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

Date: Friday 1 July 2022 **Time:** 10:00am

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. J. Taylor'.

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

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6 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	
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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 on 0115 8388900

If you need 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

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

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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters -
Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 29 April 2022 from 10.00 am -
10.56 am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora (Chair)
Councillor Bethan Eddy
Councillor Tom Hollis
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor John Lee

Absent

Councillor Roger Jackson
Councillor Toby Neal

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Candida Brudenell – Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Tracy Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development
Matt Sismey - Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

30 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Toby Neal
Councillor Roger Jackson (Councillor John Lee substituting)

31 Declarations of Interests

None.

32 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

33 Human Resources Update

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides a detailed update on key human resources metrics for the Quarter 4 period from 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022.

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

- a) whilst the Whole-Time approved number of posts is 431, there are currently only 427 in post. This is in line with planning forecasts;
- b) the number of vacancies within the On-Call and support cohorts are higher than anticipated but is a reflection of a national trend;
- c) excluding Covid related illness, the sickness rates for Quarter 4 are higher than anticipated by 65% on the same period last year, although last year's figures were particularly low, and work is underway to address this trend. Comparison with 2016-20 (pre-Covid) figures are a more accurate benchmark and represent an increase of 2.4% and a reduction of 3.1% for On-Call staff.
- d) last year 28% of absences were due to Covid related illness, but since the change in national guidance, this figure has reduced significantly;
- e) during the pandemic, absence rates were significantly reduced, but now that staff are mixing there has been a rise in sickness absence;
- f) in terms of national absence figures for the sector, whilst NFRS are relatively high in comparison to other services, this is partly due to the way that different services have recorded Covid related illness. This should be addressed in next year's figures;
- g) Appendix A to the report provides sickness figures for the period between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022 to illustrate how absence has fluctuated for all work groups over the past three years;
- h) absence rates are closely monitored with a focus on tracking and addressing muscular-skeletal and mental health issues which can result in longer term absences of 28 days and over;
- i) internally and externally provided preventative support and mechanisms are in place for staff to assist recovery and return to work, including a helpline for mental health and physio therapy;
- j) the higher rate of absence amongst retained/ On-Call staff may be a reflection of them often having a second job, but they still have full access to all support mechanisms.
- k) the recruitment of Whole-Time staff has been paused, but is provisionally scheduled for August 2022, and will include a concerted effort to promote the Service in areas likely to attract applications from those who are currently under-represented in the operational workforce, such as women and BAME;

- l) recruitment to support roles has been difficult and is a national issue across the whole of the public sector;

Committee members commented that it's important to closely monitor retained firefighters and ensure that the Service understands their needs and can respond to them.

Resolved to note the report.

34 Equalities Monitoring

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides an update on the breakdown of the workforce and applicant analysis by protected characteristic the period 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

The following points were highlighted and responses provided to committee members' questions:

- a) the number and variety of protected characteristics recognised by the Service has changed to reflect characteristics more representative of the broader communities across the whole county, but there is still work to be done as the Service continues to rely on 2011 information until recent census data is published;
- b) On-Call communities may often be less diverse than those of the City and so it may be more difficult to recruit staff with protected characteristics;
- c) one of the benefits of this type of committee is that it further empowers members to promote the Service within their communities;
- d) of the 61 Service leavers, 5 were BAME which is broadly in line with the workforce profile;
- e) whilst operational roles require a specific minimum level of fitness, if a member of operational staff then becomes ill or disabled whilst in service, the Service do try to support them in their role, or seek to redeploy them to a non operational if this is not possible.. The Service would work through all options with staff to help them return to the work place, but if that's not possible, then retirement is considered;
- f) if the Service is of aware of potential problems like dyslexia, mechanisms can be put in place to help individuals cope and/or address the issue. Software is available on all systems and can be accessed by everyone for speech to text and also document summaries. These functions are particularly helpful for those with dyslexia, and the Service may consider funding workplace dyslexia assessments;
- g) staff are encouraged to declare disabilities and illness and a lot of work has gone into creating a culture in which they can feel comfortable to come forward. 'Disability Matters' is a new employee network which highlights the range of support available with the aim of improving confidence of staff. Where staff are identified as needing support or adjustments the Service will ask what is required and what is needed by the employee;

- h) the Service is currently reviewing its reasonable adjustments process including the use of a disability passport;
- i) the power of employee networks is phenomenal. Employees being open and speaking out about their issues has made a big and impact and is helping influence culture;
- j) the new website will be fully compliant with disability needs, is public facing and hopefully will help with recruitment, even with the ability to translate documents. It will also include religious/faith pod casts;
- k) there is an opportunity to celebrate religious festivals and landmarks with Police colleagues at the new Joint Headquarters;
- l) with regard to recruitment, substantial improvements have been made with the introduction of incremental training to improve the attractiveness of On-call posts. 'Have a go' days will be trialled at different sites across the county;
- m) female recruits can be supported through positive action such as helping build fitness and upper body strength in preparation for the application fitness tests. Social media and radio raising the profile of the role and that it is not just for men;
- n) applications are shortlisted in a process where managers do not see anything to identify the applicant. This process has been independently assessed and the Service is confident that it works well.

Members of the committee welcomed the work Inclusion and Diversity Team and noted the level of social deprivation within an area does impact on the ability to recruit.

Resolved to note the content of the report and support the Service's continued commitment to attracting, recruiting and retaining a more diverse workforce.

35 People Strategy

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs members of the progress of the People Strategy 2020-2022 a copy of which is attached as Appendix A to the report.

The following points were highlighted:

- a) in spite of a couple of challenging years due to the pandemic, the Service has achieved progress against all the following key criteria;
 - i. delivering our services;
 - ii. shaping our workforce;
 - iii. inclusion;
 - iv. outstanding leadership;
 - v. workforce development;
 - vi. workforce engagement;
 - vii. positive workplace and culture;
 - viii. employee well-being;

- b) the Service needs to ensure it has a workforce that is robust and able to respond;
- c) a revised rostering and collective agreement to improve efficiency within Whole- Time shifts has been introduced along with new crewing arrangements;
- d) the move to the new Joint Headquarters is ongoing and won't be complete until the end of summer, but is proving successful and very positive so far, despite initial employee concerns;
- e) agile working practices for office-based staff, for which Covid acted as a catalyst, are making the workplace more flexible and having a positive impact on employee well-being;
- f) engagement forums have been set up to help better understand the needs of the BAME, LGBT+ workforce, along with women's issues, and will continue to be developed;
- g) the Workforce Survey of 2020 highlighted that a notable number of employees wanted the opportunity to advance within the Service. This is being addressed, but there is still further work is to be done;
- h) the Firefighter Apprenticeship Programme, to which five support staff are committed, passed an OFSTED inspection in 2021;
- i) the Leadership Programme has been refreshed and expanded;
- j) the Well-Being Strategy reflects the Service's commitment to supporting the physical, mental and emotional health of the workforce.

Resolved to note the report and the progress made against the objectives of the People Strategy 2020-2022.

36 Change to Permanent Establishment

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report, which proposes the creation of six new roles as part of the budget setting process which supports the delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan.

Resolved to support the following changes to the permanent establishment, subject to Fire Authority approval:

- i. the creation of a new role of Fire Investigation Dog Handler;**
- ii. the creation of two Equipment and Fire Hydrant Technician roles;**
- iii. the creation of a Rostering Manager role;**
- iv. the creation of a Pensions Officer role;**
- v. the dis-establishment of a HR Business Partner role and creation of an HR Officer as a career-graded post.**

37 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item 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.

38 Regrading of Posts

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which details the regrading of posts as a result of the Job Evaluation process.

Resolved to note 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: 01 July 2022

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on key human resources metrics for the period 1 April to 31 May 2022.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of the report and support the amended absence targets.

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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 April 2022 to 31 May 2022, 12 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 31 May 2022 are highlighted below:

	Approved	Actual	Variance
Wholetime	431 (431 FTE)	417 (414.3 FTE)	-14 (-16.7 FTE)
On-Call	168 Units	243 persons (includes 69 Dual Contracts)	- 53.5units (Please refer to Para 2.9)
Support	152 (147.55) FTE)	160 (151.13 FTE)	+8 (+3.58fte)

- 2.2 There have been 34 leavers and 12 starters since the last report. This has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 820 (this includes 69 dual contractors). Leavers are broken down as follows: 11 x Wholetime, 8 x On-call and 15 x Support roles.
- 2.3 As at 31 May 20221 Wholetime strength stood at 417 operational personnel (414.3 FTE) employees against an establishment of 431 posts.
- 2.4 During the period, the Service has appointed to 10 On-call and 2 support roles.
- 2.5 Turnover rates are higher than forecast and reflect a high level of leavers in early April as a result of retirements and the completion of fixed-term contracts. In total 11 employees retired from the Service and 8 completed their fixed term periods of employment. Resignations accounted for 13 leavers and 2 operational employees transferred to other Fire and Rescue Services.
- 2.6 As reported in the previous review, this reflects the national picture of turnover where employment vacancy rates have increased significantly during 2021-22.

This has been identified as a potential area of concern for the Service and is referenced in the Services' risk register. A review of recruitment and retention is currently underway to identify and address issues which may be impacting upon recruitment and retention levels.

- 2.7 As a result of recruitment campaigns undertaken earlier in the year, ten On-call trainees commenced their training in April and a further 11 will commence training in July. There is also an ongoing recruitment campaign for a course start date in January 2023.
- 2.8 A Wholetime recruitment campaign will commence in the summer and will conclude at the end of the year for a course start date in April 2023. The Service may also introduce other measures, such as migration and transfers, to address operational workforce shortfalls during 2022-23.
- 2.9 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

- 2.10 An analysis of sickness absence figures for Q4 (Jan-Mar 2022) was set out in a report to committee on 28 April. Due to the cycle of committee dates, the Q1 analysis for the period 2022-2 analysis, which ends on 30 June, cannot be completed for this meeting and will be reported to the next committee.
- 2.11 The sickness absence data previously reported showed that average sickness absence for 2021-22 was 11.99 days (excluding On-call absence) including Covid-related absence and 9.18 days if Covid-related absence was not included. This is above the target figure of 6.5 days per employee. The report set out a detailed breakdown of these figures, including the main reasons for sickness absence, and the actions being undertaken to address this as part of an in-depth review.
- 2.12 As part of this review, sickness absence targets have been revised to reflect the national sector average and provide a benchmark against other Fire and Rescue Services. Averages for each workgroup have been amended to reflect sector averages in 2019-20 so that the main impact of Covid related absence is removed. The revised averages are as follow:
 - Wholetime: 9.05 days
 - On Call: 13.2 days
 - Support: 9.35 days
- 2.13 The Service provides significant support to employees through its Occupational and Health and Fitness team, Employee Assistance Programme and membership of the BUPA Cash-Back scheme, both to promote well-being and therefore to prevent sickness or injury arising, and to support employees during any period of sickness or injury. This includes a focus on mental health and musculo-skeletal injury, which are the two primary reasons for sickness

absence. This support includes access to counselling, physiotherapy, fitness advisor, an Occupational Health Physician and on-site gyms.

- 2.14 Work will be undertaken during 2022-23 to reduce the levels of sickness absence across all work groups.

NATIONAL ABSENCE TRENDS

- 2.15 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. It should be noted that some services have not included Covid related absence in their figures, however these figures were included in the NFRS returns.
- 2.16 Reasons for sickness absence at NFRS broadly mirror the national trends with musculo-skeletal and mental health related absences featuring significantly in all workgroups.
- 2.17 Appendix A reflects the national absence trends including Quarter 4, which is a whole year analysis. The three charts reflect Wholetime, Support (Green book) and On-call employees by the average of duty days / shifts lost per person for those Fire and Rescue Services who contribute to the survey.
- 2.18 For Wholetime personnel NFRS has an average of 11.71 days lost per employee which ranks the Service as 30th out of the 37 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 11.08 days per employee. The lowest average was 3.37 and the highest 17.18.
- 2.19 For On-call staff, NFRS has an average of 18.52 days lost per employee which ranks the Service 18 out of the 23 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 13.64 days per employee. The lowest average was 3.55 and the highest 38.94.
- 2.20 For Support Staff (Green Book) the Service has an average of 12.75 days lost per employee which ranks the Service 33 out of the 38 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 9.28 days per employee. The lowest average was 1.29 days and the highest 15.82 days.

OTHER WORKFORCE METRICS

- 2.21 This section reviews the following activities: disciplinary cases, grievances raised, harassment cases raised, dismissals, appeals and active employment tribunal cases.
- 2.22 Over the period, one grievance has been heard and one harassment complaint received. This grievance related to a management. The harassment complaint is currently under investigation.

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

- 4.1 A review of sickness absence is being undertaken to identify and address sickness absence issues, with the aim of reducing both short and long term sickness levels. This review will report into the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.
- 4.2 The impact of turnover on staffing numbers and issues related to both recruitment and retention levels will be undertaken. This review will report into the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

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

- 8.1 A regular reporting system on the management of human resources ensures that the Service and the Authority are aware of any developing workforce issues.
- 8.2 Workforce Issues identified as potential risks to the service relate specifically to recruitment, retention and levels of sickness absence. This risk will be addressed through a comprehensive review undertaken by the Head of

People and Organisational Development, and led by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

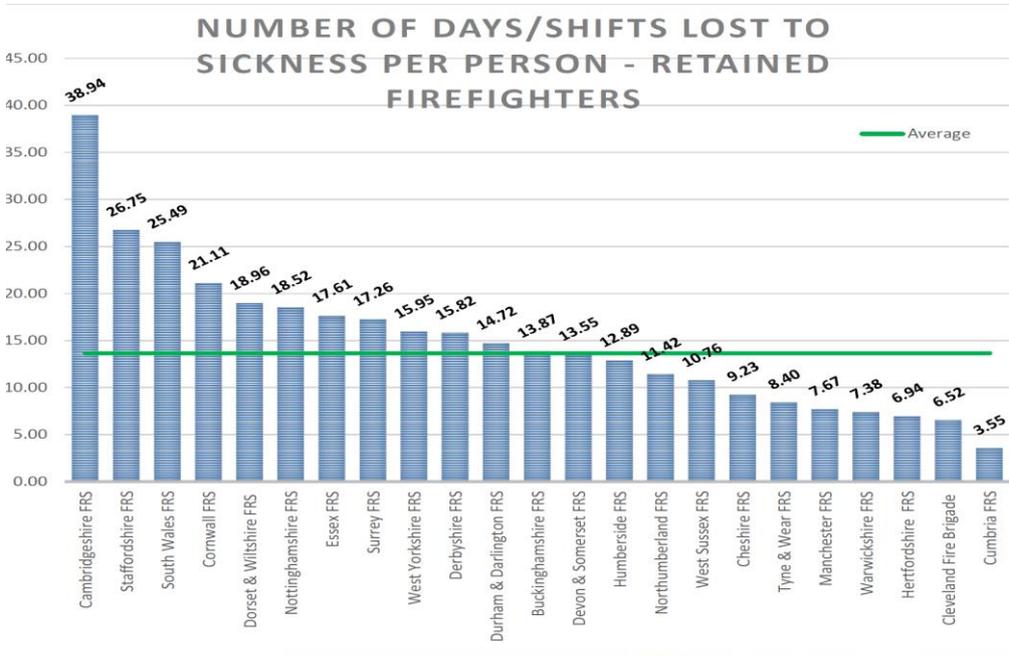
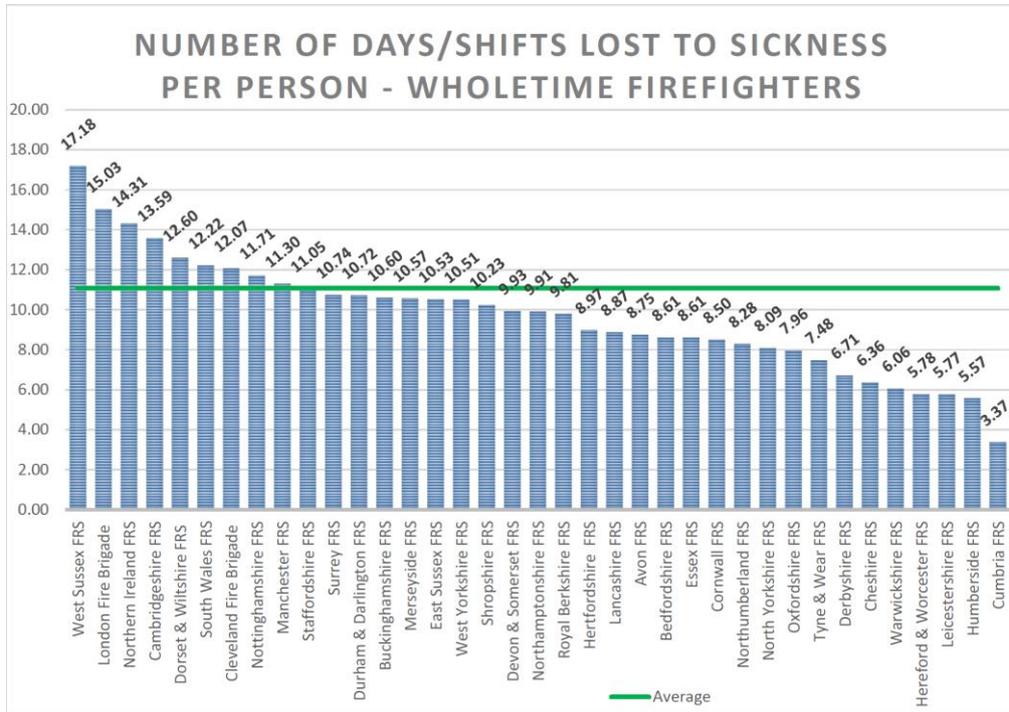
10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of the report and support the amended absence targets.

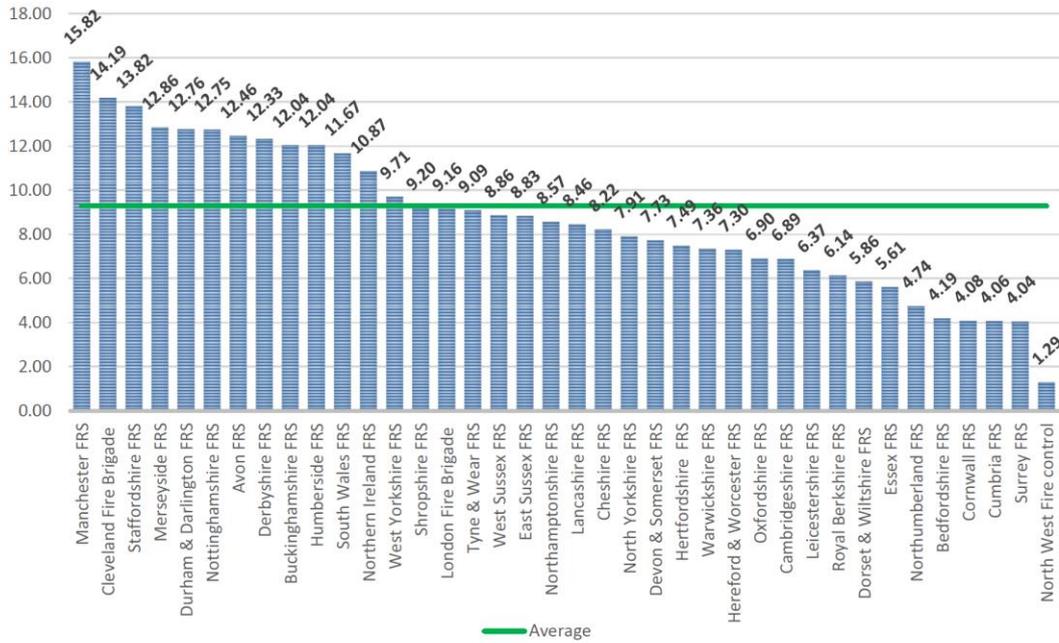
11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



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





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

WORKFORCE PLAN 2022-2024

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 01 July 2022

Purpose of Report:

To review the Workforce Plan for 2021-23 and inform Members of the updated plan for 2022-2024.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of the report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Workforce Plan 2022-2024 forms part of the business planning process which supports the delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan and is undertaken by the People and Organisational Development (POD) department to establish workforce trends, identify potential workforce planning issues and formulate an action plan to address these issues. The plan is based upon projections of anticipated turnover and information received from all departments regarding their workforce needs for the forthcoming year.
- 1.2 The plan seeks to forecast:
- Workforce reductions through retirement, projected turnover and other factors;
 - Workforce increases resulting from delivery of new service requirements;
 - The need for succession planning for specialist and managerial roles;
 - Particular areas of concern within the Service;
 - Resources requirements.
- 1.3 By anticipating the needs of the Service through the business planning process, the Service can ensure that the foundations are in place to deliver on key Service objectives and commitments which will underpin the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). These needs can then be factored into the budget planning process.
- 1.4 This Plan is developed and managed through the Strategic Leadership Team, and the Workforce Plan for 2022-24 is attached as Appendix A to this report.

2. REPORT

REVIEW 2021-2022

- 2.1 Overall staffing numbers have slightly reduced from 861 (850.78fte) to 842 (828.9fte) employees in post during 2021-22). There were 65 appointments to substantive or fixed-term roles and 108 leavers during the period, accounting for a turnover of 12.7%.
- The number of leavers during 2021-22 was more than predicted and reflects a general increase in turnover across the national workforce in the post-Covid period. Whilst this trend was predicted in the last workforce plan, the numbers of support staff who have left the Service (24.5%) was double the predicted number. Whilst increased movement in the labour market is a national trend, the increase may also relate to the move to the Joint Headquarters and to increases in the cost of living, which have seen public sector pay rates become increasingly uncompetitive. This increase in turnover has been identified on the corporate risk register and will be kept under review during 2022-23.

- 2.2 As an outcome from the firefighter recruitment campaign in 2020, 27 new apprentice firefighters commenced employment during 2021. Preparations for recruitment during 2022 is underway and will commence during the summer for a course start date in April 2023. This will ensure that establishment numbers are maintained as operational employees retire or leave the Service for other reasons.
- 2.3 Two recruitment campaigns for On-Call firefighters were undertaken, with the appointment of 13 firefighter trainees, who have now completed their initial training period. A further 10 trainees commenced training in April 2022 and 11 will commence in July 2022.
- 2.4 Further details of establishment figures, at the end of the financial year 2021-22, are set out below.

WHOLETIME ESTABLISHMENT

- 2.5 As of 31 March 2022, the wholetime establishment has remained at 431 posts with no changes to establishment throughout 2021-22. This is against a workforce strength (headcount) of 427 (424.3fte) employees. Any changes to the permanent establishment are reported through the Human Resources Committee for approval.
- 2.6 During the year, there have been 28 appointments to operational roles mainly through the wholetime recruitment process undertaken in 2020.
- 2.7 Thirty-four wholetime employees left the Service, 22 due to retirement and 12 for other reasons. This represents 7.6% of the wholetime workforce.
- 2.8 A decision was made to delay the planned whole-time recruitment campaign and migration process in 2021 due to budgetary issues. However, a recruitment campaign has commenced for appointment to initial training courses in 2023. This delay in recruitment will lead to vacancies on the ridership pending the out-turn of the April course in July 2023. This may be off-set by a migration and transfer processes during 2022.

ON-CALL (RETAINED) ESTABLISHMENT

- 2.9 As at 31 March 2022, there were 241 On-Call personnel working from sixteen On-Call sections across the County.
- 2.10 The Service has continued to focus on recruitment to On-Call roles during 2021-2022, running 2 campaigns with 13 new trainees appointed in 2021. A further 10 trainees commenced training in April 22 and 11 in July 2022. Two recruitment campaigns are planned during 2022, to recruit to courses in 2023.
- 2.11 Thirty-one On-Call employees left the Service, 5 due to retirement, 11 to take up wholetime positions, and 12 for other reasons. This represents 12.5% of the On-Call workforce.
- 2.12 On-Call recruitment and retention remain an ongoing challenge for the fire sector nationally due to the limitations of recruitment pools of applicants who

live or work within the required five-minute response time of a station and the commitment required to attend incidents and training whilst undertaking a primary employment.

- 2.13 In response to this, a project to review On-Call Pay and Contracts project is being piloted, with the aim of improving recruitment and retention, by offering greater flexibility to existing and prospective employees. The success of this trial will be evaluated in August 2022 to establish whether this option will be rolled out to other On-Call stations.

SUPPORT ESTABLISHMENT

- 2.14 As at 31 March 2022, the Service employed 174 (163.6) employees in support roles against an establishment of 152 (149.05fte) posts. However, it should be noted that, of these, 22 are employed on fixed-term contracts.
- 2.15 Twenty-four appointments were made during 2021-22, with 13 of these to fixed term roles. Fixed term appointments are made to temporarily fill substantive vacancies or to provide short-term expert skills to support specific projects or priorities.
- 2.16 Forty-three support employees left the Service during 2021-22, which accounts for 24.5% of the support workforce. This is a significant and unprecedented level of turnover and is recognised as a risk to the Authority in terms of resources and loss of skills and knowledge. A review into recruitment and retention will be undertaken during 2022 with the aim of addressing any potential issues, establishing the Service as an employer of choice, and reducing turnover of existing staff.

OTHER ACTION POINTS

- 2.17 In addition to succession planning, other key workforce objectives within the 2021-23 plan are centred on improving equality and sickness absence figures.
- 2.18 In terms of equality, it is a stated objective for the Service to increase the number of operational female employees in wholetime roles, the number of women in operational roles increased during 2021-22 by 3 (48 overall) or 7.2% of the operational workforce.
- 2.19 The work undertaken to support female applicants for the last firefighter recruitment process had a positive outcome in 2020 with 15% (78) of applications from women. Of these, five were successful through the selection stage (although one candidate failed at the medical stage), which represents 17.8% of successful applicants. A success rate of 6.4% compared to 4.1% for male applicants.
- 2.20 Due to the delay in commencing wholetime recruitment in 2021 there has been more time to implement positive action initiatives and to encourage and work with more potential female applicants on areas like fitness to improve their chances of success in the selection process. The Service aims to increase the numbers of women applying for firefighter careers in the 2022 campaign.

- 2.21 Overall, women account for 17% of the workforce. The greatest proportion of women are employed in support roles (54.59%).
- 2.22 The number of employees from BAME backgrounds has slightly increased from 40 to 44 (this does not include employees from White Irish or White Other backgrounds), equating to 5.23% of the total workforce. There are currently 30 operational employees from BAME backgrounds, which represents 4.5% of the operational workforce.
- 2.23 The Service does not set equality targets but aspires toward the local population census figure of 11.2% for BAME employees as a reflection of the community. Positive action initiatives have been undertaken over the last few months to encourage more applicants from BAME backgrounds to apply for a career as a firefighter and this has generated a significant amount of interest. The Service's aim is to increase the numbers of BAME applicants applying for firefighter careers in the 2022 campaign.
- 2.24 The average sickness absence rate for Service employees was 9.18 days (excluding Covid absence). The average sickness absence rate for Service employees was 9.18 days (excluding Covid absence) in 2021-22, an increase from 8.47 days in the previous year. However, this still is above the Service target of 6.5 days per employee. The majority of absence (69.25%) was due to long-term medical conditions which were certified by a GP and were longer than 28 days in duration. There have been two medical retirements during the year.
- 2.25 The Service has implemented additional support to reduce the level of absence arising from musculo-skeletal and mental health conditions in the workforce, which are the two main reasons for sickness absence. This includes access to an Employee Assistance Programme, access to physiotherapy support and the impending recruitment of a part-time mental health practitioner to the Occupational Health Team for a fixed term period.
- 2.26 Progress against these targets, and other aspects of the Workforce Plan, are reported to the Human Resources Committee throughout the year.

WORKFORCE PLAN 2022-24

- 2.27 As a result of the financial pressures facing the Authority during the period of this Plan, an efficiency review (Futures 25) will be presented to the Authority in September 2022. This may have workforce implications which will be factored into workforce plans going forward.
- 2.28 The current plan has been revised to reflect projections into 2024 and a summary of current workforce planning is set out below:
- 2.29 **Wholetime Establishment** – for the purposes of this workforce plan it is assumed that operational establishment will remain at its present figure of 431 posts.

- 2.30 The outcome from the 2022 firefighter selection process is likely to lead to a temporary over-establishment of apprentice firefighters during 2023 as recruits fill the vacancies left as operational personnel leave the Service. This front-loading to plan for projected retirements is factored into budget planning and reflects the fact that it takes 26 months to complete the firefighter apprenticeship and become competent in role.
- 2.31 Workforce projections suggest that the Service may lose up to 54 operational personnel by April 2024, offset by new starters during 2022-23. This may include a migration and/or transfer process to meet immediate crewing requirements. Figures are kept under regular review as part of quarterly workforce reporting to the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 2.32 There is still some uncertainty in projecting retirement levels due to the ongoing issues around the Firefighter's Pension Scheme. For this reason, assumptions have been made that 92 scheme members who attain 30 years' service (or reach the age of 60) will continue to retire and at least 50% of individual's who attain 25 years' service (at aged over 50) will still choose to retire early under their 1992 scheme provisions.
- 2.33 Succession planning and leadership development programmes are in place to fill supervisory and middle manager vacancies in line with retirement forecasts.
- 2.34 **On-Call Establishment** – campaigning for On-Call personnel runs constantly throughout the year, with events held at local stations to promote engagement with local communities, and with central support provided by the On-Call and Human Resources teams.
- 2.35 It is anticipated that there may be up to 26 leavers per year from the On-Call workforce in 2022 and 2023. The majority of leavers leave due to relocation of their home base or for reasons linked to their primary employment which result in difficulties in maintaining availability.
- 2.36 The focus will continue to be on increasing On-Call firefighter appointments and to reducing the numbers leaving the Service. As previously reported, a Pay and Contracts project has commenced, with the aim of enhancing both recruitment and retention by offering greater flexibility in cover hours provided.
- 2.37 **Support Establishment** – it is anticipated that up to 26 employees per year will leave the Service in 2022 and 2023, either due to the expiry of a fixed term contract or to take up alternative employment. The recruitment and retention review previously referenced in the report will seek to reduce this level of turnover and improve attraction rates to Service roles.
- 2.38 During 2022, the Service will be introducing a competency framework for support roles. This will identify current and future skills needs and support the development of individuals and job roles.
- 2.39 The raising of the normal retirement age and pension scheme changes will result in an increasing age profile for those working in both operational and support roles, which will have implications for fitness, well-being and

employee support. The impact of an ageing workforce will be considered alongside the impacts of an ageing population which will also have implications for the delivery of services to the community.

- 2.40 The need to make the workforce more representative and diverse will continue to be a priority for the Service, with the aim of improving the current workforce profile to better reflect the local population. Whilst targeted positive action measures will continue to be used, the Service will also use service delivery activities as opportunities to engage with local communities about a career with the fire service and to promote the Service more widely as an employer of choice.
- 2.41 There are a number of external factors which will impact upon workforce planning and these are set out within Appendix A of the Workforce Plan.
- 2.42 The Workforce Plan forms a key part of the Service's planning process and ensures that the Service has the requisite number of skilled employees, deployed to achieve and maintain the delivery of corporate objectives. The action plan sets out detailed departmental workforce issues and priorities linked to the delivery of the corporate strategy and business plans. These identify succession planning requirements and skill gaps to ensure that the Service has the requisite plans in place to meet delivery objectives.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The management of establishment levels is key to the overall management of staffing budgets which constitute 79% of the overall revenue budget. Accurate predictions are always difficult but are still essential to budget setting with issues such as the overall establishment, the distribution of staff within roles and the numbers of staff in development all having considerable influence on budgets.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The equalities implications are contained within the report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

The Service is actively engaged in identifying opportunities to collaborate with other public-sector bodies on the provision of services to increase effectiveness or efficiency. As such collaborative arrangements may have workforce implications, the POD department will provide professional advice and support to the Service to ensure that issues are dealt with in line with the requirements of employment law and local policy and procedure, and provide support for NFRS employees.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Workforce Plan

2022-24



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INTRODUCTION

This Plan is designed to highlight issues relating to corporate “people” requirements over the next year, with a look-ahead to 2023, and links into Strategic Planning and Business Planning objectives.

The report seeks to forecast:

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

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

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

REVIEW OF KEY WORKFORCE METRICS 2021-22

- The total turnover for 2021-22 was 12.7% which represents 108 leavers. This compares to 7.8% in 2020-21.

- Turnover by work group:

		Comparative 2019-20 turnover
Wholetime	- 7.6% (34)	7.3% (21)
On Call	- 12.5% (31)	10.6% (28)
Support	- 24.5% (43)	10.3% (15)

- The Service appointed 65 new staff during 2021-22. This compares to 48 new appointments in 2020/21;

- Starters by work group:

Wholetime:	28
On Call:	13
Support:	24 (13 FTC)

Established Posts

The number of established posts (excluding on-call roles), has remained stable, there has been a slight decrease overall from 582.78 (fte) to 580.05 (fte) due to permanent changes to the establishment

Overall staffing numbers (headcount) has reduced slightly from 861 to 842 employees in post (March 2022).

CURRENT WORKFORCE

Work group	Establishment 31/03/2022 FTE	Actual 31/03/22 FTE (Headcount)	Establishment 31/03/21 FTE	Actual 31/03/21 FTE (Headcount)	Difference (Establishment) FTE)	Difference (Actual) FTE (Headcount)
Principal Officer	3	2 + 1 T/ACFO	3	3	-0	0
Wholetime	428	421.3 (424.3fte)	428	425.76 (427)	0	-4.46
On-call		241		254		-13
Support	149.05 (152)	163.6 (174)	151.78 (160)	168.02 (177)	-2.73--	-4.42
Total	580.05 (583)	828.9 (842)	582.78 (591)	850.78 (861)	-2.73	-21.88

The overall workforce establishment is summarised below;

Operational Roles

As of March 2022, the whole-time establishment has remained unchanged at 431 posts, with no changes throughout 2021. This is against a workforce strength of 427 (424.3) FTE at March 2022. This figure is not reflective of extractions from the ridership for internal/external, temporary promotions, maternity leave, long-term absence or for other legitimate reasons which stands at -22 at the end of March 2022.

Turnover during 2021/22 was 7.6% accounting for 34 leavers. This compares to a prediction of 34 leavers in the previous workforce plan;

- Average absence levels from April 2021 to March 2022 were 8.9 days per employee (excluding covid absence), which is above the 6 days performance target set and an increase of 53.5% (1305 days) from 2020/21. It should be noted that absence figures reduced significantly in 2020-21 which accounts for the comparative increase. Compared to 2019-20 (pre-covid period) absence rose by only 0.05%.
- At the end of March 2021, the whole-time workforce was 4 fte below establishment.
- During the year, there have been 28 appointments to wholetime operational roles, accounting for 25 Apprentice Firefighters, 2 transferee Firefighters and one Station Manager.

- There were 41 substantive internal promotions made to supervisory (37), middle (3) and strategic manager (1) roles during the review period and 1 external appointment (Station Manager).
- Two temporary appointments have been made to strategic roles (1 x ACFO and 1 x Area Manager) pending a review of strategic manager roles.
- 6 on-call firefighters transferred temporarily to the wholetime duty system to improve strength whilst 15.24 fte wholetime staff were seconded on to COVID support activities. Support for COVID programmes has now ended and the temporary contracts have been terminated.
- A decision was made to delay the planned whole-time recruitment campaign and migration process in 2021 due to budgetary issues. However, a recruitment campaign has commenced for appointment to initial training courses in 2023. This delay in recruitment will lead to vacancies on the ridership pending the out-turn of the April course in July 2023 unless this is offset by a migration/transfer process.
- During 2022, a Fire Cover Review will be undertaken which may impact upon the number of wholetime operational roles. The outcome from this review will determine the number of new recruits appointed in 2023.

On-call Roles

As part of a strategy to increase the number of On-call personnel, there has continued to be a concerted effort to recruit to On-call sections during 2021 with 2 recruitment campaigns being run through the year. This has led to the appointment of 13 Fire-fighters, with a further 10 commencing training in April 22 and 11 due to commence training in July 2022. However, this must be off-set against turnover, which accounts for 31 leavers in the past year.

There are currently 241 On-call personnel providing cover across all On-call sections compared with 254 in 2020-21 (-13). A pilot programme trialling flexible cover arrangements commenced at Bingham and Stapleford stations during 2021 with the aim of improving recruitment and retention rates.

At the end of March 2022, 54.5 units of cover were vacant at those stations not involved in the pilot programme.

- Turnover during 2020/21 was 12.5%, accounting for 31 leavers. This compares to a prediction of 26 leavers in the previous workforce plan;
- There were 10 substantive promotions to a substantive or temporary On-call Crew or Watch Manager supervisory position in 21/22, of these 7 were dual contract appointments. A lack of promotion opportunities for substantive On-call firefighters could impact upon back retention and resilience, and is a risk raised in previous workforce plans.

- Currently, there are 62 dual contract arrangements in place (whole-time firefighters undertaking secondary employment as on-call firefighters) providing 36 units of cover. Additionally, there are 9 employees providing cover at Stapleford and Bingham. This makes 71 dual employees in total.
- The Service has implemented a restriction on the numbers of dual employment contracts per station to manage the potential risk to operational resilience once the numbers of dual contract arrangements have reached an optimum level.
- It is worth noting that 13 out of 16 (81%) On-call Watch Managers and 35 out of 46 (76%) On-call Crew Managers are employed on a dual employment basis.
- In addition, there are 13 temporary Crew Managers who are supernumerary to establishment to facilitate development and succession planning.
- In total, supervisory roles account for 25.7% of all On-call roles (31.1% including the development roles).
- Average absence figures during 2021/22 were 14.12 days per employee (excluding covid absence), which is above the target of 11 days per employee. This is an increase of 45.3% (1079 days) on 2020-21 levels. However, compared to 2019-20 (pre-covid period) absence rose by only 0.09%.
- On-call recruitment and retention remains an ongoing challenge due to the limitations of recruitment from a pool of applicants who live or work within the required five-minute response time of a station and the commitment required to attend incidents and training whilst, quite often, undertaking a primary employment. In response to this a project to review On-Call Pay and Contracts is now underway which aims to improve overall availability and retention alongside improving the volume of new applicants during the recruitment process. The success of this trial will be evaluated in August 2022 to establish whether this option will be rolled out to other On-call stations.

Fire-fighters in Development

		31 March 2022	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
WDS	FF	28	9	32
	CM	3	0	1
	WM	0	0	3
	SM	1	1	3
Total		32	10	39
OC	FF	16	25	42
	CM	1	1	2
	WM	1	1	0
Total		18	27	44

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

The increase in the numbers of wholetime firefighters in development during 2021 is a direct outcome of the Firefighter recruitment process in 2020.

Conversely, there has been a reduction in the number of On-call employees in development due to the lower intake during 2021 – there will be a further intake of up to 21 trainee On-call firefighters in April and July 2022, which will see the numbers in development increase significantly.

- It should be noted that should there be an increase in recruitment activity, trainees may take between 26 months to become fully competent and this requires a resource commitment from both the Service Development Centre trainers and service delivery managers.
- An increase in the number of operational personnel in development may create challenges for local managers. .

Support Roles

The number of established roles has decreased by 4 during 2021-2022 to 152 with a strength of 174 (163.6 fte). Of these, the Service currently has 22 personnel on fixed term contracts (excluding internal temporary moves) which are either held against establishment vacancies or are supernumerary to establishment.

- Turnover during 2021/22 was 24.5%, accounting for 44 leavers. This compares to a prediction of 18 leavers in the previous workforce plan;
- The Service appointed 24 support staff in 2021/22, 13 of which were to fixed-term contracts;
- At the end of March 2022, there were 9 support role vacancies. However, the majority of these are currently in the process of recruitment or are covered by temporary or fixed term appointments;
- Average absence levels for support employees during 2021/22 was 9.9 days per employee (excluding covid absence), this is above the performance target of seven days per employee, and an increase of 96% (808.5 days) from 2020-21. It should be noted that absence figures reduced significantly in 2020-21 which accounts for the comparative increase. Compared to 2019-20 (pre-covid period) absence rose by 8.97%.
- The increase in turnover during 2021-22 has been significant. Whilst increased movement in the labour market is a national trend, the increase may also relate to the move to the Joint Headquarters and to increases in the cost of living, which have seen public sector pay rates become increasingly uncompetitive. This increase in turnover has been identified on the corporate risk register and will be kept under review during 2022-23.

- A workforce review has commenced and will report during 2022. The outcome of this review may lead to a restructuring of established posts. At the present time it is not anticipated that this will lead to a reduction in posts.

ANTICIPATED TURNOVER AND RECRUITMENT

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

Wholetime Duty System

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

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

2022-24

- It is anticipated that the Service may lose up to 39 Whole-time uniformed personnel before 31 March 2024: 23 due to retirement at 30 years' service; 2 due to ill-health and 14 for other reasons.
- A number of employees are opting to retire from age 50, with 25 years' service. If it is assumed that 50% of those who could take early retirement before 30 years' service are factored into the workforce plan, an additional 15.5 uniformed personnel may choose to take early retirement during the period 2022-24.
- This takes the total of potential leavers to 31 March 2024 to 54.5 leavers plus the four existing vacancies, it is therefore predicted that up to 59 whole-time personnel may need to be recruited before 31 March 2024, based on a worst case scenario, and assuming that the current whole-time establishment remains unchanged at 431 full time roles.
- Of these, up to 14.5 retirements will be at Firefighter level.
- Of these, up to 7 retirements will be at supervisory level and up to 8.5 at Middle Manager level and, potentially, 2 at Brigade Manager level.
- The Service is already undertaking positive action for a selection campaign which will open in August 2022 and conclude in January 2023. Given current, known and projected vacancies during 2022-24, it is proposed that up to 36

new, migrated and transferred Firefighters commence employment either during 2022 (migration/transfers) or from April 2023, with a further intake commencing training in January 2024.

- Actual numbers will be affected by the actual level of turnover and will need to be reviewed in April 2023. The impact of any decision about whole-time establishment numbers as part of the Futures 25 agenda may also affect future Firefighter appointments, particularly into 2024 and whether or not the Service undertakes further recruitment during 2023.
- Given that there is potential to lose another 6 Crew Managers through retirement during 2022-24, it is critical that development of prospective Crew Managers is accelerated in order to fill vacancies as they arise.
- Given that there is potential to lose 6 Station Managers through retirement during 2022-24, it is critical that development of prospective Station Managers is accelerated in order to fill vacancies as they arise.

On-call Duty System

2022-24

- The On-call could potentially lose 8 individuals due to retirement at age 60+, increasing to 12 if 50% of eligible individuals choose to retire between the ages of 55 and 59, before 31 March 2024.
- It is likely that 52 On-call personnel in total will leave (based on average turnover rates) before 31 March 2024. Whilst the Service has committed to recruiting to On-call roles over the last two years, and has committed significant resources to support this, with an average of three campaigns per year, it has proved difficult to retain personnel at a rate that outstrips the number of new starters. This is a perennial problem that will require measures to support retention, as well as recruitment.
- As a result of campaigns in 2021-22, up to 21 new On-call trainees will commence their training in April and July 2022.
- One recruitment campaign is scheduled to run during 2022-23 for a course date in January 2023 and which may potentially lead to the appointment of a further 12 trainees. Further campaigns and courses are at the planning stage and being led by the SOoC team.
- The Service has completed two on-call recruitment campaigns during 2020-21, with the appointment of 13 trainee firefighters (plus 21 pending – see above).

SUPPORT ROLES

2022-24

- There are likely to be 5 retirements before 31 March 2024.
- Based on past turnover levels, it is likely that up to 52 staff will leave the service before 31 March 2024. This includes those linked with the expiry of fixed-term positions (currently 22). It should be noted that the exceptionally high level of turnover (44) during 2021-22 will have skewed the average 3-year forecast and that actual turnover should be lower than predicted.
- The high level of leavers from support roles has been highlighted as a risk for the Service if it continues at current levels, reflecting a loss of corporate memory as well as reduced resources to deliver on our objectives. There are likely to have been a number of factors contributing to this turnover – which may include the relocation to Joint Headquarters, the high level of labour movement in the post-covid period (following very low levels during 2020), the increasing cost of living and inability of the public sector to maintain competitive pay levels and limited internal development opportunities. It is proposed that a review will be undertaken at Area Manager level to establish and address issues of both recruitment and retention for support roles.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Wholetime and on call acquisition

It is anticipated that, based on estimated turnover figures, there is likely to be a need for two acquisition courses during 2022-24. There may also be a need for a transitional training if a migration process is undertaken.

On-call turnover is estimated at 52 for the period 22-24. One On-Call acquisition course (12 appointments) is scheduled for January 2023. Planning for further recruitment and trainee courses is ongoing, although the challenges of recruiting to the courses is recognised. The Operational Training Team continue to work with the Sustainability of On-Call team to diversify acquisition training options to appeal to the broadest range of applicants possible.

Revalidation of Core Operational Competencies

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

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

Revalidation requirements are outlined in the table below:

Core Competence	Standard	Revalidation Frequency
Breathing Apparatus	NOG BA Foundation	Every 2 years (broken down into 1 year)
Casualty Care	Currently First aid at work and IEC – soon to be FREC 3	Every 3 years
Extrication	Currently not revalidated, will start next year	Planned to be every 3 years
HAZMAT	Currently not revalidated, will start next year	Planned to be every 3 years
Water/Water Safety	Rescue 3	Every 3 years
Working at Height	Out Reach	Every 3 years
Driving	NFCC – soon to be section 19	Every 5 years
Incident Command L1-	Foundation for Incident Command	2 Yearly

Specialist roles

Specialist roles encompass specialist operational competencies for example for the Service's Technical Rescue Unit, MTA, ELS and driving and operation of specialist vehicles. In addition, a range of specialist Officer Competencies are required to support functional command roles such as Fire Investigation, Hazardous Materials Advisor and NILO.

Work has been undertaken to develop a maintenance of competence (MOC) programme for all specialist roles during 2021, with recruitment and development of a number of specialist roles.

Corporate Training Needs

Generic training gaps for the workforce have been identified as:

- Upskilling managers in HR skills (HR Essentials)
- ICT skills
- Inclusion and faith awareness

These will be areas of focus during 2022-24.

LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

Turnover predictions

During the review period, it is anticipated that 7 supervisory managers and 9 middle managers may be promoted or recruited to role. Additionally, projected turnover of support staff is likely to lead to vacancies at a managerial level. This will be supported through the different levels of leadership development.

Aspiring leaders

In order to promote an interest in future leadership roles, Aspiring Leaders programmes will be run in 2022-23.

The Aspiring Leaders programme aimed at firefighters has now been amalgamated with last year's 'Look Ahead' programme for prospective Crew Managers for those who may wish to apply for their first supervisory role in 2022/23.

An Aspiring Middle Manager programme commenced in 2021 for those interested in the next step up to Station Manager or equivalent support role.

Development programmes

The latest cohort of delegates for the ILM3 Award in Leadership commenced in May 2022. This programme is for supervisory manager (operational and support staff) and provides development at the first level of line management. A further course will be scheduled to run in 2022/23 subject to outcomes from PDR outcomes.

The ILM 5 in Leadership commenced in October 2021 for newly promoted middle managers or those in role with development needs. The programme and provider are both subject to review but a further programme will run during the 2022-23 financial year.

Further details of the ILM Level 3 and Level 5 programmes are available within the L&D Prospectus.

A pilot Leadership Transformation Programme which is led by Nottingham City Council and delivered via Nottingham Trent University is currently in progress, with the aim of offering further cohorts through to 2024. This is aimed at Group Manager and equivalent level for those with the aspiration to be our future strategic leaders.

Talent Management

The Service will also be seeking to introduce a pilot Talent Management programme during 2022 to identify and develop future leaders. This work will assist the Service in proactively identifying and developing talented people to ensure we harness their skills and abilities in the right way and the right time. We will also ensure that we embed the talent management tools developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council.

WELL BEING

The Well-being strategy ([link](#)) is a focus for ensuring that we support our employees to maintain good physical, emotional and mental health. The Service will maintain its commitment to providing the highest level of support for its employees to achieve this through access to occupational health expertise, employee assistance and health programmes (including access to counselling support) and health and fitness guidance.

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

The Service has introduced a new Employee Assistance Programme provider during 2021 and has launched a new mental health app (Back Up Buddy) and signed up to the Mental Health at Work commitment led by Mind (Blue Light Together programme) as a benchmark for mental health support. We are also working with Relate to provide on-site counselling.

In terms of operational fitness, the Service Fitness Advisor will be launching a pilot during 2022 to review vocational fitness requirements and support conditioning programmes which build core strength which, in the longer term, are intended to reduce injury, impact and maintain operational fitness as part of the normal ageing process. This will be linked to a NFCC/Firefit review.

Promoting a culture which recognizes the importance of well-being acknowledges the link between high performance, high morale and optimum health. The need for good communication, coaching skills in managers, skills in dealing with difficult issues will be equally important in creating a workplace in which people can perform at their best.

Sickness Absence

The last year has seen an increase in sickness absence levels compared to 2020-21. However, this should be off-set against the significant reduction (25%) in sickness absence levels during the core Covid period. If comparison is made with pre-Covid absence levels in 2019-20, Wholetime and On-call absence rates have remained relatively unchanged, however absence for those in support roles has slightly increased.

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

EQUALITIES METRICS AND AIMS

A breakdown of the ethnic make-up of the workforce is set out at Appendix two. Workforce profiling tells us that women and employees from BAME backgrounds are under-represented in the operational Wholetime and On-call workforce. Women represent 8.2% (35) of the Wholetime workforce and 5.4% (13) of the On-call workforce. BAME employees represent 5.6% (24) of the Wholetime workforce and 2.5% (6) of the On-call workforce.

BAME employees are also under-represented in support roles at 8% (14) of the workforce. Women make up 45.4% (79) of those in support roles. In the last year, 18.75% (12) of new starters were women and 7.8% (5) were from BAME backgrounds.

The gender pay gap tell us that the average pay differential between male and female employees is 15.3% and the median pay differential between male and female employees is 8.2%. This is an improvement on 2020-21 figures. This reflects the low number of women in operational management roles. This means that whilst men and women are paid the same pay for the level of role they undertake, more men than women are employed in more senior roles.

The Service does not set equality targets but aspires toward the local population census figure of 11.2% for BAME employees as a reflection of the community we serve.

Aims

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

We are currently undertaking a raft of positive action activities ahead of the next Firefighter campaign (which will commence later in the year) with the aim of engaging with prospective applicants, including those who are currently under-represented in operational roles, to improve their fitness and understanding of the role. In this way we hope to encourage more applications from women and BME candidates.

The Service has a long-standing commitment to promoting equality, diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in service delivery and within its workforce. The Service undertook an independent review of equality in 2021 and will be working toward implementation of key recommendations over the next year.

We will seek to close the gender pay gap by encouraging women to apply for more senior roles and establishing more flexible working arrangements for our employees. We are already a Disability Confident employer and will continue to provide employees and job applicants with ready access to reasonable adjustments which will help to support them at work, or to apply for job roles with us.

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

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

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

BUDGETARY POSITION

Whilst the service has set a balanced budget for 2021/22 this has required £2m of temporary savings to be made and still requires £153k to be funded from reserves. The financial position remains at best uncertain beyond 2021/22 as the prevailing economic climate will increase financial pressures to be placed upon all public-sector bodies and the Fire Service is no exception.

In particular, inflation and pay award pressures are expected to create a deficit in the region of £2m in future years. The Service is drawing up an Efficiency Strategy to identify where the required savings can be made in 2023/24 and beyond. With employee costs representing in the region of 80% of our current budget it is unlikely that savings can be made without it impacting on staffing levels.

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

WORKFORCE ISSUES BY DEPARTMENT

Response

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

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

As described earlier in the plan, recruitment and retention of on-call personnel is an ongoing priority as the level of turnover remains high. The on-call model depends on having enough appropriately trained firefighters within a few minutes of the fire station and issues in the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters is a challenge across the sector. In 2021 a one-year trial of new on-call pay, and contract arrangements commenced with the desire to enhance the attractiveness of the role. In September 2022 the findings of this trial will be published and a decision as to whether these new arrangements should be adopted will be taken.

Emphasis remains on developing the skills of both WDS and on-call operational employees. These include specialist skills to meet new and emerging risks (such as terrorist incidents and those associated with changing climate) alongside the maintenance of traditional fire and rescue service core competencies. In May 2022

the outcome of a review into the provision of Special Appliances was published. The findings of this review will begin to be implemented in 2022 and will lead to additional localised training requirements.

In the Autumn of 2022 a new rostering system for WDS, on-call and Flexi-Duty officers will be introduced. This will enhance the Service's ability to efficiently move resources between locations when any shortfalls are identified and reduce the burden of dual-entry systems for users.

In 2022/23, under the Futures 25 programme, a review of the Service's current Fire Cover and Flexi-Officer arrangements will be undertaken to ensure that they meet the requirements of the CRMP, continue to be suitably resilient and operate within current budgetary constraints.

Balancing the demands of operational training and development with the response to incidents, the delivery of CRMP commitments (for example the completion of 13,000 Safe and Well visits and 500 Business Safety Checks in 2022/23) and the gathering of intelligence related to risks in the community and built environment, remains a challenge for Response.

Prevention, Protection and Fire Investigation

Prevention and Protection (P&P) activities have now returned to normal following the disruption caused by the Covid pandemic. P&P was further impacted during the pandemic due to numerous members of the department being seconded out of the Service to assist in the wider Public Health response to the crisis.

Turnover of staff will remain an issue for the department, particularly Green Book staff. Market trends are indicating that are staff with technical skills are sought after in a competitive jobs market. Public sector pay has fallen behind Private sector pay in recent years and there remains a national shortage of skilled individuals with fire protection skills.

There will be an increased burden on the Fire Protection department in the coming years which will require an increase in the number of Fire Safety Inspectors. New burdens are being placed on the Service by the expansion of the Regulatory (Fire Safety) Reform Order and the Building Safety Act.

It is also anticipated that the Government will require further fire safety audits on buildings above 11 metres in height and the provision of fire protection tactical advice at operational incidents. The Fire Standards for Protection also require the Service to have a 24/7 ability to deliver enforcement action in line with our statutory requirements. This will require a change to the terms and conditions of selected Fire Safety Inspectors.

The Grenfell inquiry has also directed the Service to more closely align Protection and Operational Intelligence to work more closely together. This will require Protection and Operational Intelligence to be more omni-competent in their skill sets, and result in new entrants into Protection coming from an operational/ grey book background.

Due to the current financial pressures on the Service, several posts have remained unfilled, these are –

- Grade 6 District Prevention Manager
- Grade 6 Fire Investigation Officer
- Grade 5 District Prevention Officer who is currently seconded as a Community Engagement Manager
- Grade 3 Youth Engagement Co-Ordinator
- Firefighter – Persons at Risk Team

We also have two posts which are temporarily funded through ear marked reserves and grant funding through the Home Office Fire Protection uplift fund, these are –

- A Business Education Advocate, appointed to a 24-month fixed term appointment, until October 2022.
- Occupational Therapist, three-year secondment basis until 2023.

The Service also had a further four additional SHSO roles for a Safe and Well Visits catch-up following the back log from Covid. These fixed term contracts have now been completed and the individuals have left the Service.

It is anticipated that three Firefighters and one District Prevention Officer will retire from the Service in 2023. A challenge will be presented to replace the Firefighters roles to predicted medium term issues in the operational ridership. P&P are also likely to be impacted by the current review on Green Book Middle Managers. This may necessitate a restructure once the outcomes are known.

Prevention

The new CRMP has a strategic goal to help people stay safe from fires and other emergencies. This aligns with our legal duty under the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004.

The new Vulnerable Persons module has put an increased focus on the person-centered approach to keeping people safe from fire. This focus will put further demands on the Prevention department as the population ages and their needs become more complex.

The Occupational Therapist (OT) role will become vital in linking in with health to offer a multi-agency problem solving approach to dealing with complex needs. It is hoped that the OT post can be substantiated as part of the workforce review.

The number of safe and well visits will increase to 15000 visits by 2025. This will involve a closer working relationship with Response and the Persons at Risk Team in delivering the increased number of visits. Work will be undertaken to evaluate new delivery methods to ensure that we are efficient and effective.

Education will remain pivotal to our prevention offer to the Community. We will continue to support Safety zone events in the City and County, along with Road and Water safety education in Schools and Colleges.

Fire Investigation

In October 2023, a new ISO Standard for forensic investigations will impact on the work of our fire investigation team.

This may result in a change of delivery model from the present dedicated team and flexi duty officers to an embedded fire investigation function with crime scene investigators. The Services FI Team are now co-located with our Crime Scene Investigators at Joint HQ.

In addition to the ISO Standard, the Service will host the Regional Hydrocarbon Dog Unit which will result in the appointment of a Dog Handler and Dog, funded regionally.

Protection

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

We will increase the number of fire safety audits we complete this year, along with a significant increase in building consultations that we will respond to. This will increase the workload burden placed on the department.

The Building Safety Act may also increase the demands on the Department as the Act can direct the use of resources to support the Building Safety Regulator.

The Fire Safety Act has also increased the demands on the department due to new responsibilities placed on `Responsible Persons` to provide fire safety information and plans for all building above 18 meters.

Risk, Assurance and Operational Training

The team is currently seeing vacancies in a number of key green book specialist posts including those delivering statutory function.

Increasing demand for assurance functions and those related to the gathering and sharing of risk information are continuing as a consequence of public inquiries including The Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena Inquiries. There is a requirement for enhanced resourcing, in particular relating to the gathering and sharing of risk information.

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

Additional work will be required relating to business continuity planning, including preparedness for loss of staff as a consequence of industrial action, coupled to national reform including pay and terms and conditions.

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

Operational Training

The Operational Training function is midway through a three year retirement profile which will see a further 3 competent trainers able to retire this year. Succession planning is in place and will continue through the use of firefighter and Watch Manager trainer posts. The loss of training skills and experience will result in a performance drop whilst new trainers are trained. The challenges around this are further exacerbated by ridership figures which make it difficult to release operational staff to other roles.

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

Recruitment and retention of green book driver training posts remains difficult due to pay grades not reflecting market rate for these critical posts, coupled with a competitive recruitment market due to a shortage of LGV drivers and trainers nationally.

Corporate Support

In 2021, 'Corporate Support' and ICT departments came together under one line manager to align the delivery of support services across the organisation.

The Service's new approach to business planning and delivery of the CRMP continues to be embedded with further work envisaged across all three years of the current CRMP. This is coupled by an increased focus on performance management, aligning this to the CRMP, and ensuring that information management is accurate, assured and used by all levels in the organisation to monitor progress against the Strategic Goals. The temporary post of Business Intelligence Manager will be evaluated during the 2022/23 year with a view to substantiating this post to support the increase in focus on performance management within the CRMP.

The Service's ICT team has also been restructured to broaden the previous role of ICT Change Team to a wider organisational change team, supporting the Service's projects and change programmes. This has also seen the ICT Service Delivery team assume responsibility for implementing changes to the Service's ICT infrastructure.

The Service currently has three fixed-term posts associated with the move from the Service's old Headquarters to the new Joint Headquarters. The majority of this work is aligned to the decommissioning of old equipment at Bestwood Lodge and the migration of Servers to 'the cloud'. Work continues within the Team to facilitate the transfer of teams to their new locations as well as wider organisational improvements and maintenance of current systems and hardware.

The risk of cyber threats continues to be a present threat to the Service and work is being undertaken to ensure that the Service is compliant to required standards and presents a safe and secure environment for communications and working practices.

The Service continues to support the national Emergency Services Network programme and a permanent post has been established to facilitate the local works required of this programme. This post continues to be shared collaboratively with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service and works regionally to ensure progress is maintained against the required roadmap.

The new approaches and workstreams place a more sustained, continuous demand upon the Corporate Support and ICT teams with a dependence on the specialist skills of personnel within the Team. Work is being undertaken to reduce the number of single-person dependencies and this work will continue across the duration of this plan.

The loss of personnel with specialist skills, and the turnover of staff, continues to present a challenge to the department with challenges in recruitment of personnel currently being experienced. Delays to recruitment impact on a relatively small team, and absence of personnel for other reasons, present challenges and delays to the progression of key workstreams.

People and Organisational Development (POD)

There has been an unprecedented number of leavers within the HR team during 2021-22 and new appointments have been made to fill or cover for these roles. There will therefore be a period of transition across the department whilst new staff are inducted and trained into their new roles. The move to Joint Headquarters is now complete and the new working arrangements are generally working well. Other key workforce challenges during 2022-23 are:

Preparations are ongoing for Wholetime recruitment, which will begin in the Summer. This requires significant HR resources over a period of several months in terms of administration of the application process, shortlisting, role related testing and coordination of an assessment centre. New recruits then need to be on-boarded before the first training course commences in April 2023.

This is in addition to normal HR activity and high levels of recruitment across all employee groups. A review will be undertaken during 2022 to identify and address issues relating to recruitment and retention and this is likely to lead to changes to current approaches. There will be high demands on HR Business Partners, who are currently operating with a vacancy due to a retirement earlier in the year. A new development role of HR Officer has recently been approved by the Authority to replace the HR Business Partner vacancy and recruitment for this role should see an appointment in the Autumn of 2022. This role will focus on recruitment, policy development and project support which are areas that are under resourced in the current structure.

The level of pensions administration has greatly increased due to national changes to the firefighter pension scheme in the last year. The changes are complex and will

require dedicated support from the HR manager and administration team. This may require some short-term additional support.

The Occupational Health and Fitness (OHF) team has seen significant pressure in recent months due to the loss of four team members, including the OH Manager. Contingency arrangements have been implemented to maintain support to the Service, including out sourcing medical referrals. This is likely to continue until September 2022 when a new Occupational Health and Fitness Manager commences in post.

The OHF team are planning to develop district hubs and station visits over the next year to improve accessibility and promote the health and well-being agenda more widely. A new OH database will also go live during 2022 which will require additional training and process changes for the team. The Station Fitness Advisor will also be implementing a pilot to review current strength standards and role related functional testing, which should enhance future fitness training and assessment. A focus for the team will be reducing instances of Musculo-skeletal injury and support for mental health.

The organisational development and inclusion (ODI) team have been involved in undertaking positive action ahead of the wholetime recruitment process to encourage a more diverse range of applicants and this will continue into 2022. Work has also been undertaken to develop better community engagement and support internal employee networks – this will continue to be a focus. This has been achieved through short term secondments into fixed-term roles and we aim to establish these roles as permanent posts during 2022-23 (subject to funding) to further progress the diversity and inclusion agenda.

Overall the next year will be a period of consolidation and development for the POD team.

Procurement and Resources

The 2020 restructure has now been embedded across the department, however some of the proposed changes proved inefficient and a further realignment within the Engineering and Estates team are required.

Engineering

Within the Engineering team, by separating the Hydrant maintenance team away from Equipment we now have 3 distinctive workstreams, the additional two Hydrant and Equipment Maintenance Technicians ensures greater resilience. Some of the roles within this team will be reviewed this year to reflect changes current and future job requirements.

On retirement of the Breathing Apparatus (BA) Officer the accountability for maintenance and repair of BA equipment will now be the Engineering Manager with the day to day responsibilities being undertaken by the Asset and Equipment Officer, this includes the line management of the BA Technician. A report will be shortly presented to AMT proposing this realignment to the Engineering Team structure.

The Fleet Transport team remains effective and efficient, that said the Fleet Maintenance Manager will be taking Flexible Retirement 01 Aug 22 reducing his hours from 37 to 22.2, this arrangement will be reviewed after 6 months.

Estates

The two Site Supervisor Handypersons have now adapted to mobile working, however existing duties at Bestwood Lodge are restricting the amount of other site maintenance activities. Once Bestwood lodge is closed to NFRS staff, increased duties will be allocated removing some of NFRS dependency on external contractors, this includes PAT testing, a contract currently outsourced at over £20k a year, and some low skilled tasks allocated away from the MAC Contractor.

This past couple of years have been a very busy time for the Estates Team, especially the Estates Manger implementing two major contractual changes with new MAC Contractors and a major upgrade the Estates CAFM Concerto system. To greater assist the Estate Manager and undertake duties of Energy Manager, the 2020 restructure included a higher grade more technical Estates and Facilities Officer. A review will be undertaken to assess roles within the Estates team with a view to managing estates administration more efficiently.

Procurement

The 2020 restructure included the addition of an Assistant Procurement Manager, this has proved greater resilience to high value procurement activities, however, the team have suffered somewhat through gaps in post caused by Staff departures and secondments backfilled with temporary fixed term contracts. Once the team is back to full establishment strength the team should function and be a high performing unit.

Finance

The finance department has been stable for several years, although it currently has a vacancy for an apprenticeship role at Grade 3.

Changes to the audit regulations have significantly increased the burden of work on the team to facilitate the audit of the Statement of Accounts. The Fire Authority approved the appointment of a new post in the team in February 2021 to enable the team to better meet the increasing workload of audit, pensions and VAT compliance. It has been very difficult to appoint to the post which was advertised 3 times before it was filled, and then only for 4 days per week rather than full time. This reflects the reducing pool of public sector accountants after a reduction in training budgets across all public sector employers. A further challenge is the salary that the service offers is significantly less than private sector and some other regional public sector organisations. This makes it difficult to compete in a job market where demand far outweighs supply. The difficulties in recruiting to vacant posts is expected to be a long term issue for the team.

The age profile of the team is of concern given that 75% of the team is aged over 50 and have predominantly been with the organisation for many years. This requires

considered succession planning, especially given the difficulties in recruiting appropriately trained staff in the current recruitment climate.

The increasing complexity of pension legislation and the implementation of McCloud Employment Tribunal remedy outcome have placed an additional burden on the Finance Team. The service procures specialist advice from Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service to help mitigate risk in this area. In addition to this, a part time pensions post was authorised by Fire Authority in May 22 to undertake pensions management work. This will help mitigate the risk of misinterpreting legislation and ensure that the service continues to respond in a timely manner to legislative changes as well as ensuring that the Pension Board is properly trained and receives timely, accurate information.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy and future budget planning will be a key piece of work for the team in order to ensure that funding is aligned with the priorities outlined in the CRMP, especially in the current challenging financial environment.

INTERNAL DRIVERS: WORKFORCE ISSUES

Corporate issues which underpin the workforce during 2022-24 include:

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

EXTERNAL DRIVERS: WORKFORCE ISSUES

National influences on workforce issues during 2022-24 include:

- Fire reform White Paper
- Fire-fighter Pension scheme changes – impact of McCloud appeal judgement on early detriment cases and the Matthews (part-time workers) case
- Outcomes from Grenfell Public Inquiry/impact on Fire Protection
- National Pay Review/Broadening of Role Maps/Potential for Industrial Action
- Skills Shortages
- Increased collaboration with partners
- Recommendations from the HMICFRS 'State of Fire and Rescue – The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2021'

NFCC

- NFCC People Strategy 2017-22
- NFCC Inclusion Strategy

- NFCC Leadership Strategy
- NFCC Professional standards and code of ethical practice (under development)

APPENDIX 2

EQUALITIES PROFILE

Gender :

Workforce by Gender

Gender	Wholetime	On-call	Support	Total	%
Male	391	228	79	698	83.00%
Female	35	13	95	143	17.00%
Total	426	241	174	841	

- As of March 2022, women constituted 17% (143 of the total workforce which is a slight increase of 2.1% from 2020/21. Of these, 48 women are employed in operational roles (including management roles), which represents 7.2% of operational roles undertaken.
- 3.98% (8) of Crew and Watch Managers are women and there are no female middle managers at Station or Group Manager level. As at March 2022, one principal officer is female and two are male, all operational area managers are men, although there are three non-operational female Strategic Managers (Area Manager equivalents) within the Strategic Leadership Team.
- Within the support workforce there continues to be more women (95) than men employed (79). However, it should be noted that men occupy higher numbers of senior organisational positions at Grade 8 and above (61%) than women (39%).

Ethnic origin:

1

Ethnic Origin	Wholetime	On-Call	Support	Total	%
BAME	24	6	14	44	5.23%
Not declared	21	7	7	35	4.16%
White British	360	216	146	722	85.85%
White Irish / White Other	21	12	7	40	4.76%
Total	426	241	174	841	

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

- As of March 2022, employees from BAME groups constituted 5.23% (44) of the workforce (excluding employees who defined themselves as Irish and White Other). Of these, 4.5% (30) were employed in operational roles.
- In comparison 2020/21, the overall number of BAME employees has increased by 4 (0.5%)
- It should be noted that 35 people have chosen not to define their ethnic origin which is a reduction from 38 in 2020 which may indicate that employees feel more comfortable in disclosing their ethnicity through the recruitment process.
- There continues to be a low number of employees from BAME backgrounds in operational supervisory roles at 2.98% (6), and there are no middle managers or senior operational managers from BAME backgrounds.

Sexual Orientation:

	Wholetime	On Call	Support	Total	% Total
Bisexual	6	3	3	12	1.4
Gay/Lesbian	5	1	5	11	1.3
Straight/Heterosexual	358	220	153	729	86.7
Declined to specify	57	19	13	89	10.6
Total	426	241	174	841	100

- A number of employees (10.6%) have chosen not to state their sexual orientation, however, it should be noted that this reduced from 13.02% in 2020/21. Work is already underway through a series of webinaris and e-learning packages to raise awareness of issues faced by employees that identify as LGBT and an LGBT+ employee network has become established over the last year to raise awareness of issues.
- Numbers of employees who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual has increased from 1.41% (12) to 2.7% (23) of the work force, however this is low compared to the expected national population of 5 - 7% quoted by Stonewall.
- The Service continues to work with Stonewall to improve its performance in relation to LGBTQ+ issues.

Gender Identity

In July 2018, the Service started to monitor gender identity and gender reassignment. Declaration is voluntary and, to date 22.9 (193) of employees have provided gender reassignment data. However this shows an improvement from 2020 when only 9.66% (82) made a declaration. 34.4% (289) have provided gender identity data compared to 15.78% (134) in 2020. Whilst these figures are too low to provide any meaningful analysis, it does show an improvement in declaration rates. Work continues to raise awareness of this reporting mechanism and why the Service collects the data in an effort to improve declaration levels.

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

Disability:

	Wholetime	On Call	Support	Total	% Total
Disability	12	7	18	37	4.39
No disability	411	231	152	794	94.4
Not specified	3	3	4	11	1.3
Total	426	241	174	841	

- The declaration rate of disability at March 2022 is 4.39% (37) of the total workforce.
- The declaration rate amongst support employees is at 10.34% which is in line with the working age population in the UK that is disabled, which is approximately 10%. When operational employees are included this figure reduces to 4.39%. This is due to the fitness, strength and other functional aspects, such as sight and hearing standards, which are a requirement of operational roles. It should be noted that as a workforce gets older disability issues are likely to increase.
- Whilst disability declaration rates remain relatively low, the Service continues to raise awareness of disability issues such as dyslexia and mental health.
- It is acknowledged some employees who meet the definition of disability under the Equality Act may not consider themselves as being disabled, thus monitoring of reasonable adjustments is being considered for future reporting.

By Age:

	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	65+	Total
Wholetime	6	87	159	151	23	0	426
On-call	15	69	74	61	22	0	241
Support	15	23	40	49	44	3	174
Total	36	179	273	261	89	3	841
% Total	4.28	21.28	32.46	31.03	10.58	0.36	

- The largest age group is those between 36 – 45 years old who make up 32.46% (273) of the workforce. This has changed since 2021 when the largest age group was 46-55 and a changing age profile as employees retire and are replaced by a younger cohort of employees.
- As the typical retirement age for operational personnel is between 50 and 60, and this still accounts for 151 wholetime and 61 On-call employees, this has implications for projected turnover for the next five years, and the associated loss of experience and knowledge to the service. Succession planning is in place to account for this projected level of turnover.

- At the other end of the age scale, 4.28% (36) of all employees are aged 16-25.
- The largest group for the on-call workforce (74) are aged between 36-45 which represents 31% of all on-call firefighters. It is important that this group is developed and retained in Service to sustain workforce numbers and replace supervisory managers as they leave the service.
- Members of the Firefighter Pension Scheme (1992) may opt to take early retirement from 50 if they have at least 25 years' service; members of the 2006 and newly constituted 2015 pension schemes have a retirement age of 60 (with the option to retire from age 55 with a reduction in pension benefits). This means that the age profile of the operational workforce will steadily increase over the coming years. This will inevitably raise issues around maintaining fitness and other age-related medical issues which may arise in an ageing workforce. The Service has already begun undertaking work to address these issues through strength and conditioning programmes to build core strength and maintain fitness during the natural aging process.

APPENDIX 3

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2022-24

NBR	IDENTIFIED RISK	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE
Succession Planning			
1	Potential loss of up to 7 Fire-fighters due to retirement after 30 years' service before April 2024 Additionally, up to 8 FFs could take early retirement (with 25-29 years' service)	Maintain an overview of projected retirements against established roles during 2022-24.	Head of POD
		Intake of up to 24 FF Apprentices during 2022-23.	Area Manager (Response)
		Migration process may be required in 2022/23 subject to decisions about recruitment	
		Consider the transfer of competent FF from other FRA's as part of recruitment strategy.	
2	Loss of up to 9 Crew & Watch Managers due to retirement after 30 years' service before April 2024. Additionally, up to 5 Crew and Watch Managers could take early retirement (with 25-29 years' service)	Undertake effective succession planning, including identification of specialist roles, and promote <u>Aspiring Leaders</u> programme.	Head of POD
		Plan for a Crew Manager promotion process in 2023. Implement interim CM development roles in 2022.	Area Manager (Corporate)
		In-band progression to fill WM roles in 2023.	Area Manager (Response)
		Consider the transfer of competent supervisory managers from other FRA's	
3	Potential loss of up to 5 Middle Managers due to retirement after 30 years' service before April 2024. Additionally, up to 3 Middle Managers could take early retirement (with 25-29 years' service)	Station Manager and Group Manager selection process scheduled for summer/autumn 2022.	Head of POD
		Undertake effective succession planning, including identification of specialist roles.	Area Managers (Delivery)
		Continue <u>Aspiring Middle Manager</u> Programme throughout 2022	
		Consider green book conversion for specific roles	
4	Potential loss of 16 operational personnel for other reasons before April 2024 (resignation, ill-health retirement, transfers, dismissal)	Maintain an overview of turnover and build into succession planning and recruitment activity.	Head of POD

5	Improve current On Call vacancy levels and plan for the potential replacement of 26 leavers per year	Maintain an overview of projected retirements against established roles during 2022-24.	Head of POD
		Plan for a minimum of 3 On Call recruitment campaigns per year	SoOC team
		Undertake local recruitment campaigns	
Corporate Workforce Issues			
6	Undertake a Green Book workforce review	Recommend changes to support roles structures to FA	Leila Henry
7	Undertake a fire cover review	Recommend changes to operational establishment to FA	Head of Response
8	Undertake a review of the flexiofficer collective agreement	Negotiate and implement any changes to the CA	ACFO Mick Sharman
9	Undertake a review of sickness absence levels	Review current processes, revise target to align with national sector average, monitor absence levels through CRMP Board	Head of POD
10	Undertake a review of recruitment and retention for support (Green Book) roles	Identify any underlying issues and seek to address them	Head of POD
11	Wholetime recruitment	Undertake positive action and commence whole time recruitment in July 2022 for course commencing April 2023	Head of POD
Inclusion			
11	Improve the diversity of the workforce	Undertake positive action initiatives to increase the number of applications and success rate of BAME applicants.	OD & Inclusion Officer
		Develop community engagement opportunities	Area Manager Prevention & Protection
12	Increase the number of female operational personnel in supervisory and management roles	Identify potential female candidates for promotion and provide development opportunities.	Area Manager (Response)
Training and Development.			
13	Wholetime recruitment	Plan for two acquisition courses in 2022-23	Area Manager RAOP
14	Manage the forecasted increase in	Monitor the volume of employees in development	Area Manager (Response) / Area

	operational personnel in development	Ensure capacity to support employees in development.	Manager Risk, Assurance and Operational Training
Health, Fitness and Well-Being			
15	Aim to maintain absence levels at or below the national sector average.	Promote healthy lifestyles and support via Occupational Health interventions.	Head of POD
		Manage long term sickness interventions	
16	Review strength standards for operational firefighters	Implement a programme to establish and improve strength standards	Head of POD
17	Undertake a review of mental health support	Implement the MIND Blue Light Together programme	Head of POD
18	Undertake a review of Musculo skeletal injury	Identify any underlying issues and trends and seek to address them	Head of POD

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