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

Date: Friday 28 January 2022 **Time:** 10:00am

Venue: Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood
Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD

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. D. D. D.", written over a faint, larger signature.

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

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7 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, Paragraphs 1 and 3, 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	

8 Exempt Minutes

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Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2021, for confirmation

Any councillor who is unable to attend the meeting and wishes to submit apologies should do so via the Personal Assistant to the Chief Fire Officer at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on 0115 8388900.

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

Governance Officer: Adrian Mann
0115 8764468
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The agenda, reports and minutes for all Human Resources 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 Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on Friday 5 November 2021 from 10:00am to 11:35am

Membership

Present

Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
(Chair)
Councillor Bethan Eddy
Councillor Tom Hollis
Councillor Roger Jackson
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Toby Neal

Absent

None

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance

Adrian Mann	- Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council
Craig Parkin	- Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Matt Sismey	- Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager

10 Apologies for Absence

None.

11 Declarations of Interests

None.

12 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair. The following matters arising from the minutes were discussed:

- (a) best practice for on-call contracts is being reviewed at a national level, but very different issues affect different areas. Following discussions with staff and trade unions, a pilot for a new form of on-call contracts is underway and a report on the outcomes will be produced for the second half of 2022;

- (b) the pilot will be taking place at a couple of different stations. It is hoped that the more flexible offer will attract a wider range of people and positive engagement is underway with the communities around those stations. It is important that all communities local to the stations are engaged with effectively, particularly those that are most disadvantaged;
- (c) a communications programme and 'have a go' days are in place to help communities understand what it means to be an on-call firefighter. Engagement is also in place with employers, including local authorities, to help raise awareness. However, resources are limited, so careful consideration will be required as to where these resources can be best deployed to achieve the greatest effect.

13 Human Resources Update

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the key Human Resources metrics for the period of 1 June 2021 to 30 September 2021. The following points were discussed:

- (a) wholetime staffing is above the approved establishment level currently, in preparation for upcoming leavers – with a number of the new wholetime staff going through initial training. There are 79 firefighters on dual contracts to support on-call provision, but this can cause coverage issues if a dual contract firefighter has an unexpected absence, such as due to sickness. As such, there is a significant focus on on-call recruitment. Numbers in the support staff are also above the approved establishment level, but this is because several people in this area are carrying out temporary roles on fixed-term contracts;
- (b) the Workforce Plan has been accurate in forecasting the number of leavers and starters. However, there have been resilience problems caused by the departure of some specialist support staff;
- (c) the rate of sickness absence has risen to above the national average, which is an unusual result for the Service. The primary causes of long-term sickness absence are musculo-skeletal injuries and mental health, and the two issues can become connected where long-term physical illness gives rise to mental health problems. A well-established 'return to work' process supports staff in coming back after a long period of physical injury, guided by medical advice. There is also provision for returning to a modified role, to facilitate the transition back into work;
- (d) sickness absence has also been increased due to some operations that would have taken place during the Coronavirus pandemic being delayed, and staff found it more difficult to get medical appointments during the pandemic. Good internal mental health and wellbeing assistance continues to be in place to support staff. The reasons for poor mental health are varied and can relate to non-work issues, but the Coronavirus pandemic has worn down staff resilience and may have made some mental health problems worse;
- (e) although sickness absence is unusually high, particularly as it was so low during the pandemic, the reasons behind the sickness absence do not appear to be out of the ordinary. However, the position will be monitored closely over the coming reporting periods, to ensure that the right provision is in place;

- (f) currently, there are no disciplinary, grievance or harassment and bullying cases underway;
- (g) steps are underway to manage any tensions or anxieties that might arise as more staff return to working in the office more regularly. All firefighters continued to operate throughout the pandemic, but are now returning to other face-to-face frontline functions such as 'safe and well' visits and fire protection activity. Managers are having ongoing conversations with teams and individuals on the impact of returning to the office, particularly in the context of moving to a new headquarters site. A policy for agile working is being developed. Staff morale is being monitored closely, and the current feedback is largely positive.

The Committee noted the report.

14 Equalities Monitoring

Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, presented a report on the breakdown of the workforce and applicant analysis by protected characteristic for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021. The following points were discussed:

- (a) there has been a small, gradual increase in staff numbers in the underrepresented groups in the Service, with a particular increase in those identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual, particularly amongst new starters. The Service's figures for underrepresented groups are broadly in line with the national average for the sector. However, the number of staff who are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) remains low, and the Service is finding it challenging to encourage BAME people to apply for roles in the organisation;
- (b) work is underway with communities, with a Community Engagement Manager and BAME community advisory group in place to ensure that this engagement is done continually and through all interactions with the Service, rather than just in recruiting periods. It is the aim to continue to integrate inclusion into everything that the Service does. Positive action opportunities are being developed across all teams, and 'safe and well' visits represent one, important channel for raising awareness about the Service in communities;
- (c) the Service is taking a broad approach to positive action and developing internal employee networks, which are now becoming more integrated. The number of women in leadership roles still needs to grow and, primarily, this will be enabled by recruiting more female firefighters. As such, the current focus on bringing more women into operational roles in the Service is at the entry level, though work is being carried out nationally to seek to develop appropriate avenues for direct entry to management positions;
- (d) the declaration rate amongst support staff is consistent with the national average. The Service is working hard with existing staff on encouraging declarations relating to disability to ensure that all staff can be properly supported, and there is funding in place to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace for disability. Specific work is underway with personnel with dyslexia. The policy and provisions for supporting

employees with disabilities is included in recruitment-related communications, to try to ensure that potential applicants are aware of the assistance that is available;

- (e) much more of the workforce has now been engaged on LGBTQ+ issues the Service continues to work with Stonewall to improve its approach in this area. Steps have also been taken to develop staff knowledge of religion and how to engage with citizens with different beliefs effectively, through podcasts and both face-to-face training and e-learning. There is a growing confidence amongst staff to be themselves in the workplace;
- (f) preparation is underway for a new stage of firefighter recruitment, and a number of awareness days will be held. It is intended to challenge the traditional narrative around who firefighters are and what they do, to attract as wide a range of applicants as possible;
- (g) the Committee noted that strong staff networks, along with effective strategy and policy, is important in attracting the widest possible range of people during recruitment activity. It is vital that the Service seeks to engage actively with the most disadvantaged communities that it serves, and be aware of their needs;
- (h) the Committee queried whether there is a specific engagement plan for Nottingham City itself, as it is where a large number of the BAME people within the Service's area live, and asked that the Service's community engagement plans are discussed in more detail at a future meeting.

The Committee noted the report.

15 Equal Pay Audit

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the findings of the Equal Pay Audit, gender pay gap reporting and ethnicity pay gap information. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the report has been carried out in line with the Gender Pay Gap Regulations to identify any inequality issues in pay. Currently, there are fewer women in senior and on-call roles, so positive action and talent spotting in the workforce is underway to grow the number of women in these areas;
- (b) investment is being made in 'future leaders', to support female firefighters in training for supervisory and senior management roles over the next few years. Structures are needed to help overcome any potential barriers, such as returning to work following a period of maternity leave. Flexible working continues to develop, but this can be challenging in the context of ensuring fully-crewed wholetime firefighter shifts, so provision needs to be considered carefully. A women's network is in place, to develop engagement on these issues;
- (c) ultimately, the Service operates a grading system whereby each type of role has a set salary. The identified gap is because there are more men than women in the Service, and in its senior roles. However, all staff members holding the same role earn the same salary;

- (d) the Committee noted that, as such, the Equal Pay Audit must be understood within the wider equality context. Primarily, the issue that the report identifies is that there is an imbalance in the number of men and women that are recruited into the Service, which the Service should seek to address, rather than that there is a disparity in how men and women are paid for carrying out the same role.

The Committee noted the report.

16 Agile Working

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on proposals for implementing agile working arrangements for Service employees. The following points were discussed:

- (a) a policy for agile working arrangements has been developed, following the experiences of the Coronavirus pandemic and in the context of the upcoming move to the new joint headquarters. The Service moved to remote working during the pandemic rapidly, and it is clear that it is not necessary for all office staff to work from their main office for all of the time. As such, staff will be able to apply for agile working, creating a balance of office-based and remote working. However, it will be vital to manage business continuity and both individual and team performance closely in this context, to ensure that services continue to be delivered as effectively as possible;
- (b) the representative bodies of both uniformed and non-uniformed staff have been engaged with fully as part of the development of the policy, and have been supportive of the proposals;
- (c) the new joint headquarters was designed before the Coronavirus pandemic. Although the office working space will be shared, it will still have the capacity to accommodate the current headquarters workforce numbers in full. However, discussions are underway with the Police on how to use the shared space as effectively as possible in an agile working context.

Resolved to support the Service's implementation of the Agile Working Policy.

17 Review of the People Strategy

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the progress of the People Strategy for 2020 to 2022. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the People Strategy is key to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-22, and sets out how the Service will address and prioritise workforce issues to meet the Plan's aims and objectives. In terms of key activities, the firefighter apprentice scheme is progressing well and has had a good first Ofsted report. The Workforce Plan has been refreshed to inform recruitment planning, and recruitment and promotion processes are in place. A Community Engagement Plan and Equality and Inclusion Plan have been produced, and a report on the on-call position is underway;
- (b) strong employee networks and champions are in place. A new Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Community Advisory Group has been established to engage with

how services are delivered to communities. Engagement is also underway with both Service and Police staff networks on the upcoming move to a joint headquarters. The focus on supporting both good physical and mental health and wellbeing continues, and the Service is working hard to support staff on maintaining their needed fitness levels and physical conditioning.

The Committee noted the report.

18 Exclusion of the Public

The Committee resolved to exclude 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, Paragraphs 1 and 3, 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.

19 Exempt Minutes

The Committee confirmed the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

20 Changes to the Permanent Establishment

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

Resolved to support the recommendations as set out in the exempt report.

21 Regrading of Posts

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the outcomes of the latest Job Evaluation process, which has led to permanent changes to the non-uniformed establishment.

The Committee noted the report.



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: 28 January 2022

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on key human resources metrics for the period 1 October 2021 to 31 December.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of the report.

CONTACT OFFICER

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Deputy Chief Fire 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 October 2021 to 31 December 2021, 10 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 31 December 2021 are highlighted below:

	Approved	Actual	Variance
Wholetime	431 (431 FTE)	439 (437.8 FTE)	+8 (+6.8 FTE)
On-Call	192 Units	241 persons (includes 80 Dual Contracts)	-54.5 units (Please refer to Para 2.6)
Support	151 (147.59) FTE)	176 (165.51 FTE)	+25 (+17.92fte)

- 2.2 There have been 26 leavers and 10 starters since the last report. This has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 856 (this includes 80 dual contractors). Leavers are broken down as follows: 5 x Wholetime, 10 x On Call and 11 x Support roles.
- 2.3 As at 31 December 2021 Wholetime strength stood at 439 operational personnel (437.8 FTE) employees against an establishment of 431 posts.
- 2.4 During the period, the Service has appointed one Station Manager and nine support roles.
- 2.5 The number of leavers for Wholetime and On-call roles is within planning forecasts. However, as reported in the previous review, the number of leavers from support roles is higher than predicted, with 27 leavers compared to a forecast of 18 leavers in 21/22. This reflects the national picture of turnover where employment vacancy rates have increased significantly during 2021. This has been identified as a potential area of concern for the Service and will

be kept under review. During the same period, there have been eighteen new starters to support roles.

- 2.6 The recent introduction of the On-call trial at Bingham and Stapleford fire stations, whereby available hours are calculated as opposed to units of cover, has affected the variance figure set out in the table at 2.1. This now reflects the position of the fourteen stations not involved in the trial period.

SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 2.7 The review period covers Q3 (Oct-Dec 2021).

- 2.8 Target absence figures for 2021/22 are:

Wholetime:	6 days per person
Non-Uniformed:	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)

- 2.9 Summary Table:

Absence	Period 3 July – Sept	Compared with previous quarter	Total days lost for 21/22	Average over last 12 months
Total workforce (259 employees have been absent on 300 occasions during Q3, excluding On-call *)	2008.5 days lost 3.32 days per employee	1731 days lost 2.86 days per employee 16% increase (+277.5 days)	5162.5 days lost	10.37 days per employee (target 6.25 days)

(*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).

- 2.10 Absence across the workforce, excluding On-call employees, increased by 277.5 days (16%) in Q3 compared to the previous quarter. This also

represents an increase compared to the same quarter of the previous year (2020-21) of 681 days (51.4%). It should be noted that absence during 20-21 saw an overall reduction in absence of 25.7% compared to the previous year (2019-20), which accounts for the high comparative increase. The increase has also been impacted by absence related to covid.

- 2.11 Absence related to Covid represents 690 working days lost in Q3, which accounts for 34.4% of total absence in this period. In addition, 476 days were lost due to covid absence for On Call personnel.
- 2.12 The trends across quarters is shown in the table set out at Appendix A.
- 2.13 Long term absence equated to 39.5% of the total absence during the review period. A full period commentary of Q3 can be found at appendix C.

NATIONAL ABSENCE TRENDS

- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 Reasons for sickness absence at NFRS broadly mirror the national trends with musculo-skeletal and mental health related absences featuring significantly in all workgroups.
- 2.16 Appendix B reflects the national absence trends for Quarter 2. Quarter 3 figures have not yet been published. 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.
- 2.17 For Wholetime personnel NFRS has an average of 4.98 days lost per employee which ranks the Service as 29th out of the 38 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 4.27 days per employee. The lowest average was 2.3 and the highest 8.34.
- 2.18 For On-call staff, NFRS has an average of 8.68 days lost per employee which ranks the Service 21st out of the 24 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 6.97 days per employee. The lowest average was 1.83 and the highest 17.28.
- 2.19 For Support Staff (Green Book) the Service has an average of 6.06 days lost per employee which ranks us 35 out of the 39 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 3.94 days per employee. The lowest average was 0.31 days and the highest 8.34 days.

OTHER WORKFORCE METRICS

- 2.20 This section reviews the following activities: disciplinary cases, grievances raised, harassment cases raised, dismissals, appeals and active employment tribunal cases.
- 2.21 Over the period, one disciplinary investigation has commenced and there has been one dismissal due to capability/ill health.

- 2.22 The employment tribunal case which has been previously recorded has now completed. The Service was successful in defending a claim of constructive dismissal.
- 2.23 There are no significant issues in respect of the above HR metrics outlined above.

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

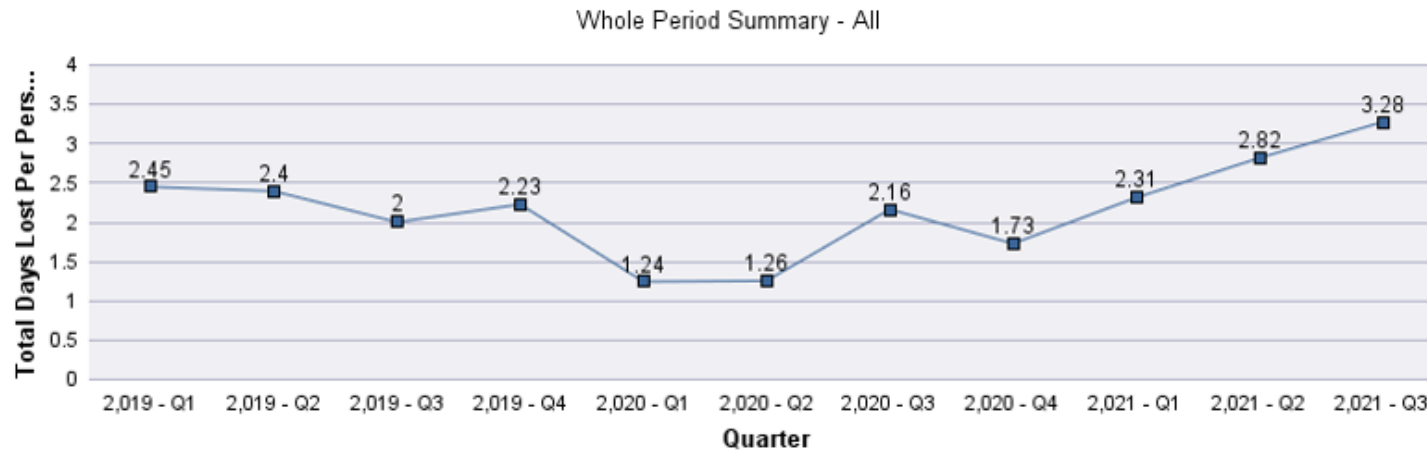
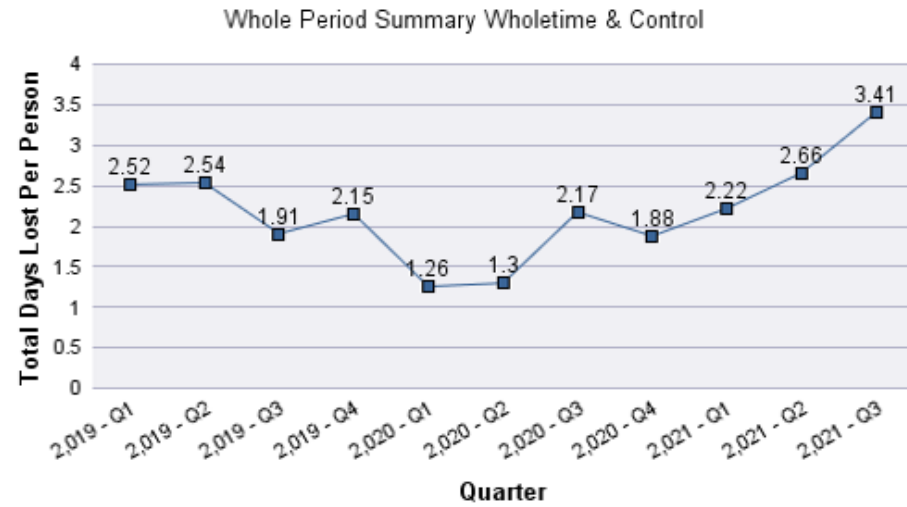
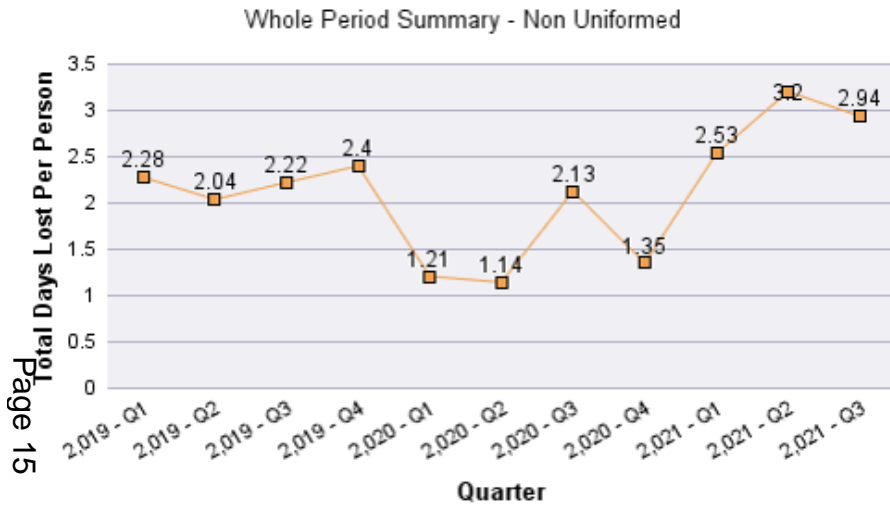
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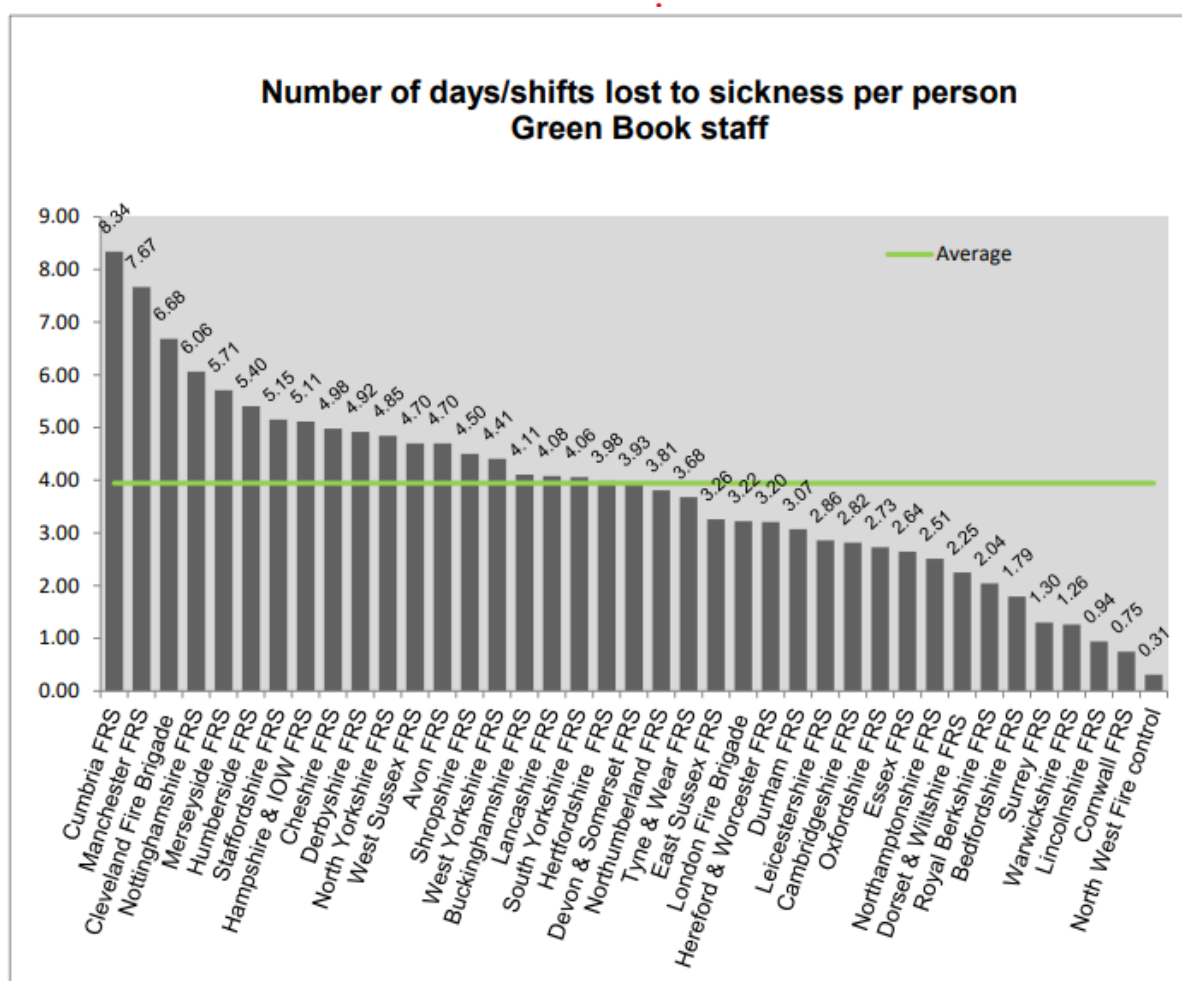
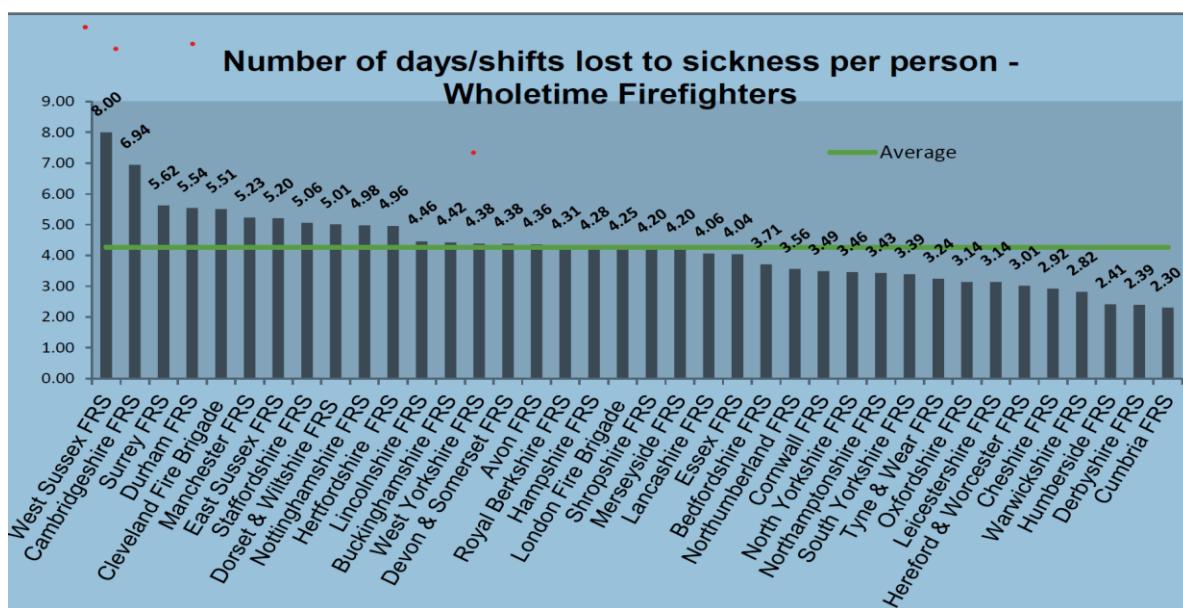
11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

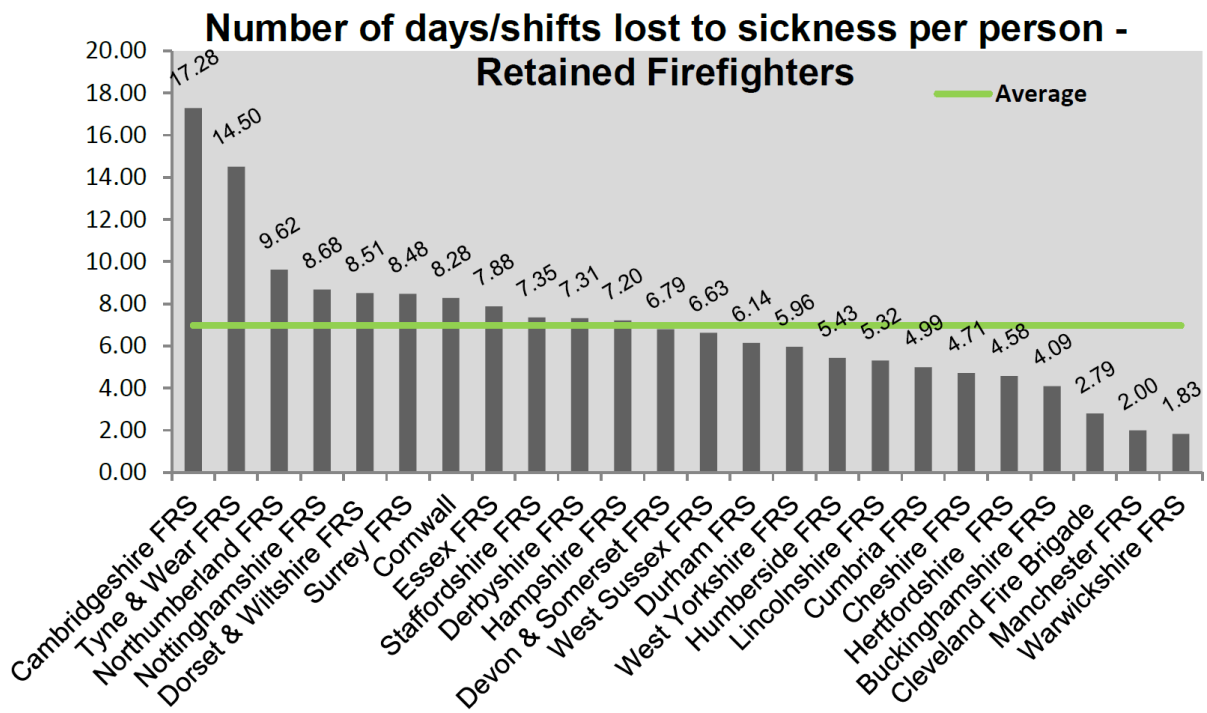
None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Appendix - Reporting Period: 01/04/2019 to 31/12/2021







Q3 2021/2022 - Wholetime

In total 1488 working days were lost due to sickness during this quarter. Of this, 579 days were lost to long-term absence (28+ calendar days absent) and 909 days were lost due to short term absence. This represents an overall increase of 324 days (27.84%) on the previous quarter.

The average absence per employee was 3.39 days lost, which is above the target figure of 1.6 days lost per quarter per employee.

38.91% of sickness absence in this quarter was due to long term absence. There were 90 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e., absence longer than 8 days in duration), 16 of which were classified as long-term sickness. At the end of the period 70 employees had returned to work with 20 still absent.

Reasons for absence

Main reasons for sickness absence for the Wholetime are Covid-19 Isolating – Tested Positive (80 instances, 419 days) and Musculo Skeletal (32 instances, 374 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
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	80	419	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	79	403	Musculo Skeletal	6	235
Musculo Skeletal	32	374	Musculo Skeletal	26	139	Mental Health	4	188
Mental Health	11	241	COVID-19 Isolating Symptoms Self	32	99	Cancer and Tumours	1	46
COVID-19 Isolating Symptoms Self	32	99	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	28	95	Hospital/Post Operative	2	40
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	28	95	Mental Health	7	53	Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	28
Hospital/Post Operative	3	53	Gastro-Intestinal	18	48	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	1	16
Gastro-Intestinal	18	48	Unknown causes, not specified	6	22	Mental Health - Other	1	13
Cancer and Tumours	1	46	Hospital/Post Operative	1	13			
Other known causes (not specified in list)	6	38	Virus/Infectious Diseases	3	13			
Unknown causes, not specified	6	22	Other known causes (not specified in list)	5	10			

Q3 - Support (Non-Uniformed) sickness absence

In total 521.64 working days were lost due to sickness absence for support personnel during the quarter. This breaks down into 215 days due to long term sickness absence (28+ continuous days absent) and 306.64 working days due to short term absence. This represents a decrease of 45 days (8%) on the previous quarter.

The average absence per employee was 3.13 days lost, which is above the target figure of 1.6 days lost per quarter per employee.

41.22% of sickness absence in this quarter was due to long term absence. There were 27 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e., absence longer than 8 days in duration), 5 of which were classified as long-term sickness. At the end of the period 20 employees had returned to work with 7 still absent.

Reasons for absence

The main reasons for support absence was Covid-19 Isolating – Tested Positive (20 instances, 146 days) and Musculo Skeletal (3 instances, 69 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
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	20	146	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	20	146
Musculo Skeletal	3	69	Gastro-Intestinal	6	30
Cancer and Tumours	1	66	COVID-19 Isolating Symptoms Self	8	26
Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	32	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	7	22
Gastro-Intestinal	6	30	Unknown causes, not specified	3	22
Mental Health	2	30	Headache/Migraine/Neurological	4	22
COVID-19 Isolating Symptoms Self	8	26	Hospital/Post Operative	3	13
Genitourinary/Gynecological/Reproductive	1	25	COVID-19 Adverse Reaction to Covid Vaccine	3	6
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	7	22	Respiratory - Chest Infection	2	6
Unknown causes, not specified	3	22	Ear, Nose, Throat	2	4
			Mental Health	1	4

Q3 - 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 whole-time employees).

In Q3, 1333 days were unavailable due to sickness, broken down into 701 days of long-term absence (28+ days) and 632 days of short-term absence. This equates to an average of 5.4 “days” of unavailability per employee.

Compared to Q2, when 1092 days were lost to sickness absence, this reflects an increase of 241 available days (22%).

There were 49 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e., absence longer than 8 days in duration), 11 of which were classified as long-term sickness. At the end of the period 40 employees had returned to work with 9 still absent.

HMICFRS do not collate sickness data for On-call.

Reasons for absence

The 2 main conditions leading to absence for On-call employees in Q3 were Covid-19 Isolating – Tested Positive (40 instances, 448 days) and Musculo Skeletal (7 instances, 236 days).

Retained

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	40	448
Musculo Skeletal	7	236
Mental Health	5	192
Respiratory - Other	1	92
Other known causes (not specified in list)	3	76
Eye Problems	1	70
Gastro-Intestinal	9	49
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	6	48
Hospital/Post Operative	1	30
COVID-19 Isolating Symptoms Self	7	28

Short Term Absences

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	39	383
Gastro-Intestinal	9	49
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	6	48
Musculo Skeletal	4	34
COVID-19 Isolating Symptoms Self	7	28
Ear, Nose, Throat	1	22
Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	16
Other known causes (not specified in list)	2	14
Mental Health	2	12
Respiratory - Asthma	1	12

Long Term Absences

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	3	202
Mental Health	3	180
Respiratory - Other	1	92
Eye Problems	1	70
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	1	65
Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	62
Hospital/Post Operative	1	30



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Human Resources Committee

UPDATED EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) STATEMENTS AND REVIEW

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 28 January 2022

Purpose of Report:

To seek endorsement of the updates to the 'Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' and 'Joint Commitment on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity' statements included in this report as appendices and to inform members of the EDI review which has taken place.

Recommendations:

That Members support the endorsement of the updates to the Service's Equalities Statement and Joint Commitment on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of the Service's strong commitment to Equality, an 'Equalities statement' and 'Joint Commitment on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity' was developed and approved. Since this time, the Service has made significant progress in the area of equality, has developed its culture, values, and practices and therefore these statements have been updated to reflect the Service's current practice and terminology.
- 1.2 The Service has commissioned a review of its performance on EDI during 2021, using the expertise of an independent equalities' consultant. The review has referenced elements of the Fire Service Equality Framework.

2. REPORT

COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY STATEMENTS

- 2.1 The Service's updated 'Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' (Appendix A) and Joint Commitment on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity' (Appendix B) were originally developed by the organisation as policy statements, demonstrating the Service's commitment to promoting equality.
- 2.2 These documents also act as policy statements for external suppliers and to fulfil requests for the Service's equality policy.
- 2.3 The update to 'Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' document specifically now reflects the Service's values, latest terminology, community engagement work and related documents.
- 2.4 Similarly, the updated Joint Commitment on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity' now reflects the Service's current resources in this area, LGBT+ staff network, latest terminology, incorporating service delivery commitments and links to related documents.

WORKFORCE SUPPORT

- 2.5 The Service's workforce representatives all signed up to the original statements. Equality and LGBT+ representatives have all been approached to inform and support these documents and to communicate this commitment to those they represent and wider workforce.
- 2.6 These statements help the Service to demonstrate its commitment to being an employer of choice by seeking to attract, recruit and retain talent from all communities and under-represented groups.
- 2.7 A relaunch of the statements will be used to ensure employees are aware of the updates made to these documents. Printed copies will be distributed to work locations as well as electronic versions being visible through the NFRS intranet and internet.

- 2.8 These statements were discussed at the member-led Strategic Inclusion Board on 17 December, and members of the group supported the endorsement of these statements subject to Fire Authority approval.

EDI REVIEW

- 2.9 Since its inception in 2008, the Service has used the Fire Service Equality Framework to benchmark its performance on equality, diversity and inclusion. In previous years the Service has undertaken 'Peer Challenges' with the Local Government Association and the Chief Fire Officers' Association (now National Fire Chiefs Council).
- 2.10 In order to ensure that the Service is meeting statutory and best practice equality standards, an independent external consultant was commissioned to undertake a review of its EDI and leadership practices using criteria within the Fire Service Equality Framework.
- 2.11 The process has included an analysis of key HR and EDI policies and other major documents including staff survey results and a series of focus groups with representation from staff from across the service and community stakeholders. A draft report has been received by the Service with the findings of the review and these will be communicated to members in a future report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The EDI review outlined in this report was delivered within existing budgets.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The workforce will be made aware of the updates to the 'Commitment to EDI' and 'Joint Commitment on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity' through the relaunch of these statements, and new starters will be made aware of the statements through an Introduction to Equality training delivered to all new starters.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The EDI review and policy statement items within this report demonstrate a positive commitment to establishing and furthering equality issues across the service.
- 5.2 The EDI review has been undertaken as part of the Service's continued commitment to Equality, and its outcomes will help the Service to continue to develop positive equality impacts.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The EDI Review will enable the Service to ensure that the Service continues to meet its commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act, 2010).

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members support the endorsement of the updates to the Service's Equalities Statement and Joint Commitment on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is committed to providing excellent services and becoming an employer of choice by ensuring that equality and inclusion are at the heart of everything it does.

The Service will work to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with the communities it serves. We will engage with our service users to ensure that we provide services which meet their needs, and that they have equal access to them.

We will also ensure that our employees work in an environment where difference is valued, where all employees are comfortable to be their authentic selves and discrimination of any sort has no place in our Service. We have developed a values based culture and expect staff to demonstrate the Services four [values](#) of; value and respect, professionalism, openness to change and working as one team. We will provide our employees, managers and elected members with access to excellent learning and development opportunities enabling them to understand and meet the demands of changing, diverse and emerging communities, in addition to meeting our obligations under the [Equality Act](#).

The Service will promote employment opportunities to encourage applicants from across all communities, particularly where they are under-represented in the current workforce. We will create a workplace where all our employees feel valued, not in spite of who they are, but because of who they are. We will work collaboratively with trade union representatives in order to improve workforce policy and practice in these areas.

The Service will also use its spending power to encourage its suppliers of goods and services to apply similar values to their own business to share good practice and encourage an ethical, inclusive supply chain.

It is only by adopting such an approach that we can truly provide equal access to services and employment to people across Nottinghamshire.

This statement has been endorsed by the Chief Fire Officer, the Combined Fire Authority and all Representative Bodies

You may also be interested in:

- *NFRS Joint Commitment on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*
- [Equality at NFRS](#) and [NFRS Equality Duty](#) (web pages)
- [Working with NFRS document – \(sent to suppliers\)](#)
- [Joint Commitment on Workforce Diversity](#)
- [Code of Ethics](#)

Joint Commitment on Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Equality



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

The Service and unions have decided, a written, agreed document should be produced stating commitment to this area of work. This will help to promote equality for lesbian, gay, bi, trans and non-binary (LGBT+) employees, applicants and members of the public. The Service's commitments are outlined below:

As an employer, we have a duty to ensure that our lesbian, gay, bi and trans staff feel able to be themselves at work. This might include gay employees feeling able to confidently and openly take part in the normal everyday conversations we have at work about partners, family or what we did at the weekend. As part of this commitment the Service has a range of employment guidance documents and delivers a range of EDI training to its staff, features LGBT+ staff within its role models booklet and has resources aimed to support LGBT+ employees available through its intranet. The Service also has an LGBT+ and Proud Friends (allies) network.

The Service is committed to providing an environment of dignity and respect for all in the workplace and in the delivery of services. We therefore have a zero tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying and will take seriously and investigate any complaints of discrimination or harassment internally or within service delivery using agreed procedures as outlined in the Bullying and Harassment policy or [Complaints procedure](#) (in the instance of incidents within service delivery).

The Service recognises the experiences of LGBT+ people and will take action to ensure equal opportunities are provided within its practices. We will make clear to contracting companies and external agencies they are expected to demonstrate compliance with our equalities policies to ensure our [values](#) are put into practice.

NFRS has very few people who are 'out' at work, the service has worked hard to create a supportive environment for all staff in recent years and will continue to do so with the aim of increasing declaration levels. The Service understands some LGBT+ community members may find it difficult to engage with the Service and will strive to ensure its services are accessible to all communities within Nottinghamshire through targeted communications and delivery of training to those delivering services. We will also ensure our values are communicated and shared with suppliers to provide a consistent and high-quality service to all communities within Nottinghamshire.

This statement has been endorsed by the Chief Fire Officer, the Combined Fire Authority and all Representative Bodies

You may also be interested in:

- *NFRS EDI statement*
- [Equality at NFRS](#) and [NFRS Equality duty](#) (web pages)
- [Working with NFRS document – \(sent to suppliers\)](#)
- [Code of Ethics](#)



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 28 January 2022

Purpose of Report:

To provide an annual update on apprenticeships within the Service.

Recommendations:

That Members recognise the progress made in the employment of apprenticeship roles during the review period.

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1. BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 22 January 2021, Members received an update report on the implementation of the apprenticeship levy and introduction of a public-sector apprenticeship target through the enactment of the Enterprise Bill 2016. This report provides an update on developments since this time.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Since 2019, the Service has aligned its trainee firefighter development programme to the national Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship Standard, which is a level 3 qualification. There are currently 27 apprentice firefighters progressing through the twenty-four-month programme. All operational firefighter apprentices are trained and developed in-house by the Service as an employer provider.
- 2.2 The Service draws down funding from the apprenticeship levy for this training, and this counts toward the public-sector apprenticeship target of 2.3% of the workforce.
- 2.3 The development pathway follows the established internal development programme, with an initial training period at the Service Development Centre (SDC) to develop their core skills, knowledge and behaviours, followed by deployment to a designated watch where they attend operational incidents whilst continuing their development against the firefighter role map.
- 2.4 During this time, they are supported by their line manager and an experienced on-station mentor who will review and guide their development on station and undertake periodic assessment by SDC trainers. As part of the apprenticeship programme, they are also monitored by the Workplace Assessment team who meet with them at six weekly intervals to review their progress. The Service Development Centre training staff also conduct assessment of the apprentices at the 12-month and 19-month points in their development.
- 2.5 At the end of the apprenticeship programme, the apprentices undergo an End-Point Assessment (EPA) by an independent provider, which entails a formal theory examination, practical assessments and professional discussion to confirm that the apprentice has met the requirements of the apprenticeship programme. In early 2021, the Service's first apprenticeship cohort were successful at End Point Assessment with all 10 apprentices passing including one distinction. In Summer 2021, six operational firefighter apprentices from our second cohort were successful in passing their End Point Assessment with two gaining distinctions.
- 2.6 As an employer provider, the Service now receives £14,000 per operational firefighter apprentice over the two-year apprenticeship programme life.
- 2.7 The Service currently has five apprentices in support roles in the following departments:

- ICT Department undertaking a Level 4 Network Engineer Apprenticeship;
- ICT Department undertaking a Level 3 Digital Support Technician Apprenticeship;
- ICT Department undertaking a Level 4 Cyber Security Technologist Apprenticeship;
- Prevention and Protection Department undertaking a Level 2 Business Administration apprenticeship.
- Corporate Communications team undertaking a Level 3 Digital Junior Content Producer apprenticeship

2.8 The Service draws down training costs from the levy to support the academic courses, however the levy cannot be used to fund salary costs. A breakdown of levy contributions and drawn down is included in the financial implications section 3 of the report.

2.9 Two former apprentices in the Finance Department have taken up substantive roles on successful completion of their apprenticeship, and two others have been appointed to fixed-term roles during the year.

PUBLIC SECTOR APPRENTICESHIP TARGET

2.10 As previously reported, public-sector employers have been set a target of 2.3% of the workforce as new apprenticeship starters. Based on a workforce of 858, this would require twenty new apprenticeships each year.

2.11 During this period, 14% of all new starters were apprenticeships. Overall, apprentices account for 1.98% of the total headcount.

2.12 It should be noted that whilst On-call employees are counted within the total headcount figures, they are not required to undertake firefighter apprenticeships at the current time. Whilst terms and conditions do not bar On-call from apprenticeships, the practical arrangements need further consideration and is an issue of focus within the National Fire Chiefs Council.

2.13 This figure is impacted by fact that there were no appointments to Firefighter roles during the reporting period (31 March 2020 to 31 March 2021). Whilst Wholetime Firefighter recruitment was undertaken in 2020, twenty-five appointments were made from April 2021 and will therefore appear in the figures for the period 2021-22. Therefore, the Service did not meet the target of 2.3% of start-up apprenticeships during 2020-21.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 In the period December 2020 to December 2021 (inclusive) the Service has drawn down **£181,199** from the Service's apprenticeship levy digital account. This money is used to support training and development of all apprentices.

3.2 During 2021 the Service paid over **£126k** into the apprenticeship levy, based on payroll. The monthly levy contribution to the account paid by the Service is approximately **£9700** depending on payroll numbers in a given month.

- 3.3 During 2021, the Service, as an employer provider for our operational firefighter apprentices, directly drew down **£109,181** from our digital account.
- 3.4 During the same period, **£72k** approx. was paid to external training providers from our digital account for those external provided apprenticeships.
- 3.5 As of the beginning of December 2021, the Service had **£173,982** in its digital apprenticeship account.
- 3.6 Further, an additional funding of **£43000** was received in 2021 from the Government Hire a New Apprentice payment scheme. This money has been reinvested into operational training development in the form of a temporary eLearning Developer to develop operational training eLearning packages

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An initial equality impact assessment has not been undertaken as there has been no change in policy or service delivery.
- 5.2 There are currently six women undertaking apprenticeships and eight from BAME backgrounds (two did not specify their ethnic origin). This represents 18.75% women and 26.67% BAME apprentices.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The apprenticeship levy is a statutory payment under the Enterprise Bill 2016 and is payable by all employers with more than two hundred and fifty employees.
- 7.2 The public-sector apprenticeship target is established under the Public-Sector Apprenticeship Target Regulations 2017.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The apprenticeship levy is paid over, irrespective of usage and must be used within twenty-four months or lost as a source of funding. To maximise draw

down from the levy, it is therefore imperative that the Service identifies apprenticeship opportunities, by either creating apprenticeship contracts for new employees linked to registered schemes, or by purchasing training for existing employees from registered providers.

- 8.2 The Public-Sector Apprenticeship Target Regulations 2017 require public sector employers to report on progress against the 2.3% apprenticeship target annually. A failure to meet the target will result in the submission of a statement to the Secretary of State explaining why the target has not been met and how this will be addressed. It is not yet clear what sanctions, if any, will result from a failure to meet the target.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members recognise the progress made in the employment of apprenticeship roles during the review period.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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