

# Public Document Pack



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

**Date:** Friday, 23 April 2021      **Time:** 10.00 am

**Venue:** To be held remotely and streamed  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCt4VuYp8JJJvXCLRmSRJ1mw/featured>

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

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

<b>Agenda</b>	<b><u>Pages</u></b>
<b>1 Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of Interests</b>	
<b>3 Minutes</b> Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2021, for confirmation	3 - 10
<b>4 Human Resources Update</b> Report of the Chief Fire Officer	11 - 22
<b>5 Co-Location to Joint Headquarters</b> Report of the Chief Fire Officer	23 - 28
<b>6 Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment 2020</b> Report of the Chief Fire Officer	29 - 34
<b>7 People Strategy 2017-20</b> Report of the Chief Fire Officer	35 - 44
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**9 Exclusion of the Public**

To consider excluding the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, under Schedule 12A, Part 1, on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**10 Exempt Minutes**

53 - 54

Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2021, for confirmation.

**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 at Fire Services Headquarters on 0115 967 0880**

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

Governance Officer:

*Adrian Mann*  
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<https://nottinghamcity-gov-uk.zoom.us/j/98356256048?pwd=MTZPUXhERTFmcCtDcG1ZTThkLytsdz09>

If you would like British Sign Language interpretation at the meeting, please contact the Service at least 2 weeks in advance to book this, either by emailing [enquiries@notts-fire.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@notts-fire.gov.uk) or by text on SMS: 0115 824 0400



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

**Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Zoom and live-streamed on YouTube on  
Friday 22 January 2021 from 10:04am to 11:33am**

### **Membership**

#### **Present**

Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos (Chair)  
Councillor Vaughan Hopewell  
Councillor Jawaid Khalil  
Councillor John Longdon  
Councillor Salma Mumtaz

#### **Absent**

None

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

Tracy Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development  
Gavin Harris - Head of Digital Transformation  
Adrian Mann - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council  
Craig Parkin - Deputy Chief Fire Officer  
Matt Sismey - Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager  
Tracey Stevenson - Assistant Head of Finance

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **2 Declarations of Interests**

None.

### **3 Minutes**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2020 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

### **4 Human Resources Update**

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented a report on the key Human Resources metrics for the period of 1 April to 31 December 2020. The following points were discussed:

- (a) sickness absence in Quarters 1 and 2 (1 April to 30 September 2020) has seen a significant decrease in comparison to previous years, even taking into account absence in the period as a direct result of Coronavirus. This decrease in sickness may be attributed to a reduction in social contact and an increase in personal hygiene during the Coronavirus period, lowering the transmission of regular illnesses. In addition, staff working from home may have continued to work in a flexible way. Absence relating to Coronavirus is recorded specifically, and there is a requirement to report on cases at the national level. A full analysis of the sickness trends due to Coronavirus is underway, to improve planning and support;
- (b) there has been a small increase in sickness absence towards the end of Quarter 2, and numbers are likely to rise slightly due to seasonal factors. However, it seems probable that absence will continue to remain lower than normal – though instances of long-term sickness still remain a factor. The Service's absence figures are below the national average, which represents a good performance, and strong support structures remain in place for staff;
- (c) many support staff are now working remotely, and structures are in place from Occupational Health and HR to assist staff working in the new circumstances arising from the Coronavirus pandemic. Online workshops addressing mental health in yourself and others have been commissioned, and sessions have been run for managers on how to identify and approach mental ill health amongst staff;
- (d) the Committee thanked Service staff for their exceptional work during the Coronavirus period, and for the substantial improvement in sickness absence in the context of significant pressures. It requested that its written thanks are passed on to staff as part of the Chief Fire Officer's regular feedback to employees, to acknowledge their hard work during the Coronavirus period;
- (e) between 1 April and 31 December 2020, 33 new employees started work at the Service. The current whole-time staffing is 3 below the establishment level. A recruitment campaign (carried out completely online and with a strong focus on positive action) has been completed, resulting in 28 offers of employment, so the Service should be at a full establishment by April. Apprentice firefighters are starting their training programmes in April and September;
- (f) two recruitment campaigns for on-call firefighters have been carried out, with 20 new trainees coming in, and the next training course is now being advertised. The recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters remains a national challenge, and work is underway to try to develop local agreements that are as sustainable as possible. Work is also underway to seek to mitigate staffing issues arising from sickness absence amongst dual-contract staff, where a firefighter has both a whole-time and on-call role;
- (g) there have been a number of new starters amongst the support staff, though many of these are on fixed-term contracts funded through the Transformation Budget. Ultimately, the recruitment team have been working hard on various campaigns, despite the difficulties caused by the Coronavirus pandemic;

- (h) one redundancy occurred due to the restructuring of the Equipment Section, and preparation is taking place for an Employment Tribunal case scheduled for later in the year.

The Committee noted the report.

## **5 Equalities Monitoring Report**

Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, presented a report on the breakdown of the workforce by protected characteristic between 1 January and 31 December 2020, and the work being done to improve diversity within the Service. The following points were discussed:

- (a) since 2018, the Service has seen an increasing number of both female and Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) employees. The increase in the last 12 months has not been large, but the recruitment campaigns that took place during the summer were preceded by an early period of positive action, and this should have an impact on the workforce from later in 2021;
- (b) as part of the role of HR and Service Delivery functions in engaging with communities more effectively, a Community Engagement Manager has been appointed to provide support, engage with positive action to bring greater representation into the Service, and lead consultations with BAME communities on service delivery for their areas. The post-holder will also work closely with the current BAME staff, including in the context of the Future Leaders programme. Training is in place to assist managers with talent-spotting and supporting staff progression;
- (c) a BAME forum was brought together in response to the Black Lives Matter movement, and a BAME Action Plan is being developed, including processes to increase representation on interview panels. The learning from this forum will be applied more broadly to other areas of inclusion. The forum continues to meet in an informal style every other month, with the Action Plan now integrated into the Service's formal reporting;
- (d) the Committee felt that the appointment of the Community Engagement Manager was a positive step forward, and that this would be important in promoting organisational engagement with BAME staff and communities;
- (e) a great deal of inclusion training is now online. A pilot course has taken place as part of the development of e-learning relating to faith training, and the feedback from this is being used to make improvements for the delivery of more sessions in the future. Staff podcasts on faith are being developed, and greater engagement with places of worship is being planned;
- (f) the rates of declaration of disabilities remain level. Training is underway for managers on supporting mental health needs and on ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to create a suitable work environment for staff with a disability. The number of employees who declare as identifying as LGBTQ+ also remains level, so development work is underway with staff to enhance awareness and understanding. However, of the new intake of staff for 2021, 18% identify as LGBTQ+.

The Committee noted the report.

## **6 Apprenticeship Update**

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on apprenticeships within the Service. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the Service pays into a national levy for apprenticeships in the Public Sector. It can then draw down funding from this apprenticeship levy to provide training, which is regulated and inspected by Ofsted, and this counts toward the Public Sector apprenticeship target of 2.3% of the workforce. Currently, the Service has eight apprentices in support roles, who have passed their courses with good scores. Managers are encouraged to recognise the value of apprenticeships in recruitment, as a great deal of work has been put into establishing a strong scheme that results in a level 3 qualification;
- (b) consideration has been given to apprenticeships for on-call roles, but creating a suitable scheme is proving to be complex and difficult, so this is not being progressed further at this time.

The Committee noted the report.

## **7 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Update**

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the Service's response to the outcomes of its 2019 inspection report. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the 2019 inspection of the Service raised 25 headline areas for improvement (AFIs). Of the eight AFIs falling under the remit of the Committee, only two remain to be signed off, relating to the creation of a training plan that clearly aligns and supports the workforce plan, and the introduction of processes for the development and support of high-potential staff and aspiring leaders;
- (b) a new leadership and behavioural framework is in place to help staff advance through progression opportunities via a number of training routes, including formal qualification development programmes. This approach has seen good engagement from staff, and has aided actual progression. The framework is robust and has a number of strands for growing potential, including an aspiring leaders programme, and staff are being supported actively in moving forward. Diagnostic work is carried out with staff on an individual basis to establish their best training and progression approach, and work has been carried out to ensure that as many potential pathways are in place as possible;
- (c) due to the relatively small size of the organisation, it is difficult to implement a viable high potential development scheme. Nevertheless, mentoring and coaching provision is being brought in and embedded. Clear progression pathways are available for staff to pursue, including opportunities for temporary promotions, to try advanced roles and gain experience. Unfortunately, due to organisational size, it is difficult for support staff to follow a straight line of upward progression. However, processes are in place to develop opportunities for support staff to move laterally to different roles, to gain wider experience;

- (d) ultimately, the right building blocks are in place, but continual work is required to spot and nurture talent, give staff the confidence to seek progression, and achieve effective institutional culture change. A significant amount of work has been put into delivering the AFI targets, including across the Coronavirus period, to take these AFIs to a point where they can be signed off. Following a very strong effort, the Service has responded well to the AFIs. It has a good relationship with the Inspectorate, and has been able to maintain positive relations with staff unions and communities while making improvements in a very difficult period. However, the Service cannot afford to be complacent, and must continue to work hard to maintain the current standards and deliver on the remaining AFIs;
- (e) the Committee was heartened by the establishment of these progression opportunities for staff at all levels within the Service, and considered that it is vital to ensure that diversity is embedded within the organisation through effective and proactive support. It noted that close attention must be given to ensuring that the opportunities established are fully accessible to all staff;
- (f) the Inspectorate carried out a thematic inspection of the Service's response to Coronavirus at the end of 2020, and the report will be published later today. During the inspection, the response from the inspectors was positive. A date for the next inspection has not yet been confirmed, but the Service has alerted the Inspectorate to the planned timetable for its relocation to a joint headquarters with Nottingham Police, and requested that this is taken into account when setting the next inspection date.

**Resolved to approve the closure of Area for Improvement (AFI) 20 and 25, within the overall AFI Action Plan.**

## **8 People Strategy 2020-22**

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented a report on the Service's People Strategy for 2020 to 2022. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the People Strategy has been reviewed and updated for the period of 2020 to 2022, to set out and address the current priorities, workplace matters and new issues that have arisen since the creation of the previous plan. The People Strategy is key to the delivery of the 2019-22 Strategic Plan, and the People Strategy will be updated again when a new Strategic Plan comes into effect from 2022. The People Strategy is intended to be owned by all managers and departments as a fully-encompassing workforce strategy that needs to be embraced by everyone. The strategy is ambitious and will be reviewed regularly, with clear measures of what success looks like in place;
- (b) the Strategy continues to focus on the key priority areas of: Delivering our Services; Shaping our Workforce; Inclusion; Outstanding Leadership; Workforce Development; Workforce Engagement; Positive Workplace and Culture; and Employee Well-Being. These priority areas are to help ensure that the workforce is effective and sustainable; that the organisation can work differently to provide a better service; that the workplace is founded on respect and the acceptance of individuals; that the Service understands the needs of its communities; that the Service grows its own future leaders; that accessible development opportunities are available to all staff and that staff are

confident to access them; that there is a strong relationship between the organisation and its workforce and stakeholders; that there is a strong set of core values and behaviours of acceptance, inclusion and involvement that are lived by staff; and that staff have available and accessible support in the workplace;

- (c) the Committee noted that the move to a joint headquarters with Nottinghamshire Police will have a significant impact on staff and their working environment, and that this should be given full consideration in the Service's strategic planning;
- (d) ultimately, the joint headquarters project is a major priority in the overall Strategic Plan. Engagement with staff will be carried out under the People Strategy to give them the opportunity to contribute to planning, and to address any concern or anxiety. Consultation is underway with staff representative bodies, and a formal process will start shortly to work with them on how the workforces will come together at the new headquarters;
- (e) as the Coronavirus pandemic has changed the world of work considerably, and has brought forward changes to ways of working that will have benefits going forward, the People Strategy will be used to consider agile working, and what form flexible working will take in the future organisational culture. The move to the new headquarters represents a significant opportunity to re-think how people can work in the future, and the learning generated during the Coronavirus period will be given full consideration as part of this.

**Resolved to endorse the People Strategy 2020-22, and to receive six-monthly updates on the progress made against it.**

## **9 Exclusion of the Public**

**The Committee decided to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining agenda items in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.**

## **10 Exempt Minutes**

The Committee confirmed the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2020 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

## **11 Changes to the Permanent Establishment**

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on proposed changes to the current permanent establishment.

**Resolved to approve the recommendations as set out in the exempt report.**

## **12 Regrading of Posts**



Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the outcomes of the latest job evaluation process.

The Committee noted 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:** 23 April 2021

**Purpose of Report:**

To update Members on key human resources metrics for the period 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021, with exception of absence data which is for the reporting period 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020.

## 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

### HR METRICS - SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 2.1 The following represents absence figures for Quarter 3: 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020:

Target absence figures for 2020/21 are:

Wholetime:	6 days per person
Support Staff:	7 days per person
Whole Workforce:	6.25 days per person

(The average is affected by the numbers of employees in each work group and the average work shift)

- 2.2 Absence across the workforce, excluding On-call employees, increased by 561.2 days (73.3%) compared to the previous quarter. A comparative breakdown of figures by employment group are set out in Appendix C. This represents an increase compared to the same quarter of the previous year (2019-20) of 74.58 days.

Absence	Quarter 3 Oct - Dec	Compared with previous quarter (Q2)	Cumulative total days lost for 20/21	Cumulative average over last 12 months
<b>Total workforce</b> <b>(122 employees have been absent on 147</b>	1326.58 days lost  2.24 days per employee	765.44 days lost  1.3 days per employee	4190.31 days lost	7.06 days per employee  (target 6.25 days)

<b>occasions during Q3, excluding On-call *)</b>		73.3% increase (561.14 days)		
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(\*Due to the On-call nature of the On-call Duty System, On-call absence is not reflected in the figures. These are shown separately at Appendix C).

- 2.4 Across the workforce a total of 1326.58 working days were lost in the third quarter of 2020/21. The trends across quarters is shown in the table set out at Appendix A.
- 2.5 Long term absence equated to 59.85% of the total absence during this period. A full period commentary of Quarter 3 can be found at appendix C.

### **NATIONAL TRENDS**

- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 Reasons for sickness absence at NFRS broadly mirror the national trends with musculo skeletal and mental health related absences featuring significantly in all workgroups.
- 2.8 Appendix B reflects the national absence trends for Quarter 1, Quarter 2 and Quarter 3. The three charts reflect wholetime, support staff (green book) and On-call average of duty days/shifts lost per person across the Fire Services who have submitted data.
- 2.9 For wholetime personnel NFRS has an average of 4.16 days lost per employee which ranks the Service as 14<sup>th</sup> lowest out of the 41 Services included in the survey. This figure is below the sector sickness average of 5.4 days per employee. The lowest average was 2.76 and the highest 7.37.
- 2.10 For support staff the Service has an average of 4.11 days lost per employee which ranks the Service 17<sup>th</sup> lowest out of the 41 Services included in the survey. This figure is below the sector sickness average of 4.67 days per employee. The lowest average was 0.93 days and the highest 9.28 days.

### **DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC**

- 2.11 Over the period 1 January 2021– 31 March 2021.
- Disciplinary: 0
  - Grievances: 0
  - Harassment and Bullying: 0
  - Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy: 0

- Dismissals including ill health retirements: 0
- Redundancy: 0
- Redeployment: 0
- Employment Tribunal cases: 1
- IDRPs appeals: 0
- Performance and capability: 0

## STAFFING NUMBERS

2.12 During the period 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021, 25 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 31 March 2021 are highlighted below:

	Approved	Actual	Variance
<b>Wholetime</b>	431 (431 FTE)	427 (425.76 FTE)	-4 (-5.24 FTE)
<b>On-Call</b>	192 Units	254 persons (140 units) (includes 84 Dual Contracts)	-52 units
<b>Support</b>	160 (151.78) FTE)	177 (168.02 FTE)	+17 (+16.24)

2.13 There have been 20 leavers and 25 starters since the last report. The starters include 6 WT (now dual contractors) who are providing temporary cover due to secondments to support vaccinations and testing, and 3 new dual contractors. This has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 858 (this includes 84 dual contractors). Leavers are broken down as follows: 7 wholetime, 8 On-call and 5 support roles.

2.14 As at 31 March 2021 wholetime establishment stood at 427 operational personnel (425.76 FTE) employees against an establishment of 431 posts.

2.15 During the period, the Service has appointed to 16 support roles.

## 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 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 the report.

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

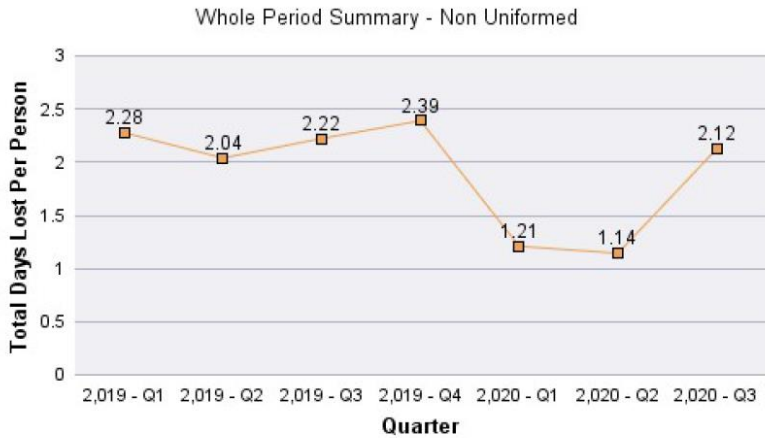
None.

John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

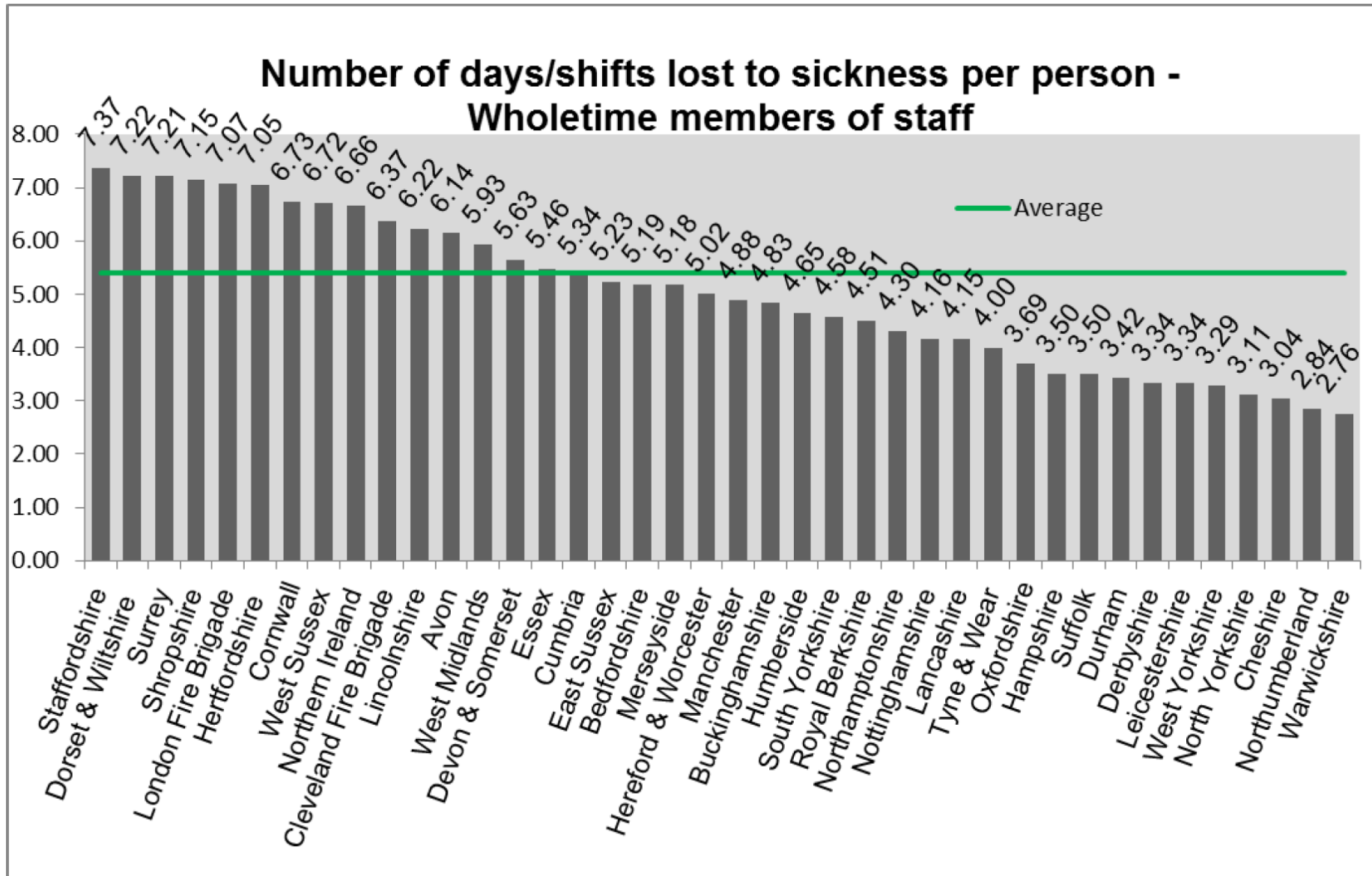
LOCAL TRENDS OVER TIME

APPENDIX A

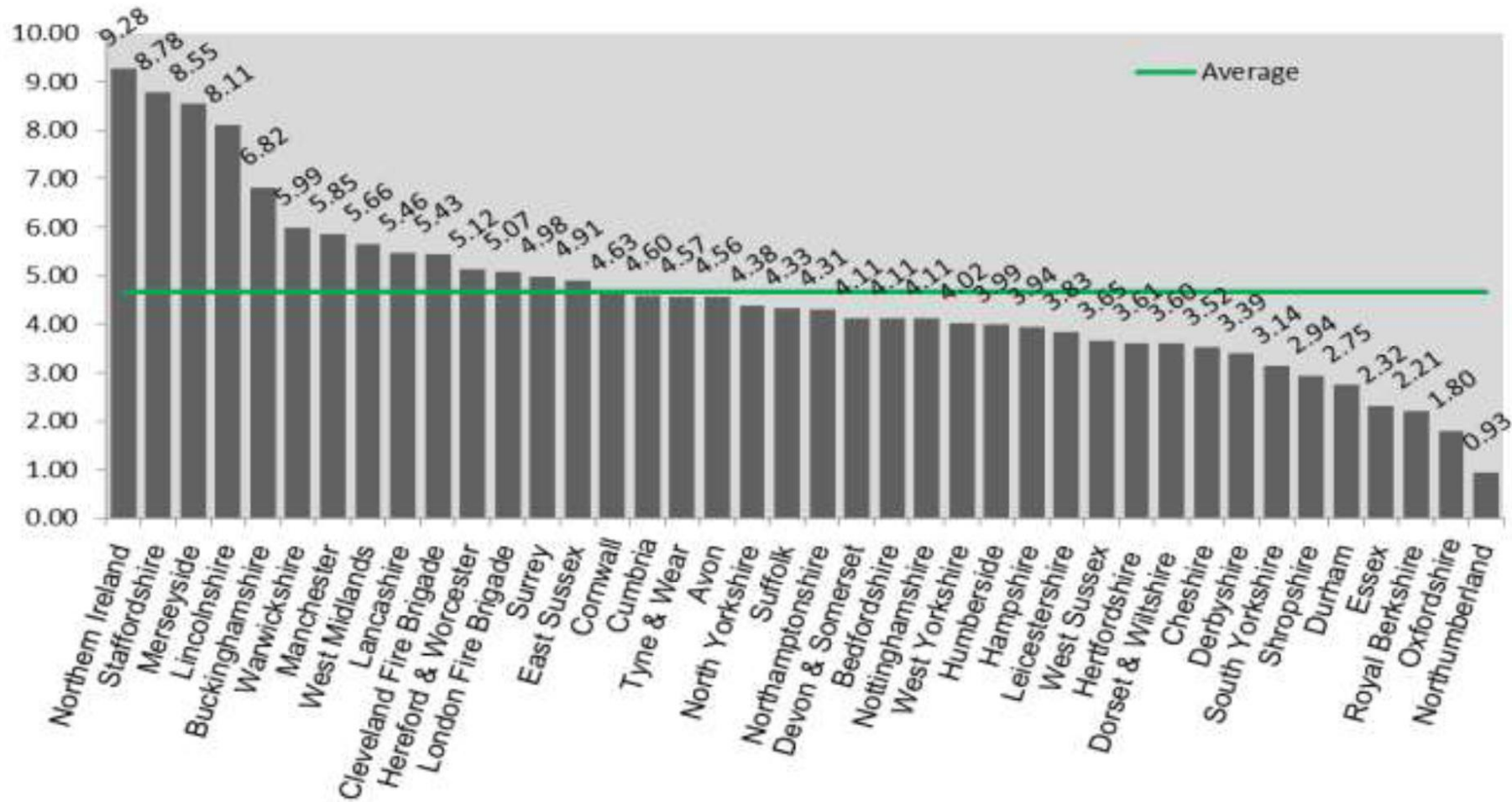
Appendix - Reporting Period: 01/04/2019 to 31/12/2020







### Number of days/shifts lost to sickness per person Green Book staff



**Q3 2020/2021 - Wholetime**

In total 950 working days were lost due to sickness during this quarter. Of this, 542 days were lost to long-term absence (28+ calendar days absent) and 408 days were lost due to short term absence. This represents an overall increase of 387.1 days (68.8%) on the previous quarter.

The average absence per employee was 2.2 days lost, which is above the target figure of 1.6 days lost per quarter per employee.

57.1% of sickness absence in this quarter was due to long term absence. There were 55 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 21 of which were classified as long term sickness. At the end of the period 43 employees had returned to work with 12 still absent.

**Reasons for Absence**

Main reasons for sickness absence for the wholetime are Musculo Skeletal (23 instances, 309 days) and COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive (22 instances, 131 days). The main long term absence reasons were Musculo Skeletal (8 instances, 223 days) For short term absences was COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive (21 instances, 117 days)

Wholetime			Short Term Absences			Long Term Absences		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	23	309	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	21	117	Musculo Skeletal	8	223
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	22	131	Musculo Skeletal	15	86	Mental Health	4	90
Mental Health	6	116	COVID-19 Isolating Symptoms Self	16	36	Hospital/Post Operative	3	80
Hospital/Post Operative	7	106	Hospital/Post Operative	4	26	Mental Health - Other	2	69
Mental Health - Other	4	84	Mental Health	2	26	Other known causes (not specified in list)	2	41
Other known causes (not specified in list)	7	60	Gastro-Intestinal	7	24	Eye Problems	1	25
COVID-19 Isolating Symptoms Self	16	36	Other known causes (not specified in list)	5	19	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	1	14
Eye Problems	2	27	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	7	19			
Gastro-Intestinal	7	24	Ear, Nose, Throat	4	16			
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	7	19	Mental Health - Other	2	15			

### Support (Non-Uniformed) Sickness Absence

In total 376.6 working days were lost due to sickness absence for support personnel during the quarter. This breaks down into 252 days due to long term sickness absence (28+ continuous days absent) and 124.6 working days due to short term absence. This represents an increase of 174.1 days (85.98%) on the previous quarter.

The average absence per employee was 2.3 days lost, which is above the target figure of 1.6 days lost per quarter per employee.

66.9% of sickness absence in this quarter was due to long term absence. There were 13 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 6 of which were classified as long term sickness. At the end of the period 7 employees had returned to work with 6 still absent.

### Reasons for Absence

The main reasons for support absence was Mental Health (4 instances, 127 days) and Musculo Skeletal (2 instances, 78 days). Mental Health is the main reason for long term absences (3 instances, 124 days).

Non Uniformed			Short Term Absences			Long Term Absences		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health	4	127	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	4	32	Mental Health	3	124
Musculo Skeletal	2	78	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	5	17	Musculo Skeletal	1	66
Hospital/Post Operative	2	36	Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	17	Hospital/Post Operative	1	35
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	4	32	Gastro-Intestinal	3	12	Pregnancy Related Disorders	1	27
Pregnancy Related Disorders	1	27	Musculo Skeletal	1	12			
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	5	17	Eye Problems	1	10			
Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	17	COVID-19 Isolating Symptoms Self	5	7			
Gastro-Intestinal	3	12	Genitourinary/Gynecological/Reproductive	1	5			
Eye Problems	1	10	Mental Health	1	3			
COVID-19 Isolating Symptoms Self	5	7	Mental Health - Other	1	3			
			Respiratory - Other	1	3			

## On Call Absence

Attendance for On-call fire-fighters does not reflect shifts lost as they do not have standard working hours, instead it reflects calendar days lost e.g. availability to attend incidents or training periods and absence is predicated over a 7-day availability pattern (compared to 4 day shift traditionally for wholetime employees).

In Q3, 891 days were unavailable due to sickness, broken down into 555 days of long-term absence (28+ days) and 336 days of short-term absence. This equates to an average of 3.6 “days” of unavailability per employee.

Compared to Q2, when 583 days were lost to sickness absence, this reflects a decrease of 308 available days (52.8%).

There were 24 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 8 of which were classified as long term sickness. At the end of the period 19 employees had returned to work with 5 still absent.

## Reasons for Absence

The 2 main conditions leading to long-term absence for On-call employees in Q3 were Musculo-Skeletal issues (12 instances, 411 days) and COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive (18 instances, 195 days).

Retained			Short Term Absences			Long Term Absences		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	12	411	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	17	164	Musculo Skeletal	5	340
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	18	195	Musculo Skeletal	7	71	Mental Health	1	92
Other known causes (not specified in list)	4	103	Mental Health - Other	1	25	Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	92
Mental Health	1	92	Gastro-Intestinal	5	20	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	1	31
Mental Health - Other	1	25	COVID-19 Isolating Symptoms Self	6	17			
Gastro-Intestinal	5	20	Other known causes (not specified in list)	3	11			
COVID-19 Isolating Symptoms Self	6	17	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	2	9			
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	2	9	Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	8			
Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	8	Cause Known, but not specified	1	6			
Cause Known, but not specified	1	6	Hospital/Post Operative	1	5			

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

# CO-LOCATION TO JOINT HEADQUARTERS

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 23 April 2021

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide an update on the co-location to a joint headquarters with the Nottinghamshire Police.

**Recommendations:**

That Members note the contents of this report.

## CONTACT OFFICER

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In February 2019, the Fire Authority approved the relocation of Service Headquarters to a shared site with the Nottinghamshire Police. This to be achieved through co-location at the Police's existing Sherwood Lodge site.
- 1.2 The relocation of staff to Sherwood Lodge is planned to take place from January 2022, with the majority of staff relocating from March 2022.
- 1.3 Planning for the relocation has been co-ordinated through a Joint Headquarters (JHQ) Programme Board, chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, with joint workstream leads from both organisations, including for the workforce aspects of the move. These workstreams include ICT, Estates, People, Finance and decant from the Bestwood Lodge site.

## **2. REPORT**

- 2.1 Whilst it is important to manage the logistics of the move in a planned way to enable staff to operate efficiently at the point of relocation, the over-riding objective from a workforce perspective is that all employees will relocate to the new shared headquarters in a managed and supported manner, with concerns having been addressed as part of transition planning, so that the impact of any disruption to working arrangements will be kept to a minimum.
- 2.2 In order to maximise opportunities for joint working and efficiencies, comparable teams will be relocated together, for instance the Police and Fire HR and Organisational Development teams will share office space. Office arrangements have recently been agreed and these can now be shared with staff so that they can raise any issues and have an opportunity to contribute how the new arrangements will work. Teams are actively encouraged to make links with each other, both formally and informally, to develop good relations and understanding ahead of the move and this will be a focus over the next year.
- 2.3 Communication and employee engagement is central to ensuring that the move is a positive experience for both Police and Fire employees. There have been a number of employee briefings setting out progress on the project and updates on key issues, and employees are encouraged to raise questions at these briefings to make them as open and engaging as possible. These briefings will continue over the next year. A Communications Plan has been established and will be delivered by a joint communications team.
- 2.4 A joint employee forum has also recently been formed to ensure ongoing engagement and input from staff, particularly around communal areas and ways of working. The group members, who are volunteers from both services, will act as conduits for suggestions, information-sharing and issues raised by staff, and will feed into the programme board. Issues which have been raised so far include car parking, shared facilities and reception



arrangements. The employee forum will also be consulted on issues such as signage and branding of the new JHQ and joint working protocols.

- 2.5 There are a number of issues which are specific to fire service employees, such as contractual changes to work base, additional travel time and vetting arrangements. Consultation has been ongoing with representative bodies over the last year about possible impacts, and a vetting policy has already been agreed and the process is underway for headquarters based staff. Ongoing consultation will form part of the Joint Negotiating and Consultation Panel agenda as a standing item to ensure ongoing feedback. This includes an assurance that there are no planned redundancies anticipated as all job roles will transfer to the new JHQ.
- 2.6 Individual meetings with those who will be relocating will take place to allow people to raise any specific issues so that they can be addressed as early as possible. This will include any reasonable adjustments for employees who require provision of specialist equipment, modification to their work area or individual issues related to their health or well-being.
- 2.7 There are also a number of areas of shared policy with the Police which are being progressed through a joint HR project group. Some of these are specific to the shared site, for instance smoking policy, agile working arrangements and data security, and some create opportunity for more collaborative working, for instance around equality and diversity and organisational development.
- 2.8 The Occupational Health (OH) teams will be co-locating to a shared building on the existing Sherwood Lodge site and this will entail agreement on the use of shared facilities and appointments process. A separate working group has been established to manage through the changes to working practices required by both OH teams to ensure that their services are maintained throughout the transition period.
- 2.9 The co-location of Fire and Police staff will represent a significant change for both organisations and planning for the move is well underway. The focus for the People aspect will be to create a positive experience for all employees who will be affected by the change, and to ensure that communication and engagement with staff are a priority over the next year.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Costs associated with the co-location to a Joint Headquarters with the Nottinghamshire Police have been approved by the Authority and form part of the programme management which is overseen by the Strategic Collaboration Board and JHQ Programme Board.
- 3.2 There will be costs associated with the relocation of staff in cases where employees incur additional travel expenses, and these have been factored into budget projections for 2022-23.

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

There are significant implications for Human Resources as part of planning for the co-location. These include contractual, logistical and employee engagement issues, these are set out within the report.

#### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken as part of the design of the new build and is currently under review. A full equality assessment is being undertaken jointly with the Nottinghamshire Police, led by the Service's Inclusion and Organisation Development Manager, to establish and address any implications arising from the co-location.

#### **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**

- 8.1 The relocation of service headquarters is a significant undertaking and a comprehensive risk register has been developed for each project strand under the auspices of the Joint Headquarters Programme Board. The risk register is regularly updated, issues addressed and controls implemented to ensure a smooth transition to the new shared headquarters.
- 8.2 The People workstream of the JHQ Programme identifies key risks as potential lack of positive employee engagement, potential loss of staff, potential contractual issues and potential lack of work space – however these risks are being managed effectively through appropriate consultation mechanisms, staff engagement and communications and new/revised policies.

#### **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The proposed relocation is a key collaboration project for the Service and the Service is working with the Nottinghamshire Police to deliver against the project timescale and objectives.

9.2 The co-location may result in further opportunities to collaborate on joint provision of services or sharing of resources. Any such proposed collaboration would be subject to agreement of a detailed business case to the Strategic Collaboration Board.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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# WHOLETIME FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT 2020

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 23 April 2021

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide members with an update on the Wholetime Recruitment Process which took place during 2020.

**Recommendations:**

That Members note the contents of this report.

## CONTACT OFFICER

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 During 2020 the Service undertook a selection process to recruit whole-time firefighters for entry into the organisation from April 2021. The last such process took place in 2017/18. Planning for this work began shortly after the national lockdown was instigated, which made the management of the process and positive action campaign even more challenging than in previous years.
- 1.2 A central part of the campaign was the positive action work to attract under-represented applicants to the role of firefighter, this included women and those from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups. Face to face fitness and familiarisation sessions have always been key to the success of positive engagement; much of this activity had to be delivered online via webinars and social media.

## **2. REPORT**

- 2.1 Planning for the recruitment process commenced in May 2020, with final interviews taking place in December 2020. The process included application, on-line testing, Job Related Tests, interview and finally, medical assessment.
- 2.2 Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Service worked with an external consultant to deliver on-line testing for mechanical reasoning, literacy and numeracy and Situational Judgement.

### **POSITIVE ACTION MEASURES**

- 2.3 The organisation seconded a Crew Manager to the Organisational Development and Inclusion (ODI) team to help manage the positive action process. A large proportion of the positive action activities were open to all but were targeted to improve the diversity of attendees. Based upon feedback from previous recruitment campaigns, which highlighted the stages at which different groups of applicants were least successful, Activities took place during the summer in the run up to the recruitment process and included -
  - Zoom webinars (x 8 sessions approximately 170 people attended);
    - Familiarisation with the role
    - Overview of the process
    - Online fitness and strength education
  - Interview mentoring sessions (x 3 sessions approximately 120 people attended);
  - Literacy/numeracy practice sessions x 6 sessions (BAME candidates only);

- Face to face fitness sessions (x 10) – COVID-19 risk assessments permitting.
  - Some of these were targeted solely at women to begin with and were then opened up to all.

2.4 It should be noted that the festivals including Nottinghamshire and Worksop Prides, Mela, Carnival, Eid Festival and Nottingham Cultural Festival were all cancelled this year and so it was necessary to use more direct marketing strategies using social media and more traditional methods. This included several Facebook Live interviews, radio interviews/advertising, social media advertising, mail shots and YouTube films.

2.5 The positive action co-ordinator (Crew Manager) also used WhatsApp groups during this campaign to assist candidates and provide a platform for answering questions or concerns.

## RECRUITMENT PROCESS

2.6 The recruitment process itself opened on 24 August 2020. Within less than a week, over 600 applications were received. At this point, the applications stage was closed. Candidates were immediately directed to a third-party provider to complete the online tests. The next stage included the job-related (physical tests) which took place at the Service Development Centre in Ollerton over three weeks.

2.7 An assessment centre was originally planned to be face-to-face, but this was changed to a Zoom presentation and interview due to limitations resulting from COVID-19. Over 120 interviews took place between 19 November and 16 December.

2.8 95% of the interviews were balanced in terms of gender and 30% were represented by BAME panel members. Whilst the latter number is not as high as the Service would like, it was an improvement on previous years and something the organisation will seek to improve for all interview panels during 2021-2022.

## RECRUITMENT FIGURES

2.9 Out of the 646 who successfully applied, 28 were successful at interview stage. This includes 2 transferees and an internal applicant from the NFRS on-call cohort.

	All	White British	BAME	Prefer not to say	Female	Male	LGBT	Disability
Applications	646	481	99	66	78	568	52	27
Online Tests	563	425	86	52	63	500	44	27
Job Related	242	199	32	11	20	222	22	15

Tests								
Interview	132 (incl 6 transferees)	107	16	9	10	122	15	6
Successful	28	21	4	3	5	23	5	2

- 2.10 15% of applicants were from BAME backgrounds with 14% being successful at interview. Although there is a slight drop (from 15 to 14%), the success rate for this group was generally level throughout the process. The last Census 2011 suggests that 12% of Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City's population is from a BAME background.
- 2.11 Women made up 12% of applicants and 17% were successful at interview, demonstrating high performance through the process.
- 2.12 Whilst lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans-gender (LGBT) candidates represented 8% of all applicants, the success rate of those identifying as LGBT was 17.9%. This is far better than previous campaigns and may indicate that LGBT applicants consider the service to be a supportive employer.
- 2.13 Of those applicants who declared a disability, 7% were successful at interview compared to 4% of all applicants. It should be noted that the physical requirements of the job are not conducive to making reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants, as would normally be the case for non-operational roles.
- 2.14 The outcomes will be subject to successful medicals and therefore may change. Successful candidates will start their careers as trainee firefighters on courses starting in April and September of this year.
- 2.15 Whilst the outcomes from the campaign are positive in terms of diversity of appointments, there is still a challenge to make the workforce more reflective of the communities it serves. 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.
- 2.16 It is anticipated that the next firefighter appointments will be in 2022 and planning for positive action will commence prior to this to ensure that full engagement with prospective applicants leads to a higher level of interest from applicants who are currently under-represented within our workforce.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Online testing was funded by a budget dedicated to maintaining 'business as usual' during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Crew Manager seconded to the ODI team was funded by existing budgets.



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

The human resources and learning and development implications of this recruitment campaign were identified and addressed during the project.

#### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment (EIA) was undertaken for the Wholetime Recruitment and Selection Process. Workforce diversity and positive action measures have been highlighted in the report.

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

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

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The positive action work and EIA above helps the organisation to meet its requirements under the Public-Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

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

There are no risk implications arising from this report.

#### **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

The Service liaised with Nottinghamshire Police and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service whilst planning the campaign and associated positive action. This allowed the Service to learn from partners' approaches to positive action.

#### **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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# PEOPLE STRATEGY 2017-20

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 23 April 2021

**Purpose of Report:**

To review outcomes from the People Strategy 2017-20.

**Recommendations:**

That Members note the report and progress made against the objectives of the People Strategy 2017-20.

## CONTACT OFFICER

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In April 2017, the Service implemented a People Strategy as part of its transformational agenda “Shaping our Future”, which formed part of the overarching Sustainability Strategy. This set out the areas for workforce focus and development for the period 2017-2020, which aligns to the NFCC People Strategy 2017-2022.
- 1.2 Progress against the strategy has been reported to committee during this period. Whilst this has not been possible in the last year, due to the impact of Covid-19 on meetings of the Human Resources Committee, work on progressing the strategy has continued in the areas of workforce planning, recruitment, training and employee development, inclusion and employee engagement.
- 1.3 This report reviews progress against the key areas of the strategy.

## 2. REPORT

### OVERVIEW

- 2.1 The focus for the People Strategy 2017-20 is set below:



- 2.2 **Delivering Our Services:** ensuring that the organisation has the optimum number of personnel to deliver effective and quality services to communities: this encompasses workforce planning and the way in which resources are managed to maximise efficiency and impact. This has been delivered through:
- Annual workforce plans which plan for leavers and starters based on projected retirements, turnover, new work and skill areas and training requirements to maintain service delivery and deliver corporate objectives;

- The recruitment of 39 operational firefighters through wholetime recruitment in 2018, with a further 28 appointments pending from the recent 2020 campaign. An additional 21 firefighters have migrated from on-call roles. Collectively, this has helped to sustain ridership levels and reduce overtime payments;
  - The recruitment of 80 on-call firefighters to maintain operational cover;
  - Annual appointment processes to supervisory, middle manager and strategic manager roles as part of succession planning;
  - The recruitment of 54 employees to roles which provide the professional, technical and administrative support that maintains front line services and delivery of key corporate objectives. A number of new roles have been created within ICT as part of the Digital Strategy 2019-2022 to enhance effectiveness through technological development and digital solutions.
- 2.3 Significant changes to service delivery during the period include the implementation of a Safe and Well approach to prevention, a review of the way that protection activity is delivered to service users and businesses and station based support for prevention and protection activities within local communities. This has involved the upskilling of operational personnel to a Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety (Fire Auditors) which is accredited by Skills for Justice.
- 2.4 Collaboration with partners to enhance service delivery continues to be a key priority. There have been many instances of collaborating with partners to deliver a more effective service to communities during the review period. This includes the co-location and sharing of facilities with the police at West Bridgford, Highfields, Carlton, and with the police and EMAS at Hucknall and shared use of assets such as a drone (Nottinghamshire Police), Incident Support Unit (Nottinghamshire Police) and Environmental Protection Unit (Derbyshire FRS).
- 2.5 The Service has also worked with agencies to support vulnerable people through its prevention teams, for instance the funding of an Occupational Therapist role with the NHS, collaboration on cadets, rural intervention and road safety with the Nottinghamshire Police, a Joint Audit and Inspection Team with the City Council.
- 2.6 The recent support provided to partners through the COVID-19 crisis, such as EMAS and within local communities through food parcel and medication deliveries, befriending and signposting support and support for Local Resilience Forum activities such as the creation of temporary morgue facilities and vaccination hubs, has shown that the service delivery model is flexible and adaptable to change when circumstances require this.
- 2.7 **Shaping Our Workforce:** the Sustainability Strategy, agreed by the Authority in 2016, was the focus for planned changes to the substantive establishment with a focus on creating efficiencies and realignment of resources to effect

budget reductions. Changes can be achieved by, for instance, changing ways of working, via the restructuring of roles and teams, or considering other ways of delivering services.

2.8 During the review period there have been some significant changes to enable greater efficiencies, which have included:

- The creation of a Joint Control Room with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service from July 2019, which saw a reduction of fifteen roles across both establishments with resultant long-term salary savings;
- The establishment of mixed crewing at Ashfield and Retford fire stations, which has resulted in a full-time crewing during the day and on-call provision between 8am and 6pm. The impact of this has been to further release capacity to support the ridership and to meet the savings outlined in the Sustainability Strategy;
- The implementation of an Alternative Crewing model for on-call sections which provides for the initial attendance of a crew of three to specified incident types to enhance response times for local communities;
- The extension of on-call activities to enhance recruitment and retention, and the ongoing implementation of flexible contracts to enhance availability;
- The dis-establishment of the Princes Trust team, with resultant budget savings, and collaboration with the Nottinghamshire Police on cadet teams across the county to engage with young people and promote a safer communities message;
- An ongoing review of the Rostering Collective Agreement to release capacity within the ridership and reduce overtime costs;
- The review and restructure of functions, including ICT, Corporate, Procurement and Resources, Prevention and Protection and Risk and Assurance teams to better align processes and create improvements in service delivery;
- A focus on organisational development and allocation of resources to support organisational and cultural change.

2.9 In summary, the Service has implemented some significant changes to the way it works and delivers our services during the review period. This has resulted in efficiencies and improvements that have supported delivery of the strategic priorities and established a resilient structure to support future demands.

2.10 **Outstanding Leaders:** The need to enhance leadership skills and plan for the next cadre of future leaders through succession planning is critical to achieving and sustaining high quality services and establishing a positive workplace culture. The way that the Service supports leadership development

is set out within its Leadership Framework, which has recently been revised to clarify the opportunities and expectations of current and future leaders, with a clear development pathway for those aspiring to progress to a managerial role. The framework aligns to the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) Leadership Framework.

2.11 Over the review period the Service has:

- Reviewed and enhanced its leadership development programmes at Levels 3 and 5, which encompass supervisory and middle manager development. These are mandatory for new managers and ensure that they have the requisite knowledge and skills to manage teams, resources and make effective decisions. These academic courses supplement other learning and development activity within the workplace.
- Developed Aspiring Leadership Programmes at supervisory and, more recently, at Middle Manager levels for those employees who are thinking about their future progression, and facilitates a development pathway through access to workshops, e-learning, self-development and coaching support.
- Implemented a coaching and mentoring network to encourage employees to seek coaching and to act as coaches and mentors to others. The aim being to embed a coaching approach as an intrinsic part of a management “toolkit” to support and develop individuals and teams. Reverse mentoring has recently been introduced to support coaching relationships between more senior managers and employees.
- The introduction of 360-degree feedback to managers to support self-development;
- Facilitated the use of temporary promotions to allow experiential learning within the workplace, ensuring that experience is gained “on the job” with support when needed.
- Encouraged continuous professional development for employees at all levels through opportunities to update professional and leadership knowledge and skills as part of a lifelong learning approach.

2.12 The Leadership Framework provides a clear route for progression to, and development within, leadership roles to ensure that managers have the skills and attributes to perform effectively, and that succession planning is secured for the future.

2.13 **Workforce Development:** A key focus is the acquisition, maintenance and re-validation of core skills to ensure a safe and effective operational response. This is supported by access to a variety of learning resources for all employees to make learning accessible and encourage personal and professional development.

2.14 Over the review period the service has:

- Led regionally on the introduction of National Operational Guidance as a basis for reviewing operational training. and established a clearer link between risk and operational assurance by creating a Risk, Assurance and Operational Training department – ensuring that national guidance is more effectively translated into training outcomes;
- Reviewed specialist and command skills, with regular assessment and development opportunities;
- Implemented a mandatory training matrix for all employees to clarify development requirements as a basis for a role-related development plan;
- Implemented apprenticeships across a range of roles. All newly recruited wholtime firefighters are registered apprentices on the Level 3 Operational Firefighter standard and follow a national standard of development and assessment over 26 months. The Service has become a Registered Training Provider, which means that it can directly draw down funding from the apprenticeship levy to support its apprenticeship programme;
- Implemented a revised Performance and Development Review scheme to facilitate annual one-to-one discussions about development and training requirements. The scheme also links to discussions about performance and welfare and provides an opportunity to provide and receive feedback on individual performance and future priorities. Individual performance objectives are now linked to strategic objectives demonstrating a 'golden thread'. 96% of PDRs were completed in 2020;
- Established accessible ICT training, with the appointment of an ICT Trainer and on-line training packages to develop the technical skills of the workforce;
- Developed a suite of new e-learning products which are accessible via the Service's learning platform – NFRSLearn – to all employees and supports continuous professional development and maintenance of competence;

2.15 The Service has a strong commitment to employee development, and the level of support available to all employees for development of operational, technical and professional skills has been enhanced during the review period.

2.16 **Workforce Engagement:** To implement different channels for communicating with and informing the workforce and seeking active engagement and encourage feedback to make better informed decisions and improve understanding.



2.17 Over the review period the Service has:

- Introduced annual staff conferences, led by the Chief Fire Officer, to highlight key priorities and issues for the Service, and receive feedback from participants. These are supplemented by quarterly Middle Manager Briefings and Watch Manager development days;
- Provided regular briefings to staff via written or on-line updates. The regular Chiefs Update via Zoom has been positively received during the COVID-19 period, when meetings have not been possible, and this will continue to be a regular feature of our engagement strategy;
- The development of the intranet site – MyNet – allows for real time sharing of information. Employees can also use the messaging services to contact people directly about an article or use the Yammer site to post and join conversations.
- Completed an employee survey in 2020 to establish employee views about the Service. 62% of the workforce responded, and responses improved in 80% of the areas measured and in many cases an improvement on responses to the previous survey undertaken in 2018. Overall staff engagement was measured at 3.86 out of 5.0;
- Maintained a positive relationship with representative bodies to inform and consult on subjects important to employees and address issues at any early stage.

2.18 The Service has enhanced its channels for engaging with its workforce during the review period, the opportunities provided by technology to interact with people more widely has helped to keep employees informed and provided a platform for feedback that will continue to be developed in the future. The recent staff survey results showed that 76% of respondents felt well informed about Service priorities which is a high number given the geographical disbursement and shift-based nature of much of the workforce.

2.19 **Positive Workplace and Culture:** This is about creating a workplace where people feel accepted, included and valued. One of the three core principles is “an engaged and motivate workforce” and many aspects of the progress in the areas previously reviewed are linked to this aim – engagement, development and leadership - which all contribute to providing a positive workplace. However, it also includes physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

Over the review period the Service has:

- Implemented a new Behavioural Framework as part of the roll-out of our core values. By adhering to the behaviours set out, all employees should be treated and treat others with respect, and review their own conduct against these standards;

- Undertaken engagement with those who are under-represented within the workforce – in particular women, those from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans-gender (LGBT) employees and employees with disability – to establish specific issues which adversely impact on them and seek to address these;
- Developed a Well-Being Strategy to establish this as a priority for the Service – this related to physical, emotional or mental health, ensuring that the Service provides support when it is needed and works pro-actively to prevent ill-health and promote healthy lifestyles.
- Introduced an Employee Assistance Programme to provide access to a range of support for all employees. This supplements the healthcare scheme, peer support, and fitness provisions already in place;
- Rolled out mental health awareness training to all employees, with a focus on stress management and dealing effectively with mental health issues in self or others;
- Enhanced fitness support for operational personnel, and for those seeking to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

2.20 The responses from the recent employee survey show that 81% of respondents felt that the Service is an inclusive and welcoming place to work, and 77% would recommend NFRS as a great place to work. 82% felt that the Service was serious about dealing with and eliminating discrimination, bullying, harassment and abuse in the workplace. These are encouraging figures and indicate that the approach and awareness raising undertaken during the review period has had a positive impact.

2.21 **Inclusion:** This is about creating a workplace based on respect for individuals, valuing difference and where no one feels marginalised or excluded. It is also about understanding diverse communities and developing positive relationships with all service users, particularly with those who may have specific needs or may be more vulnerable to fire or other risk of injury.

2.22 In addition to the focus on developing a positive workplace, the Service has:

- Targeted campaigns to reduce risk of fire and other injury across diverse communities, particularly those who are more vulnerable, through prevention work and working in partnership with other agencies;
- Implemented actions from its commitment to the British Sign Language (BSL) Charter to improve access to services for the deaf community;
- Invested in additional resources to support the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda and foster better understanding and engagement with under-represented groups within the community and our workforce;
- Undertaken positive action to encourage those who are under-represented within the workforce to apply for roles with the Service, and engaged with

initiatives such as the Future Leaders programme to provide development opportunities;

- Engaged with employees from BAME heritage to better understand and address issues of concern and provide channels for engagement;
- Continued to support disability, dyslexia and mental health in the workplace;
- Worked with Stonewall to improve access to services and to support our LGTQ+ employees and service users;
- Implemented actions to highlight and address issues affecting women in the workplace, such as uniform, period dignity, menopause, and career development.

2.23 Progress has been made to understand and address issues and promote equality and diversity, both as a strategic priority and to raise awareness and engagement across the workforce. Issues such as the Black Lives Matter campaign have highlighted the challenges that still exist to embed inclusion and address issues of potential inequality.

2.24 The People Strategy 2020-22 will seek to build upon the progress made, and which has been set out within this review.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from the report.

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

The human resources implications are set out within the report.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this review does not represent a change to service delivery or policy. However, aspects of the strategy are intended to have a positive impact upon inclusion and equality issues, and these are set out within the report.

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

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

### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from the report. However, a range of the activities above demonstrate continued fulfilment of the Public-Sector Equality Duty.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The development and implementation of a People Strategy forms part of a suite of strategies which underpin the effective leadership and governance arrangements of the Service, establishing a clear direction and priorities for workforce development.

## **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

The collaboration implications are set out within the main body of the report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the report and progress made against the objectives of the People Strategy 2017-20.

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

None.

John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**



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# ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSION UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 23 April 2021

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide members with an update on the organisational development and inclusion workstreams which form part of the People Strategy.

**Recommendations:**

That Members note the contents of this report.

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

During 2020 the Service has continued its commitment to developing organisational culture and to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion as a guiding principle. The following report provides a broad overview of some of the workstreams the organisation has progressed over the last 12 months. This report should be read in conjunction with the Equality Monitoring report presented to HR Committee in January as well as the paper outlining the recent successful Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment process.

## **2. REPORT**

### **ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSION (ODI) TEAM**

- 2.1 Following agreement at Combined Fire Authority in February 2020 to the provision of Transformation and Efficiency funding to promote organisation change, three key support staff fixed-term posts have been filled to support organisational development (OD) and equality and culture workstreams. These are: Community Engagement Manager, Organisational and Development and Improvement Officer and Resources Planning Officer.
- 2.2 Appointment to these roles has ensured that work is now well underway to scope and implement key areas of improvement for the Service, some of which are aligned to the HMI inspection report. A firefighter has also joined the team on secondment in September to assist with ODI workstreams.

### **STAFF SURVEY 2020**

- 2.3 The Service's staff survey was undertaken in June 2020 and the results were first published in August. The Service had its best response rate ever with 62%; a 7% increase on 2018. 80% of the results were more positive compared with the previous survey. An action plan has been drawn up to improve in the areas which have been identified as areas for development.

Some headlines from the survey include:

- 77% of respondents would recommend NFRS as a great place to work;
- 96% of respondents know and understand our values;
- 78% of respondents agreed that we had responded well to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Experience of harassment has reduced;
- Support staff and women wanted to see more opportunities in terms of learning and development;

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff were more likely to report experiencing discrimination than their white British counterparts;
- Middle and senior managers experienced lower levels of engagement than direct line managers. (This is a normal trend in staff surveys, but we will still seek to make improvements in this area).

2.4 The staff survey action plan covers a range of issues including:

- Improving satisfaction with the Performance and Development Review process and quality of outcomes;
- Work to address negative views of learning and development opportunities, in particular among women and support staff, a competency framework workstream for support staff roles will be undertaken in 2021 and employee development will be a key part of this work.
- Improving support for managers to address behaviour and poor conduct including embedding the Behavioural Framework (described above)
- Improving team communications, both face-to-face and digital.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

2.5 As part of the work undertaken by the Community Engagement Manager, a Community Engagement Plan has been drafted to enhance engagement with (BAME) employees and communities. A key part of this plan will be the development of a representative group of people who can provide feedback on services, policy development and employment practices to the Service, as well as acting as a key stakeholder in the development of the Service's next Integrated Risk Management Plan.

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

2.6 The Service undertakes Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to ensure that it is paying due regard to protected characteristics within the delivery of services and employment. In order to ensure that inclusive services and employment practices are being delivered, a new schedule of EIAs has been produced in order to identify strengths and potential gaps within current practice/policy.

## **DEAF COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION TOOL**

2.7 As part of the Service's effort to provide more accessible services to the Deaf community - in partnership with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service and the British Deaf

Association – the Service has [developed a communication tool](#). This document will be used by operational, incident commanders and other frontline employees to communicate more effectively with the Deaf community and BSL users.

## **FUTURE LEADERS PROGRAMME**

2.8 The Service has been participants of the Future Leaders Programme for over five years. The programme aims to improve the diversity of managers across the public and third sector and is managed by the Renewal Trust in Nottingham. There were forty-three applicants for sixteen places on the programme and four NFRS employees were successful and were recognised as very high performers during the recruitment process. They will now undertake a twelve-month programme of development.

## **PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW (PDR) PROCESS**

2.9 In July 2020, as part of the annual Organisational Health paper presented to Policy and Strategy Committee, an update was provided on the Service's new PDR process which ran between April and September.

2.10 The project to review the system, improve governance of information and outcomes has been successfully completed and the 2020's PDR process resulted in a large increase in PDR completion rates from 59% in 2019 to 96% in 2020. This is a huge achievement and demonstrates the work done by NFRS managers to support the new PDR process.

2.11 A significant part of the system review was to introduce performance/development objective setting functionality within the iTrent HR system, aligning this with the employee's electronic record. This resulted in over 3852 objectives being set during PDRs at an average of 5 per employee. This demonstrates really positive engagement by line managers with the new system and provides a clear line of sight between individual and strategic objectives, ensuring that employees can clearly see where their work makes a difference to the achievement of the Service's mission of Creating Safer Communities.

## **BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK – SHAPING BEHAVIOURS PROGRAMME**

2.12 The Behavioural Framework represents the next phase of embedding the Service's values, which are now known and understood by a vast majority of the workforce according to the employee survey outcomes. The Shaping Behaviours Programme will touch all areas of the organisation in the form of face to face workshops, briefings and e-learning. This programme will be delivered by April 2022.

## **WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT**

2.13 A firefighter was seconded to the ODI Team in September to reduce the barriers faced by women in the workplace. This work has included collaboration with the Estates and Procurement Teams to address issues



relating to facilities and clothing, delivering positive action sessions to firefighter candidates but also the development and progression of existing firefighters in to supervisory management roles, which is an aim of our current Workforce Plan.

- 2.14 The first '**Look Ahead**' programme has been designed to provide a link between becoming a competent firefighter and considering promotion to a first leadership role, and complements the Aspiring Leaders programme. Whilst not specifically designed for women, pro-active engagement took place to encourage women to apply and this led to three female participants (out of 16 employees) participating in the programme. Participants have been introduced to the Behavioural Framework and taken part in table top operational scenarios to introduce them to the world of incident command in a gradual and safe way. Developmental workshops will continue to be delivered over the next year. It is hoped that this will lead to more female supervisory manager candidates coming forward for promotion in 2022.

## **LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK**

- 2.15 The Service continues to build on the leadership programmes it has developed over the last few years as part of its People Strategy. The Aspiring Leaders programme for non-managers has now been expanded to include those aspiring towards middle manager positions – this includes bespoke development workshops delivered in-house and externally. The aim is to raise the aspiration and skill-sets of potential Station Managers (or support role equivalents) as part of a succession planning strategy.
- 2.16 Self-development forms a key part of the Leadership Framework and 360-degree feedback is integral to this, allowing leaders and aspiring leaders to receive feedback on their strengths and areas for development. As part of this, Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) questionnaires also help individuals understand their perception and decision-making preferences and how this might influence their work.

## **COACHING AND MENTORING**

- 2.17 The Service's OD and Improvement Officer is working to further embed a coaching culture at NFRS with a review of coaching and mentoring training and resources as well as continuous professional development (CPD) and supervision sessions. This includes continuation of the Off-Station Support Buddying programme for new starters and collaboration with the Nottinghamshire Police coaching network.

## **REVERSE MENTORING**

- 2.18 Following a successful pilot where the Deputy Chief Fire Officer was mentored by a Crew Manager, reverse mentoring has been rolled out more widely to the Strategic Leadership Team. The purpose of this is to broaden the awareness and understanding of senior staff regarding EDI issues and those associated experiences and identities.

## **COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK**

- 2.19 As part of the Service's plans to improve the way in which it plans for the challenges of today and in the future, a workstream is underway to analyse and map out the existing skills and competencies in the organisation within the support staff cohort and identify any skills gaps.
- 2.20 The resulting Competency Framework will help managers to build roles within their teams and wider departments. It will also assist with consistency across professional disciplines across the organisation. This will also assist with matching resources to demand and help the organisation to plan its resources in a more holistic way. This work is being undertaken by the new Resource Planning Officer.

## **SUMMARY**

- 2.21 Whilst this update represents an overview of the work undertaken by the ODI team over the past year, it reflects the continued emphasis of the Service to deliver a broad and progressive ODI agenda with clear plans to develop this work to develop workplace culture, services and engagement with communities during 2021-22 and establish a strong foundation for future development. The workstreams align to delivery of the People Strategy and to the HMI improvement agenda.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Service's plans outlined in this report are provided for in existing 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**

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this is an update for members on EDI and OD workstreams. However, as described above an EIA schedule has been produced and will be delivered during 2021-22.

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

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

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Much of the work described above supports the organisation to meet its requirements under the Public-Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk implications arising from this report.

## **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

The Deaf Community Communication Guide was produced as part of a collaboration with Derbyshire and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services and the British Deaf Association.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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