2.20 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.
- 2.21 Appendix B reflects the national absence trends for Q1. 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.
- 2.22 For wholetime staff, NFRS has an average of 1.89 days lost per employee which ranks the Service as 10 out of the 34 Services included in the survey. This figure is below the sector sickness average of 2.54 days per employee. The lowest average was 0.75 days and the highest 4.18 days.
- 2.23 For on-call staff, NFRS has an average of 3.12 days lost per employee which ranks the Service as 7 out of 21 Services included in the survey. This figure is below the sector sickness average of 3.61 days per employee. The lowest average was 0 days and the highest 11.6 days.
- 2.24 For support staff the Service has an average of 3.16 days lost per employee which ranks as 32 out of the 34 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 2.12 days per employee. The lowest average was 0.87 days and the highest 4.13 days.

OTHER WORKFORCE METRICS

- 2.25 This section reviews the following activities: disciplinary cases, grievances raised, harassment cases raised, dismissals, appeals and active employment tribunal cases.
- 2.26 Over the period, there were three disciplinary investigations resulting in a hearing, no grievance or harassment claims were raised. One appeal was raised against a grievance outcome, which will be heard in October. There were no dismissals, or employment tribunal cases lodged.

EQUALITIES MONITORING

- 2.27 A review of key equalities metrics is undertaken every six months to establish any patterns or changes. The following equalities monitoring information is provided for the period of 1 April – 30 September 2023.

Workforce Profile

2.28 The table below sets out a snapshot of key equalities metrics:

| Workforce | Female firefighters (Wholetime and On-call) | Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees (whole workforce) | BAME employees in wholetime roles | Lesbian, gay or bisexual (whole workforce) | Disabled (whole workforce) |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 30 September 2023 Headcount 824 | 10.6% (44 out of 414 roles) | 5.6% (46) | 6.2% (26) | 4.13% (34) | 4.4% (36) |
| 31 March 2023 Headcount 812 | 9.76% (40 out of 410 roles) | 5.42% (44) | 5.88% (24) | 2.95% (24) | 3.94 % (32) |

2.29 When considered by workgroup, the monitoring data shows that:

Whole Workforce

- Women currently constitute 16.4% (135) of the total workforce. Of these, 42.22% (57) women are employed in operational roles. Women represent 10.8% of operational roles undertaken. 4.7% (10 of 212) of supervisory managers and 3.7% (1) of middle operational managers are women. There are five women in strategic operational roles (Area Manager and Assistant Chief Fire Officer) and who are members of the Strategic Leadership Team.
- Employees from BAME backgrounds constitute 5.6% (46) of the workforce. Current census figures show the BAME population of Nottinghamshire as 14.61%.
- Employees who identify as being Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB) constitute 4.13% (34) of the workforce. Current census figures demonstrate an LGB population of Nottinghamshire of 2.68% (however the prefer not to say level was 6% within the last census, suggesting Nottinghamshire's LGB population could be higher).
- Disability declaration is at 4.4% (36) of the workforce. However, this increases to 9.8% (16) of employees in support roles. Census data shows 11.9% of the population of Nottinghamshire identify as having a disability.

Operational Roles

- For wholetime roles, women are employed in 10.79% (45) of operational roles. Of these, 5.93% (8 out of 135) are supervisory roles (Crew or Watch Manager) and 3.7% (1 out of 27) are middle manager roles (Station or Group manager). 22.2% (2 out of 9) women in a strategic operational role (Brigade Manager).
- Employees from BAME backgrounds represent 6.24% (26) of wholetime operational roles. Of these, 5.93% (8 of 135) are supervisory roles (Crew or

Watch Manager). There are no BAME employees in middle or senior manager roles.

On-call Roles

- For on-call roles, women are employed in 4.9% (12) of operational roles. Of these, 2.6% (2 out of 77) are employed in supervisory roles.
- Employees from BAME backgrounds represent 2% (5) of operational roles. Of these, 1.3% (1 out of 77) are employed in supervisory roles.

Support Roles

- For support roles, women are employed in 48.8% (79) of roles. Of these, 46% (40 out of 87) are employed in supervisory roles and 37.5% (6 out of 16) are employed in senior or strategic roles.
- Employees from BAME backgrounds represent 9.26% (15) of roles. Of these, 12.6% (11) are employed in supervisory roles.
- The table below, shows the breakdown of the support workforce by protected characteristic and grade.

| Support Employees | Men | Women | Disability | BAME | LGB |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------|
| Grades 1-4 (plus Apprentice) | 26 | 33 | 6 | 4 | 7 |
| Grades 5-7 | 47 | 40 | 10 | 11 | 2 |
| Grades 8-SLSM | 10 | 6 | | | |
| Total | 83 | 79 | 16 | 15 | 9 |

STARTERS AND LEAVERS

2.30 There have been 55 starters and 36 leavers. The table below shows details of these starters and leavers by protected characteristic:

| | Starters | | | Leavers | | |
|-------------------|----------|-----------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|
| | On-call | Wholetime | Support | On-call | Wholetime | Support |
| Women | 2 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| Men | 11 | 19 | 10 | 8 | 14 | 3 |
| BAME | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| LGB | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Disability | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

2.3
1
Of the 55 starters, 27.2%

(15 were women. Two courses of wholetime trainee firefighters have taken place during the reporting period and one On-call trainee firefighter course.

While within both wholetime and on-call, the diversity split continues to be male dominated, figures for wholetime show 29.6% (8) of wholetime new starters and 15.4% (2) of on-call new starters were women. It can be observed that 23.1% of on-call and 25.9% of wholetime starters identify as LGB, which is positive.

2.32 In terms of leavers, the figures do not indicate any particular issues related to protected characteristics and reflect the workforce profile of each employee group.

RECRUITMENT

Wholetime

2.33 During the review period, the Service has opened a Wholetime Apprentice Firefighter recruitment campaign. This has been preceded by positive action to encourage a diverse range of candidates to apply, particularly from under-represented groups within the operational workforce. The campaign will conclude in February 2024, with the first cohort of recruits commencing their apprenticeship in April.

On-call

2.34 There have been no On-call recruitment campaigns within the period of this report.

Promotions

2.35 A Group Manager process has taken place during the reporting period, and the vacancy was advertised both externally and internally. There were 11 male applicants, all defined their ethnic origin as White British. Of these, 5 were interviewed and 3 were appointed. This response reflects the difficulty of improving the diversity of senior management roles within the sector.

Support Roles

2.36 In the review period the Service received 197 applicants in total for 12 vacancies. It should be noted that three these vacancies were not filled within the review period. However, three of the vacancies had multiple appointments. The breakdown of applicants, those shortlisted for interview and appointed are shown in the table below:

| | Female | Male | BAME | Disabled | LGBT |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| Applicants | 78 (39.6%) | 119 (60.4%) | 35 (17.8%) | 13 (6.6%) | 10 (5.1%) |
| Shortlisted | 19 (34.5%) | 36 (65.5%) | 5 (9.1%) | 2 (3.6%) | 2 (3.6%) |
| Appointed | 5 (35.7%) | 9 (64.2%) | 0 | 0 | 1 (7.14%) |

- 2.37 It can be observed that there were more male (60.4%) than female (39.6%) applicants, and the outcomes are broadly in line with these figures. The number of applications from under-represented groups remains positive, however it is noted the lack of successful applicants from BAME backgrounds and those who identify as disabled.

CONCLUSION

- 2.38 The monitoring data shows that the workforce profile is not representative of the local population in terms of employees from BAME backgrounds, Disability and people who identify as LGB. This is particularly marked in operational roles.
- 2.39 The Service continues to use positive action to promote the fire service as a career during firefighter recruitment campaigns both wholetime and on-call, it does also promote support staff vacancies through targeted advertising. It should be noted most vacancies are for on-call roles, and these are specific to location, which can reduce the impact on diversity.
- 2.40 Using a range of awareness events, mentoring and fitness/strength development activities prior to wholetime recruitment has helped to lead to positive diversity figures.
- 2.41 From the data presented above, it can be noted workforce is becoming gradually more representative.

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 has 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.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

5. EQUALITIES AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As this review does not impact upon policy or service delivery, no equality impact assessment has been undertaken. However, the report contains equalities monitoring information for the period April to September 2023,

which provides an overview of progress in terms of increasing the diversity of the workforce and which indicates an improvement in diversity during the review period, most notably for female firefighters, black, Asian and minority ethnic employees, lesbian, gay and bisexual employees and employees identifying as disabled.

5.2 There are no ethical implications arising from this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental or sustainability 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.

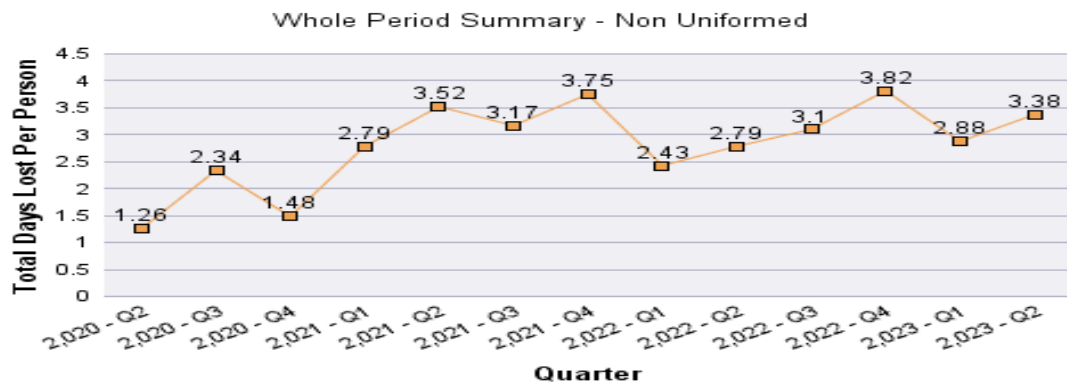
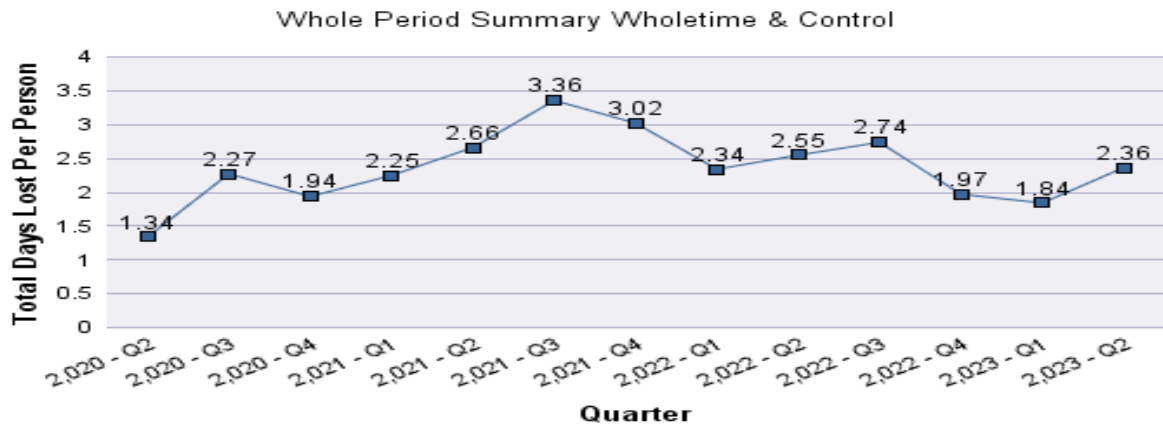
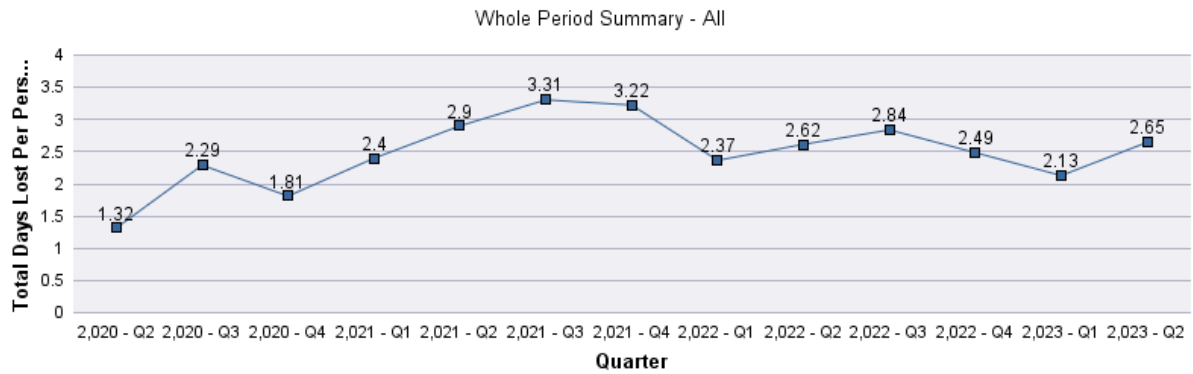
10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

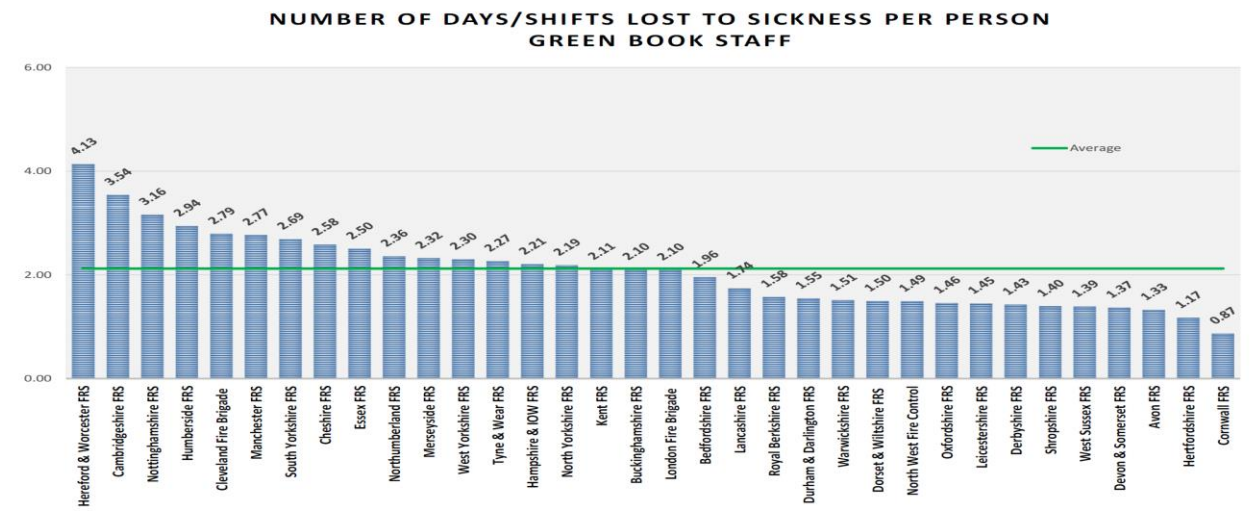
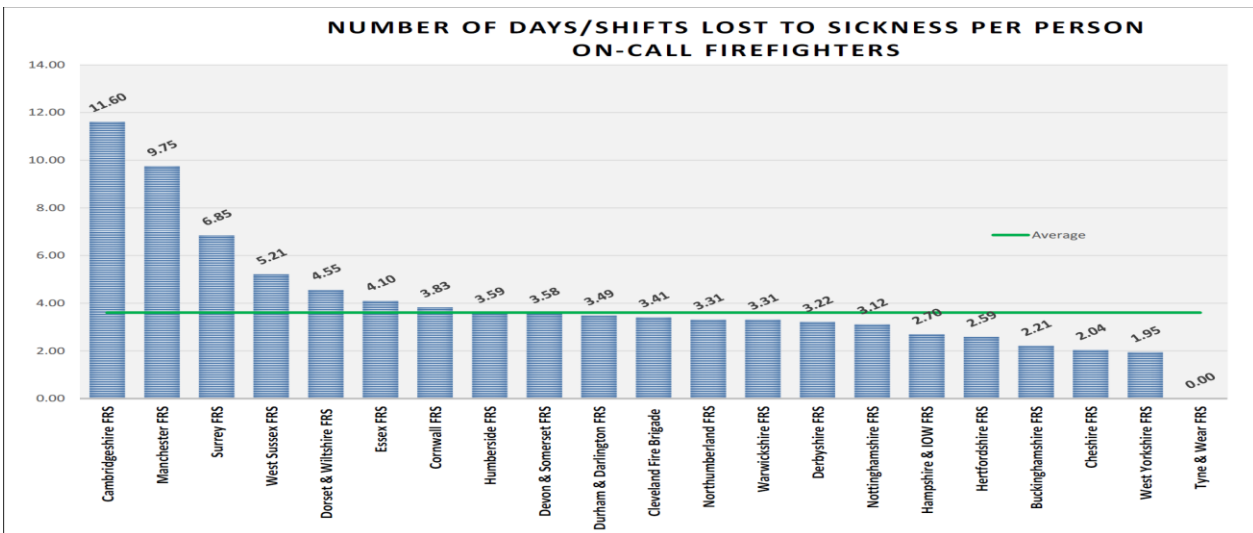
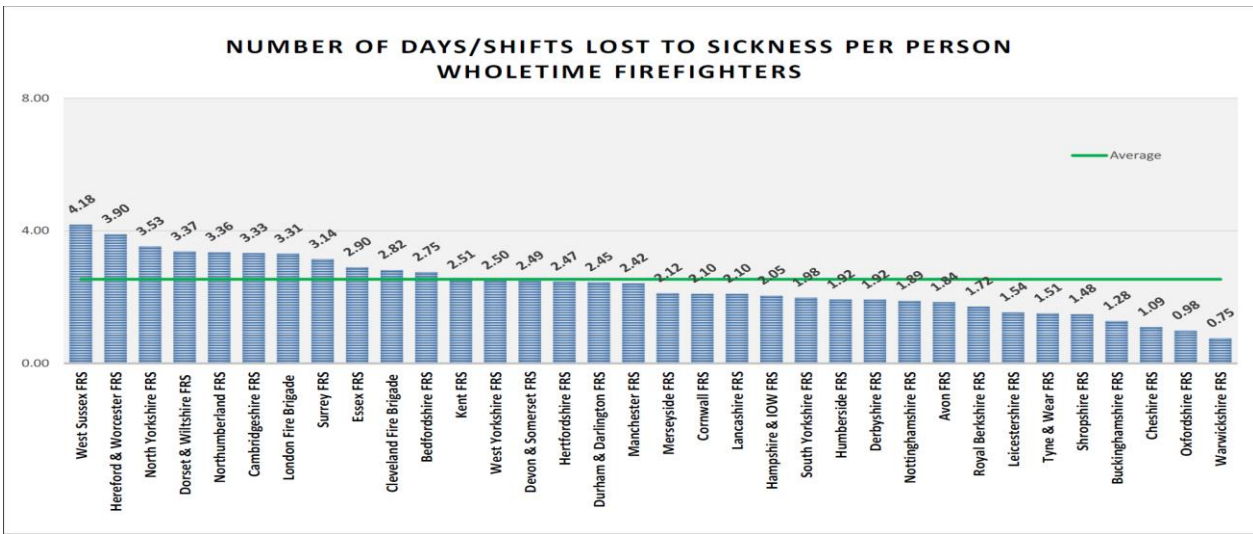
11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



NATIONAL ABSENCE SURVEY



Q1 and Q2 2023/24 – Wholetime Absence**Q1**

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|--|----------------------|-----------|
| Musculo Skeletal | 27 | 218 |
| Mental Health | 9 | 214 |
| Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems | 2 | 58 |
| Mental Health - Other | 5 | 50 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 3 | 37 |
| Other known causes (not specified in list) | 4 | 33 |
| Gastro-Intestinal | 12 | 31 |
| COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive | 8 | 30 |
| Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza | 7 | 21 |
| Cause Known, but not specified | 3 | 19 |

Q2

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|---|----------------------|-----------|
| Musculo Skeletal | 36 | 301 |
| Mental Health | 12 | 193 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 7 | 133 |
| COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive | 15 | 53 |
| Cancer and Tumours | 1 | 44 |
| Gastro-Intestinal | 17 | 44 |
| Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems | 1 | 30 |
| Allergy | 2 | 26 |
| Eye Problems | 2 | 25 |
| Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza | 7 | 23 |

Q1 and Q2 2023/24 - On Call Absence

Q1

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Musculo Skeletal | 10 | 275 |
| Mental Health - Other | 2 | 152 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 3 | 106 |
| Mental Health | 4 | 66 |
| Respiratory - Other | 2 | 66 |
| COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive | 5 | 29 |
| Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza | 2 | 19 |
| Unknown causes, not specified | 2 | 14 |
| Cause Known, but not specified | 1 | 5 |
| Gastro-Intestinal | 2 | 5 |

Q2

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Musculo Skeletal | 18 | 449 |
| Mental Health | 5 | 216 |
| Skin Condition | 3 | 81 |
| Gastro-Intestinal | 10 | 79 |
| Mental Health - Other | 1 | 75 |
| COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive | 4 | 26 |
| Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza | 5 | 26 |
| Headache/Migraine/Neurological | 2 | 21 |
| Respiratory - Chest Infection | 2 | 13 |
| Ear, Nose, Throat | 1 | 7 |

Q1 and Q2 2023/24 – Support Staff Absence

Q1

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Mental Health | 5 | 160 |
| Musculo Skeletal | 5 | 68 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 5 | 49 |
| Headache/Migraine/Neurological | 3 | 48 |
| Cancer and Tumours | 1 | 41 |
| COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive | 6 | 27 |
| Mental Health - Other | 1 | 26 |
| Gastro-Intestinal | 7 | 20 |
| Ear, Nose, Throat | 1 | 14 |
| Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza | 7 | 12 |

Q2

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Mental Health | 4 | 207 |
| Headache/Migraine/Neurological | 4 | 74 |
| Cancer and Tumours | 1 | 65 |
| Musculo Skeletal | 3 | 53 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 7 | 47.5 |
| Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza | 10 | 40 |
| COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive | 8 | 31 |
| Gastro-Intestinal | 6 | 12 |
| Virus/Infectious Diseases | 2 | 5 |
| Respiratory - Chest Infection | 1 | 3 |



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

GENDER PAY GAP 2023

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 10 November 2023

Purpose of Report:

To report the outcomes of the gender pay gap audit for the year ending 31 March 2023.

Recommendations:

That Members note the outcomes from the report and support the action points set out within Paragraph 2.21 to maintain and enhance the career advancement of, and support provided to, women within the Service.

CONTACT OFFICER

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In April 2017, the Government introduced a duty on employers with more than 250 employees to calculate and publish six specific measures in relation to the pay gap between men and women in their organisation. Pay data is collected on a specific pay date – 31 March 2023 – and must be published on the national register by 31 March 2024.
- 1.2 The last review was undertaken for pay data on 31 March 2022. This reported a mean pay gap of 19.13% and a median pay gap of 9.49%.
- 1.3 This report reflects the pay analysis undertaken on pay data as at 31 March 2023 (for the year April 2022 to 31 March 2023).
- 1.4 This shows that the gender pay gap has slightly decreased during the period.

2. REPORT

GENDER PAY GAP AUDIT

- 2.1 The six specific measures collated are:
- The difference in the mean hourly rate of pay;
 - The difference in the median hourly rate of pay;
 - The difference in the mean bonus pay;
 - The difference in the median bonus pay;
 - The proportion of male and female employees who were paid bonus pay;
 - The proportion of male and female employees according to quartile pay bands.
- 2.2 The outcomes from the audit are attached as an appendix and report a mean hourly pay gap of 12.53% and a median gender pay gap of 7.78%. This compares with a mean of 19.13% and a median average of 9.49% for 2021-22 – a reduction in both average and median pay between male and female employees – ie: the pay gap has reduced during 2022-23. Differences in hourly pay are set out in the table below:

| | Female | Male | Grand Total | % Difference |
|--------------------|--------|-------|-------------|--------------|
| On-Call | 17.42 | 17.79 | 17.61 | 2.08 |
| Dual | 28.36 | 36.82 | 32.59 | 22.98 |
| Support | 16.92 | 18.62 | 17.77 | 9.13 |
| Wholetime | 16.34 | 17.12 | 16.73 | 4.56 |
| Grand Total | 19.76 | 22.59 | 21.18 | 12.53 |

- 2.3 It can be seen that for all work groups, average male pay is higher than average female pay. It should be noted that On-call pay represents a 12-week average. This may therefore reflect a short-term increase rather than a long-term pattern of higher hourly pay.
- 2.4 During 2022-23, the Service recruited an additional 15 women to the Service, compared to 46 men. Of these, one was to a Wholetime role, two to On-call roles and 12 to support roles.
- 2.5 As a result of the recruitment campaigns in 2022, an additional eight women have commenced apprentice wholetime firefighter roles and two women have commenced as On-call trainee firefighters in April and September 2023, which will be reflected in figures for 23-24.
- 2.6 During 2022 there has been more recruitment of men (14) than women (12) to support roles, however the majority of support roles are held by women (51.2%). Whilst there is a spread of grades which are fairly equally dispersed between men and women, in more senior roles above Grade 8 men account for 61.1% of appointments (13.9% of all roles held by men compared to 8.4% of all roles held by women). This is likely to be linked to professional disparities, for instances in engineering, ICT and procurement roles and the numbers of women qualified in those fields.
- 2.7 Quartile bandings are attached at Appendix A and reflect the greater number of men employed compared to women at each level of pay banding.
- 2.8 It should be noted that this pay gap does not indicate a disparity in hourly rate paid for men and women doing the same job, which is the same for men and women at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS), but rather reflects the gender balance within the workforce (83.8% male, 16.2% female) and the proportion of men in higher graded operational and managerial roles. The breakdown of roles is shown at Appendix B.
- 2.9 The table below shows the comparative pay gap differences calculated as a mean average, by work group:

| Work Group | Mean Average % | Number of Women (31 March 2023) | Number of Men (31 March 2023) |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Wholetime | -4.56 | 38 (9.3%) | 370 (90.7%) |
| Support | -9.13 | 83 (51.2%) | 79 (48.8%) |
| On-Call | -2.08 | 11 (4.53%) | 232 (95.47%) |

- 2.10 The above figures reflect the low number of women in operational roles (Wholetime and On-call). The number of women in support roles account for 51.2% of all roles, however more men than women are employed in managerial or senior professional roles which accounts for the pay gap disparity.

- 2.11 This compares with a public-sector median average of 11.2% in 21/22. The Service is therefore better than the national median figure.*¹
- 2.12 In the private sector, the average median pay gap was 13.8% in 21/22. NFRS is better than the private sector national median figure.*¹
- 2.13 Overall, across all employers, the average median pay gap was 14.9% in 21/22. The Service is therefore better than the national average figure.
- 2.14 In terms of reducing the gender pay gap, the Service already has in place policies and pay structures that are reflective of best practice outlined in guidance documents. However, the lack of women in operational supervisory and senior management roles is a perennial issue and work needs to be undertaken to encourage more women to apply for higher graded roles. The gender pay gap will really only be closed by appointing more women to supervisory and managerial roles, and this requires more women to apply at entry level to Wholetime and On-call roles.
- 2.15 The structure and gender profile of the fire and rescue service provides particular challenges to closing the gender pay gap. It is very hierarchical in terms of its opportunities for progression, which is underpinned by function and need for a command and control leadership style in operational situations. Over recent years, changes to leadership development programmes have concentrated on a different leadership style based on coaching and effective people skills, which is also reflected in selection processes, and this will change the culture of the Service over time. This is more likely to attract women to leadership roles with the Service.
- 2.16 The need to recruit more women into entry level operational roles is key to addressing gender pay gap issues for the future. Positive action has gone some way to making a career with the fire service a more accessible option and there are now more women than ever before applying to and being successful at the recruitment stage.
- 2.17 Recruitment campaigns which run between 2022 and 2025 provide an opportunity to engage with prospective female candidates to encourage them to apply for an apprentice firefighter role. The last Wholetime recruitment campaign in 2022 saw an increase in both female applicants (50 - 13%) and successful appointments (9 - 18%). It is important that positive action measures are properly resourced and supported to enable this upturn in interest to continue.
- 2.18 A firefighter recruitment campaign is ongoing (2023) for appointments to roles in 2024 and positive action has focused on attracting more female applicants to apply.

¹ Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

- 2.19 Whilst progressing women within operational roles is key to impacting on the current gender pay gap, this is not to marginalise the need to recruit and develop more women into professional and leadership roles in support posts.
- 2.20 A Women's Network group has been established since 2021, which provides support and guidance to women across the workforce and is also a channel for women to raise issues. This group has made links to the women's network (NEWS) in Nottinghamshire Police, with the aim of sharing good practice and events. The NFRS Women's Network is led by a champion from the Strategic Leadership Team to ensure engagement at the most senior levels of the organisation.
- 2.21 The focus of actions to improve upon the gender pay gap are:
- Undertake positive action to encourage more women to apply for Wholetime and On-call firefighter roles;
 - Identify the reasons why more female firefighters do not apply for promotion and address any barriers/concerns;
 - Be pro-active in identifying those with the potential to progress to more senior roles and provide support and development;
 - Review any barriers for women to be appointed to senior roles across all work groups;
 - Review the requirements of the On-call duty system to make it more attractive to female applicants;
 - Provide opportunities for women to gain experience in higher level roles through temporary appointments, involvement in projects, development roles;
 - Any additional flexible working arrangements that can be put in place;
 - Maintain engagement with the Nottingham City Future Leaders programme and encourage women to apply.
- 2.22 In addition, a ten year plan to accelerate the diversification of the workforce across the organisation is currently under development as part of the Futures25 Change Programme.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, if further development roles are introduced, this will need to be managed through the budget setting process.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Implications are set within the report and focus on positive action, talent management and development opportunities.
- 4.2 Work will be undertaken with the Women's Network to take forward the recommendations and develop further support for women with the aims of reducing the gender pay gap.

5. EQUALITIES AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken as this report does not seek to change Service policy or service delivery. However, there are recommendations contained within the report which set out courses of action to improve the number, seniority and pay of female employees to further close the gender pay gap.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental or sustainability implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Gender Pay Gap Regulations, otherwise known as the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 came into force in the UK in April 2017. The regulations require all private and voluntary-sector employers with 250 or more employees to publish data on their gender pay gap.
- 7.2 Employers who fail to report by 5 October 2024 deadline, or report inaccurate data, will be in breach of the regulations and risk facing enforcement from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), leading to court orders and fines.
- 7.3 In addition to the statutory requirement to publish gender pay gap data, the case for ensuring that pay systems are not intrinsically gender biased is important to defend any claim for equal pay brought under the Equality Act, which includes work of equal value.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 It is important to ensure that pay and progression processes are fair and robust in order to defend potential equal pay claims or claims of gender bias.
- 8.2 It is also important from a reputational and employee relations standpoint to provide opportunity for women to develop to their full potential through

supportive policies around positive action, mentoring and development programmes and to provide a flexible work environment, which takes account of the family and dependent care roles often provided by women. Much of this support is already available within NFRS.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct collaboration implications, although work undertaken through the Women in the Fire Service network supports a national approach to identifying and addressing specific issues for women and is also supported locally.
- 9.2 Work with the Nottinghamshire Police, for instance through the NEWS network, involves an informal sharing of best practice, events and information aimed at women within both organisations.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the outcomes from the report and support the action points set out within Paragraph 2.21 to maintain and enhance the career advancement of, and support provided to, women within the Service.

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

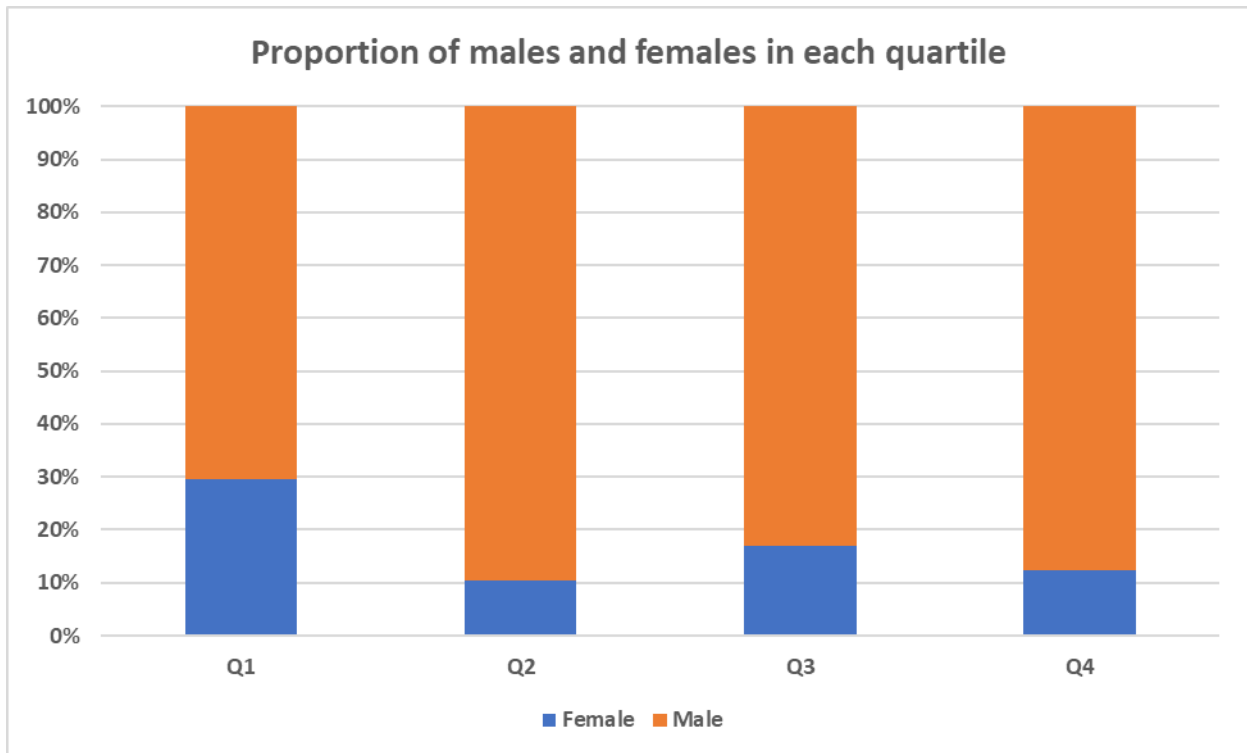
None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

QUARTILE SALARY BANDING

Proportion of Males and Females in each Quartile

| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Female | 29.65% | 10.47% | 16.86% | 12.28% |
| Male | 70.35% | 89.53% | 83.14% | 87.72% |



Hourly Rate Bands

- Q1 - £9.28 - £15.05
- Q2 - £15.06 - £15.92
- Q3 - £16.01 - £19.30
- Q4 - £19.33 - £66.31

ROLE BY GENDER 31/03/23

Wholetime Roles

| Gender | FF | CM | WM | SM | GM | AM | PO | Total | % |
|--------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|-------|
| Female | 31 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 38 | 9.31 |
| Male | 209 | 64 | 62 | 22 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 370 | 90.69 |

On-Call Roles

| Gender | FF | CM | WM | Total | % |
|--------|-----|----|----|-------|-------|
| Female | 9 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 4.53 |
| Male | 159 | 57 | 16 | 232 | 95.47 |

Support Roles

| Gender | 1-4 | 5-7 | 8-9 | Strategic | Total | % |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----------|-------|------|
| Female | 34 | 42 | 4 | 3 | 83 | 51.2 |
| Male | 22 | 46 | 10 | 1 | 79 | 48.8 |

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

REVIEW OF WORKFORCE PLAN 2022-24

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 10 November 2023

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on progress against the Workforce Plan 2022-24.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Workforce Plan 2022-2024 forms part of the business planning process which supports the delivery of the Strategic Plan 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;
 - Resource 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) Community Risk Management Plan. These needs can then be factored into the budget planning process.
- 1.4 This Plan is developed and managed through the Strategic Leadership Team.

2. REPORT

REVIEW 2022-2024

- 2.1 The Human Resources Committee approved a revised Workforce Plan for the period 2022-2024 at its meeting on 23 June 2023. This update reflects mid-year position for the period April to September 2023.
- 2.2 A significant part of the Plan anticipates turnover and recruitment requirements based on workforce projections for each work group.

WHOLETIME WORKFORCE

- 2.3 The wholetime establishment is currently 431 posts. The current workforce is 416.6, which represents a shortfall of 14.4 roles.
- 2.4 There have been 27 new starters to wholetime roles during the review period, the majority of which have been to apprentice firefighter roles recruited as part of the 2022 campaign. 11 started their NFRS career in April and 12 are

currently on their initial training course at Service Development Centre (SDC) and will be posted to stations in December. Three additional apprentice firefighters commenced their training in the Prevention team and will start their operational training at SDC in April 2024. The Service also recruited an additional area manager on a 12-month secondment to support the delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan.

- 2.5 There have been 16 leavers between April and September. 11 due to retirements and five for other reasons. This is within workforce projections.
- 2.6 In order to further address this shortfall, the Service has recently implemented a number of measures including the transfer of 15 operational roles (11 firefighters, 2 crew and 2 watch managers) into the Service. In addition, a wholetime recruitment process is underway to recruit to apprentice firefighter roles during 2024. This recruitment process will conclude in February 2024 and the Service is seeking to recruit up to 32 new apprentice firefighters.
- 2.7 A recent change to establishment has released four current operational posts to support the resourcing of Service priorities, resource to the current Community Risk Management Plan commitments, and support the mitigation of current corporate risks. This was approved by the Authority at its meeting on 3 July 2023 as part of the 'resourcing to risk' report.
- 2.8 There have been five promotion processes undertaken since April for crew, watch, station, group and area manager roles, resulting in the appointment of 18 individuals to higher level roles. These are scheduled as part of succession planning to fill and anticipate vacancies arising, predominantly through retirements, and to provide temporary development opportunities.
- 2.9 The Service is also currently recruiting to an Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) position due to the retirement of ACFO Candida Brudenell in January 2024. Interviews will be undertaken by the Appointments Committee on 1 December 2023.
- 2.10 Work to support the conversion of Ashfield from a mixed-crewing to wholetime station, in line with the decision of the Authority on 24 February 2023, has been progressing during the review period. The majority of moves have been confirmed and the station will revert back to a wholetime duty system from 29 November 2023.

ON-CALL WORKFORCE

- 2.11 The number of employees providing on-call cover currently stands at 245, of which 77 are dual contracts.
- 2.12 There have been nine leavers and 13 new appointments to trainee firefighter roles between April and September. This is below workforce projections.

- 2.13 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 and human resources teams.

SUPPORT WORKFORCE

- 2.14 The current support establishment stands at 162 posts (150.3fte), which accounts for four full-time vacancies. There are currently 11 fixed term appointments covering vacancies or providing additional resources.
- 2.15 There have been ten leavers and 14 new appointments between April and September 2023. The number of leavers is within workforce projections. Of these, two have been due to retirement and one due to the expiry of fixed-term contracts.
- 2.16 The higher levels of turnover and difficulty in recruiting to administrative, technical and professional support roles was predicted in the Workforce Plan as a reflection of a national upturn in turnover across all sectors and the gap between private and public sector salaries. Recent cost-of-living increases have exacerbated this pay differential. This is recorded in the Corporate Risk Register as a potential risk to the Service. The national employers are currently in consultation with unions on the 2023-24 pay settlement.
- 2.17 However, the reduction in turnover compared to last year (26 in 2022) and increase in the number of appointments (10 in 2022), for the same period does indicate that there has been an improvement in recruitment and retention of support employees during 2023.
- 2.18 Work to progress the Futures 25 efficiency programme has commenced, with a review of Prevention activities underway. The outcomes from this work will have workforce implications, as reported in the Plan, which will be reported to Members. Specific workstreams within the programme with workforce implications 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.

OTHER WORKFORCE ISSUES

- 2.19 The need to make the workforce more representative and diverse continues to be a priority for the Service, with the aim of improving the current workforce profile to better reflect the local population. Positive action has been undertaken to encourage applicants who are under-represented in the workforce to apply for wholetime firefighter positions and success rates will be reported to the Committee at the end of the current process. Equalities monitoring information is contained within a separate report on the agenda.

- 2.20 A focus on employee well-being and improved sickness absence rates were also identified within the workforce plan. Sickness absence rates saw a decrease in Quarter One compared to the comparative period of 2022, but an increase in Quarter Two, and more detail is set out within the monitoring information contained within the human resources update report.
- 2.21 Work undertaken to enhance well-being provision was set out at the last meeting of this Committee in June. Since this time, employees have been able to make use of a new facility to order home and electrical items from the benefits site (up to £1000) and pay for these through salary deductions. This recognises the financial pressures many families are experiencing and reduces the need for employees to take out short-term loans or pay interest for essential home items. This is in addition to the Cycle to Work scheme and savings website that are also available.

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

Human resources implications are contained within the report. It should be noted that a recent change to establishment has released four current operational posts to support the resourcing of Service priorities, resource to the current Community Risk Management Plan commitments, and support the mitigation of current corporate risks.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

As this is a review of the approved Workforce Plan an equality impact assessment has not been undertaken. However, equalities implications arising from future workforce recommendations will be assessed for any likely impact on workforce or service delivery.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental or sustainability 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 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



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
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Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING OF EMPLOYEE CONCERNS

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 10 November 2023

Purpose of Report:

To set out the provisions put in place to enable confidential reporting of concerns by employees through an independent provider.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

CONTACT OFFICER

| | |
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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following recent reports of misconduct, and the findings of the Independent Cultural Review of London Fire Brigade, the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire commissioned a spotlight report into the values and culture of the fire and rescue service.
- 1.2 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) committed to returning a report by April 2023 and in January 2023, began their assessment of the sector in this area.
- 1.3 HMICFRS considered the specific themes of values and culture (including bullying, harassment, and discrimination); training and skills; fairness and diversity; and leadership.
- 1.4 The report was published by HMICFRS on Thursday 30 March 2023. The Service has acknowledged and supported the recommendations within the report.
- 1.5 Recommendation One of the subsequent thirty-five recommendations stated that:

“By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their services provide a confidential way for staff to raise concerns and that staff are aware of whistleblowing processes”.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 In addressing the issue of confidential reporting, the Service has engaged with various providers of independent confidential employee reporting services. These providers offer methods of reporting for members of staff about a range of issues relating to their employment with the Service and providing a “safe space” for employees to raise concerns.
- 2.2 Most of the providers offer a phone line and digital reporting platform, which enables the complainant to remain anonymous if they choose to do so.
- 2.3 The Service has opted for a company called “Say So”. A number of fire and rescue services use this provider, and discussions were held with both Derbyshire and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services to collaborate on a shared approach. By agreeing on a single provider, this has the advantage of sharing experience and best practice.
- 2.4 A link to the Say So website can be found here: [Say So - Anonymous reporting service \(say-so.co.uk\)](https://www.say-so.co.uk)
- 2.5 The provision offers employees access to contact via a digital portal, which is available on a 24/7 basis, or by telephone (Monday to Friday). Telephone

calls are free and monitored by staff, experienced in safeguarding and investigation issues.

- 2.6 On receiving a reported issue, Say So collate as much detail from the caller as they are willing to provide to enable the Service to look into the issue and to respond effectively. The information is passed securely to a senior point of contact within the Service who will investigate the issue raised and respond to Say So within ten days so that the employee can be updated on progress. Depending on the complexity of the issue, it may take longer than ten days to provide a full response, but the employee is kept advised if this is the case.
- 2.7 As part of the launch, Say So offer up to twenty face to face or online video meetings to employees to introduce the scheme and answer any questions, particularly to provide assurance about the confidential nature of the reporting process. They also provide leaflets, wallet cards and posters to promote the scheme within the workplace.
- 2.8 Say So visited Joint Headquarters in August for an open session with staff, which was well attended, and have visited six fire stations during September. Further visits or on-line calls are scheduled during October and November. This is to ensure that the confidential reporting facility is widely known and understood. Access to the Say So portal is available on the landing page of MyNet to ensure that it is easily accessible to staff. The scheme officially launched on 4 September 2023. Say So will provide analysis and reports to the Service regarding recurring themes or matters of concern.
- 2.9 Whilst the independent reporting provision offers an alternative way to raise concerns for employees, employees can also raise concerns through established routes, such as the Whistleblowing (Reporting of Concerns in the Workplace) Policy, through their line managers, through the Human Resources team or their trade union representatives.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of providing the service is commercially confidential, however the Service has received a preferential rate due to the collaboration on procurement with neighbouring fire and rescue services. The cost of the provision can be met from within current budgets.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Extensive scrutiny of the security of the system and secure handling of confidential personal information has been undertaken through the Service's Information and Governance Officer to ensure data protection provisions are met.
- 4.2 The opportunity to raise concerns outside of the Service from an independent and confidential provider is intended to offer employees another route to

provide feedback to the Service and to raise issues that they may not wish to raise directly with line managers. This allows the Service to deal with issues in a timely and appropriate manner and, ideally, reduce escalation of the issues. As well as inappropriate behaviour, it also provides a route for employees to raise issues of governance, health and safety, safe systems of work, environmental or workplace issues.

- 4.3 The provision of an independent reporting provision for employees meets the requirement of the HMI Recommendation One from the Spotlight Report on the Values and Culture of the Fire and Rescue Services.

5. EQUALITIES AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken. An independent reporting provision allows employees to raise issues related to a protected characteristic in a confidential, and if preferred an anonymous, way which may increase the reporting of concerns that might otherwise be difficult to raise with a line manager or through an internal route.
- 5.2 The provision of feedback and routes to report concerns to the Service, which may include issues of integrity, leadership, professional conduct, dignity and respect and equality, diversity and inclusion, reflects the ethical standards set out within the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental or sustainability implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

It is important that employee concerns are raised as part of an open and transparent approach to dealing with issues, which may have implications for the Service in terms of its governance, health and safety practices, ethical standards, equality and diversity or employee relations. The provision of an independent channel, alongside other available routes, to raise such concerns ensures that issues are recognised and addressed when they are raised.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

Collaboration with neighbouring fire and rescue services in the procurement process provides an opportunity to share experience and best practice.

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

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