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

Date: Friday, 13 January 2023 **Time:** 10.00 am

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

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

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

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

Agenda	<u>Pages</u>
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Declarations of Interests	
3 Minutes Minutes of the meeting held on 01 July 2022 (for confirmation).	3 - 6
4 Human Resources Update Report of the Chief Fire Officer	7 - 16
5 Update on Workforce Plan 2022-24 Report of the Chief Fire Officer	17 - 24
6 Equalities Monitoring Report Report of the Chief Fire Officer	25 - 38
7 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, Areas For Improvement Report of the Chief Fire Officer	39 - 44
8 Apprenticeship Update Report of the Chief Fire Officer	45 - 50

- 9 Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade (LFB)** 51 - 56
Report of the Chief Fire Officer
- 10 Exclusion of the Public**
To consider excluding the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, under Schedule 12A, Part 1, on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information
- 11 Exempt Minutes** 57 - 58
Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 01 July 2022 (for confirmation).

Any councillor who is unable to attend the meeting and wishes to submit apologies should do so via the Executive Assistant to the Chief Fire Officer on 0115 8388900

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

Governance Officer: *Catherine Ziane-Pryor, Governance Officer*
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The agenda, reports and minutes for all Human Resources Committee meetings can be viewed online at:

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

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

Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint Headquarters, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on Friday 1 July 2022 from 10:03am to 10:40am

Membership

Present

Councillor Dave Trimble (Chair)
Councillor Robert Corden
Councillor Tom Hollis
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler

Absent

None

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Candida Brudenell - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Tracy Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development
Adrian Mann - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council

1 Apologies for Absence

None.

2 Declarations of Interests

None.

3 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2022 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

4 Human Resources Update

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the key human resources metrics for the period of 1 April to 31 May 2022. The following points were discussed:

- (a) a successful on-call recruitment campaign was carried out earlier in the year, with ten new trainees starting in April and a further 11 beginning in July, with recruitment ongoing for the following training course to start in January 2023. A whole-time firefighter recruitment campaign will begin in the summer for a training start date in April 2023;
- (b) staff turnover rates have been higher than forecast, particularly amongst support staff, with a number of leavers in early April due to retirement and the completion of fixed-term contracts. However, it is expected that the rate of departures should now slow. Vacancy rates in the sector nationally increased significantly during 2021-22, so a review of recruitment and retention processes is underway to identify and address the issues that may be impacting recruitment and retention levels;
- (c) a working group has been established to engage with staff and consider why people have moved on from the Service, and has been offering structured exit interviews to leavers. Following the Coronavirus pandemic, many people have been reviewing their lifestyles and making changes. The move to the joint headquarters has had an impact on some staff and, as the public sector is currently under a high level of strain, development opportunities can be more limited. However, the response to the new system of agile working has been positive, and steps are underway to establish a clearer development framework for support staff;
- (d) sickness absence is tracked carefully, and is currently running at slightly above the target level. The Service's sickness rates are higher than the national average, but not all Services record their absence statistics in the same way, so it can be difficult to draw like-for-like comparisons. Sickness absence levels vary across different areas of the workforce, with higher rates amongst on-call firefighters. A review is being carried out to identify the trends and address the current issues, to ensure that the right support is in place for staff who are ill, and so seek to reduce the levels of both short and long-term absence. Once the data for the complete quarter is available, a full breakdown will be provided on the particular reasons for sickness absence across all work areas. A 'return to work' interview process is in place, in addition to a 'trigger and review' system for members of staff who have a series of sickness absences;
- (e) the Service's reasons for sickness broadly reflect the national trends, with musculo-skeletal and mental health issues being the main causes of absence. There is strong support available to employees during any period of sickness or injury, and in returning to work. This includes assistance in re-developing physical strength, and the need to sustain core strength throughout a firefighter's career is becoming more and more important as the retirement age increases, so a new programme for regular physical conditioning is being started. There is also a high level of mental health and wellbeing provision in place to support staff across a wide range of areas, particularly as a number of mental health issues can arise due to circumstances outside the workplace. A joint scheme is underway with other emergency services to set a standard of access to mental health support across the sector;
- (f) one grievance case has been heard and one harassment complaint has been received, and is currently under investigation.

The Committee noted the report.

5 Workforce Plan 2022-24

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the review of the Workforce Plan for 2021-23 and the updated Workforce Plan for 2022-2024. The following points were discussed:

- (a) forecasting is underway on the Services' likely overall workforce over the next two years. The whole-time firefighter establishment has been reviewed in detail to ensure the right future provision is in place to mitigate against staffing turnover. Continual work is being carried out to make sure that the on-call establishment is properly staffed, and to address the current high turnover amongst support staff. The sector nationally is facing significant financial pressures and, given that the bulk of the Service's budget is spent on staffing, it is likely that there will be an associated savings requirement in this area. The current funding trends are being reviewed that the impact of any potential costs reductions are being forecast;
- (b) it is vital that the Service reflect the communities that it services, so actions are in place to establish a more representative workforce. Progress is being made, with steps in place to develop diversity through positive action and support wherever possible – but more work is still required. The publication of the most recent national census data is awaited so that the Service can gain a clear picture of the nature of its communities. Positive action has been very effective in the recruitment of whole-time firefighters, but further work is needed to show that there are a wide range of roles within the Service requiring different skills and experience, such as in the expanding areas of fire prevention and protection. The Committee suggested that the visual media used in advertising roles should be designed to be as reflective and engaging as possible;
- (c) a whole-time recruitment campaign starting at the end of July is intended to address any potential gaps in operational capacity both now and in the future. Firefighter training takes two years to complete and, as the retirement age of firefighters has increased, more support is needed for firefighters in maintaining physical conditioning throughout their careers;
- (d) all trainee firefighters are taken on as apprentices, and there is the potential to use more apprentices and graduate trainees amongst support staff, particularly in ICT and Finance. The Service aims to make full use of the Apprenticeship Levy, while balancing the fact that the Levy pays for training costs, but not trainees' salaries. The Committee noted that public sector organisations are able to transfer unspent Levy allocations between themselves, so the Service could seek to benefit from this, if needed;
- (e) following training, development programmes are in place for firefighters to grow leadership skills, and a strategic leadership programme is in place so that frontline managers can develop further into strategic roles. A great deal of work is in place to ensure that the right number of staff are developed and ready for management roles, to mitigate against the impacts of turnover amongst senior staff. A national scheme is also being trialled to support direct entry into certain roles, to seek to broaden the sector's pool of candidates.

The Committee noted the report.

6 Exclusion of the Public

The Committee resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, under Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 1 and 3, on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

7 Regrading of Posts

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the outcomes of a recent job evaluation process that has resulted in a permanent change to the non-uniformed support establishment.

The Committee noted the exempt report.



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Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 13 January 2023

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on key human resources metrics for the period 1 June to 30 December 2022, with the exception of absence data which is for the reporting period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of the report.

CONTACT OFFICER

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of its remit, the Human Resources Committee of Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority receives regular updates on Human Resources (HR) issues within the Service. This includes issues such as sickness absence, formal discipline, grievance, employment tribunal cases and staffing numbers. These issues are collectively referred to as HR metrics.
- 1.2 Reports are on a quarterly basis and allow the Human Resources Committee to keep informed of ongoing issues and offer their guidance and scrutiny.
- 1.3 Due to the postponement of the meeting on 4 November, staffing figures reflect the period 1 June to 31 December 2022.

2. REPORT

STAFFING NUMBERS

- 2.1 During the period 1 June 2022 to 30 December 2022, 33 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 30 December 2022 are highlighted below:

	Approved	Actual	Variance
Wholetime	431 (431 fte)	411 (410.3fte)	-20 (-20.7fte)
On-Call	192 Units	239 persons (includes 70 dual contracts)	-63 units
Support	159 (154.75 fte)	154 (143.93 fte)	-5 (-10.82fte)

- 2.2 There have been 49 leavers and 33 starters since the last report. This has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 804 (this includes 70 dual contractors). Leavers are broken down as follows: 11x Wholetime, 13x On Call and 25x Support roles.
- 2.3 As at 30 December 2022 Wholetime strength stood at 411 operational personnel (410.3 fte) employees against an establishment of 431 posts.
- 2.4 During the period, the Service has appointed to 6 Wholetime (migration and transfers), 8 On-Call roles and 19 support roles.

- 2.5 In the year to date (April to December) the number of leavers for Wholetime and On-call roles is within planning forecasts. However, the number of leavers from support roles remains higher than predicted, with 30 leavers compared to a 9-month forecast of 19.5 leavers. It should be noted that this includes the completion of 7 fixed-term appointments and 3 retirements.
- 2.6 This reflects the national picture of turnover where employment vacancy rates have increased significantly. This has been identified as a potential area of concern for the Service, and work has been undertaken to address the issue. This includes enhancing our employer brand to attract more potential recruits, engaging in pre-recruitment on social media, reducing the time taken to recruit into vacant posts and reviewing non-salary benefits.
- 2.7 In the same period, the Service has recruited to 20 support role vacancies.

SICKNESS ABSENCE

2.8 Whilst the review period usually covers three months, due to the timing of committee meetings, the review period covers a six-month period and represents absence figures for Quarter 1, 1 April to 30 June, and Quarter 2, 1 July to 30 September.

2.9 Target absence figures for 2022/23 are:

Wholetime:	9.05 days per person
Non-Uniformed:	9.35 days per person
Whole Workforce:	13.2 days per person

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

2.10 For the purposes of reporting, On-call absence analysis is shown separately to other workgroups due to the nature of their working arrangements.

Workforce (excluding On-call)

2.11 Total absence across the workforce decreased by 539.49 days (-28.16%) in Quarter One and increased by 181 days (13.2%) in Quarter 2 compared to the previous quarters.

2.12 Excluding covid related absence, this represents a decrease compared to the same quarters of 2021-22 of 191 days in Q1 (-14.9%) and 60 days in Q2 (-4.3%).

2.13 Absence related to Covid represents 504.46 working days lost, which accounts for 17.2% of total absence in Q1 and Q2.

2.14 Long term absence (excluding Covid absence) equated to 62.2% of sickness absence in Q1 and 71% in Q2.

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

On-call Workforce

- 2.16 For On-call staff, absence figures (excluding covid absence) in Q1 increased by 141 days (+19.5%) and decreased by 151 days (-17.5%) in Q2 compared to the previous quarters.
- 2.17 This represents a decrease compared to the same quarters of 2021-22 of 171 days in Q1 (-16.5%) and 125 days in Q2 (14.9%).
- 2.18 Absence related to Covid represents 294 working days lost, which accounts for 15.7% of total absence in Q1 and Q2.
- 2.19 Long term absence (excluding Covid absence) equated to 71% in Q1 and 80.5% of sickness absence in Q2.
- 2.20 A summary of the reasons for absence by workgroup are attached at Appendix C.

NATIONAL ABSENCE TRENDS

- 2.21 The Service contributes to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) sickness absence survey, which is undertaken quarterly and allows for comparison between contributing Fire and Rescue Services.
- 2.22 Reasons for sickness absence at NFRS broadly mirror the national trends with musculo-skeletal and mental health related absences featuring significantly in all workgroups.
- 2.23 Appendix B reflects the national absence trends for Quarter 2. The three charts reflect Wholetime, Support staff (Green book) and On-call the average of duty days/shifts lost per person for those Fire and Rescue Services who contribute to the survey.
- 2.24 For Wholetime staff NFRS has an average of 5.04 days lost per employee which ranks the Service as 19 out of the 35 Services included in the survey. This figure is below the sector sickness average of 5.76 days per employee. The lowest average was 2.44 and the highest 13.37.
- 2.25 For On-call staff NFRS has an average of 7.77 days lost per employee which ranks the Service as 13 out of 22 Services included in the survey. This figure is below the sector sickness average of 8.73 days per employee. The lowest average was 0.00 and the highest 20.58.
- 2.26 For Support staff (Green Book) the Service has an average of 5.61 days lost per employee which ranks us 31 out of the 36 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 4.57 days per employee. The lowest average was 0.26 days and the highest 6.75 days.

OTHER WORKFORCE METRICS

- 2.27 This section reviews the following activities: disciplinary cases, grievances raised, harassment cases raised, dismissals, appeals and active employment tribunal cases.
- 2.28 Over the period, one grievance has been heard which related to a management issue and an harassment investigation has concluded. It should be noted that a discrimination claim has previously been lodged with the employment tribunal office and will be heard in March 2024.
- 2.29 There have also been two dismissals from the service on the grounds of ill health and capability, in the period.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

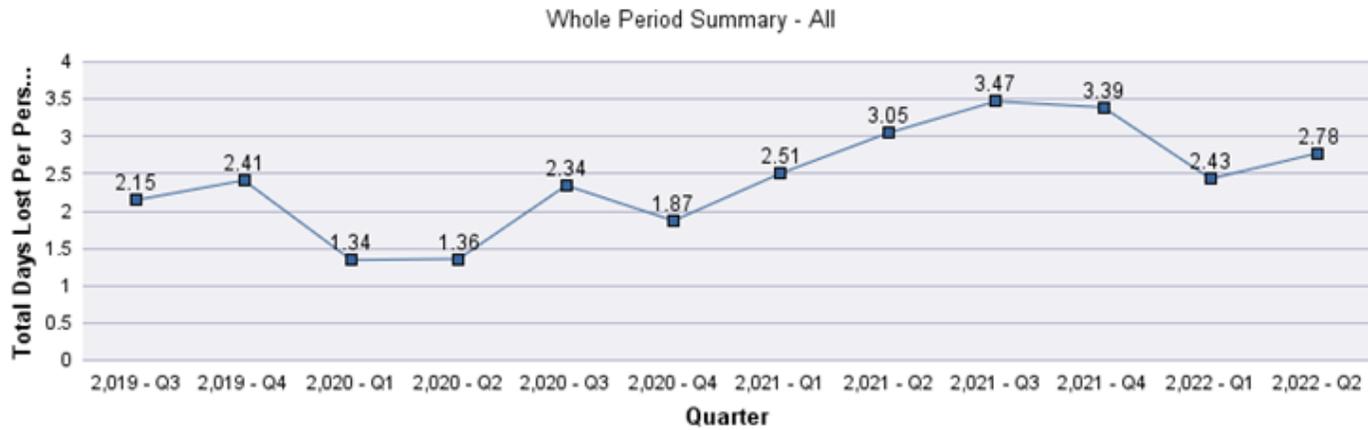
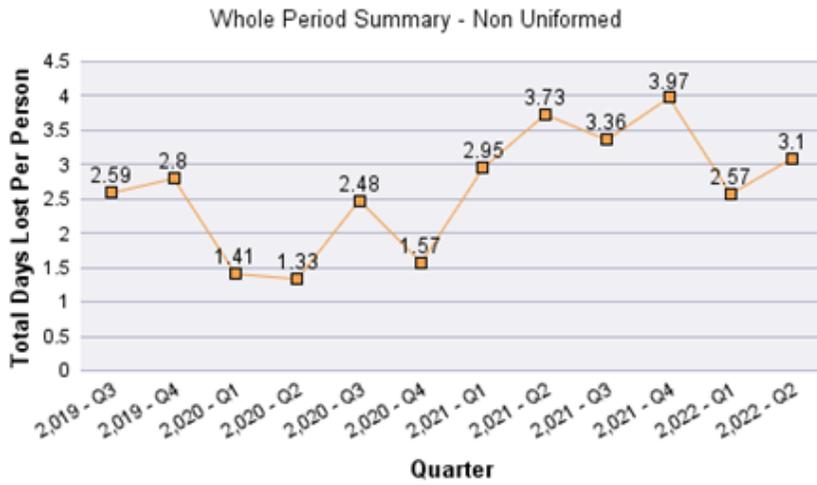
That Members note the contents of the report.

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

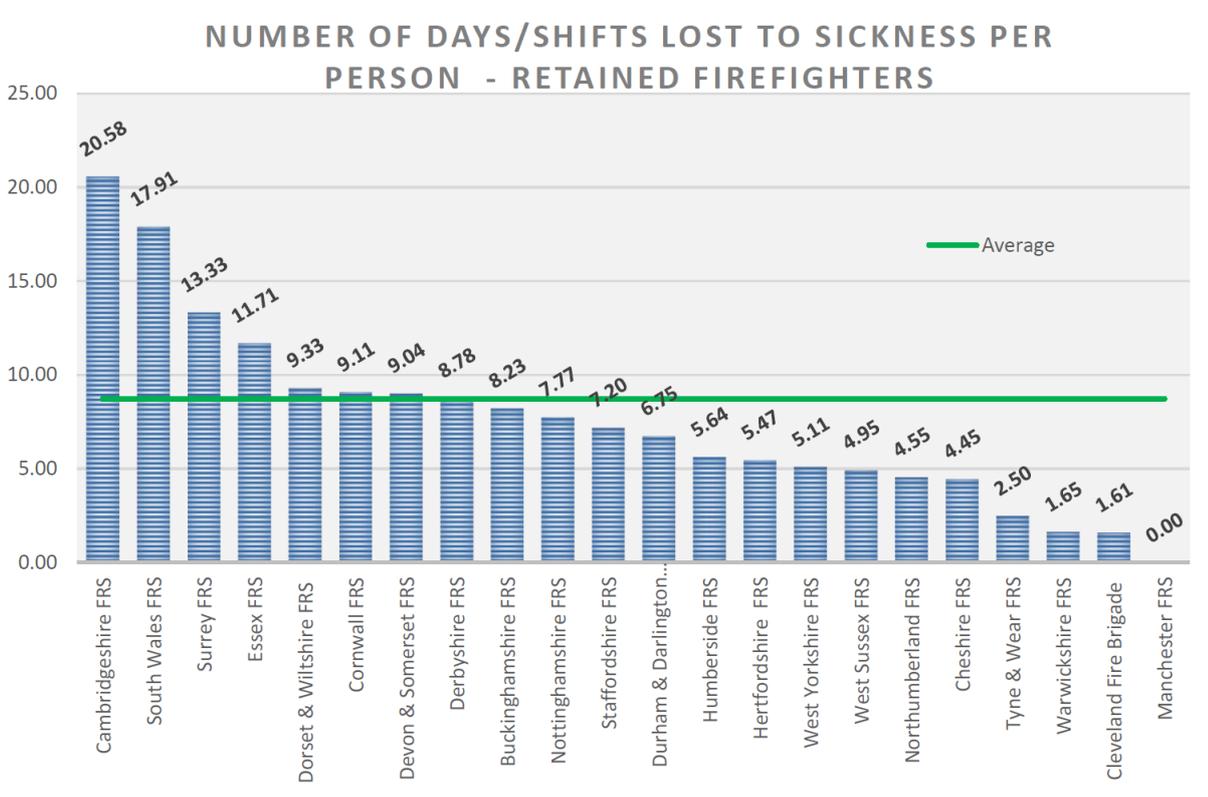
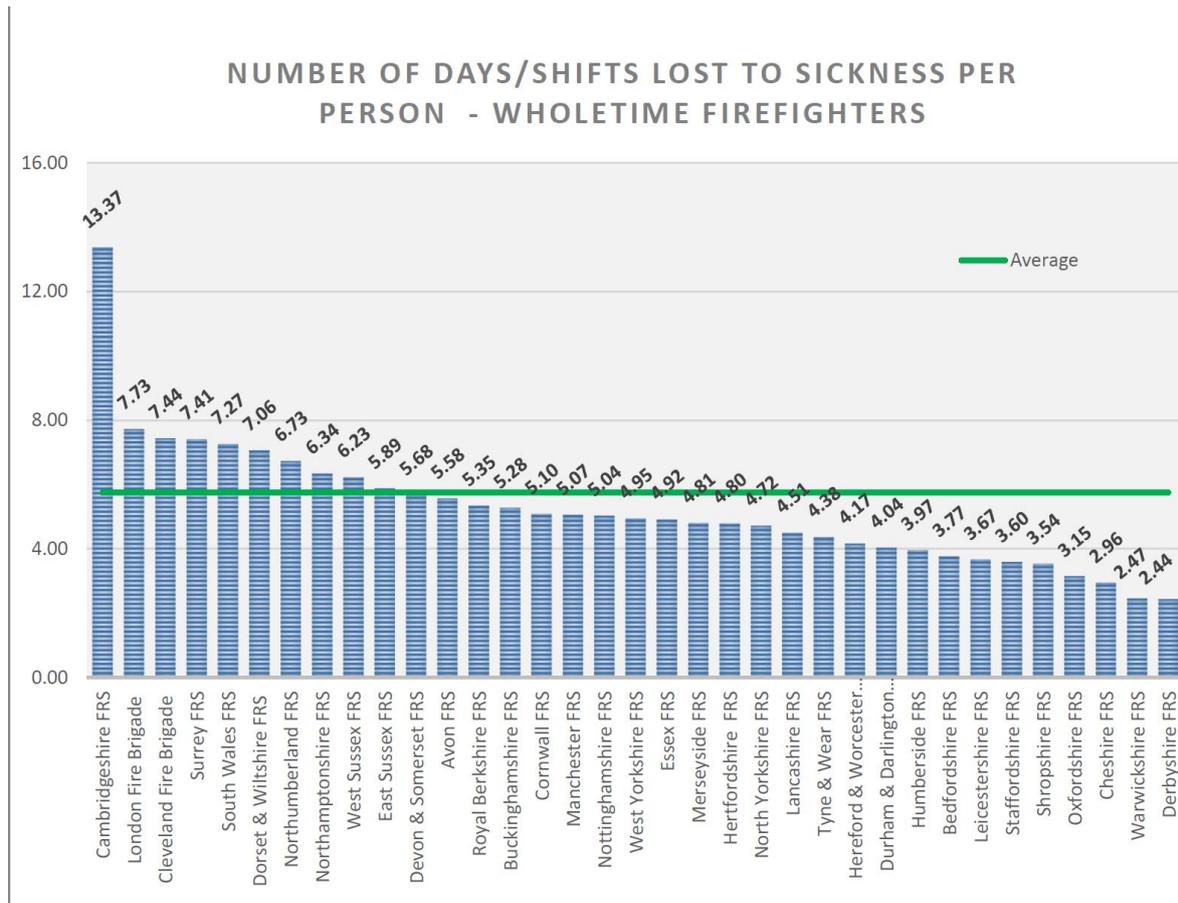
None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

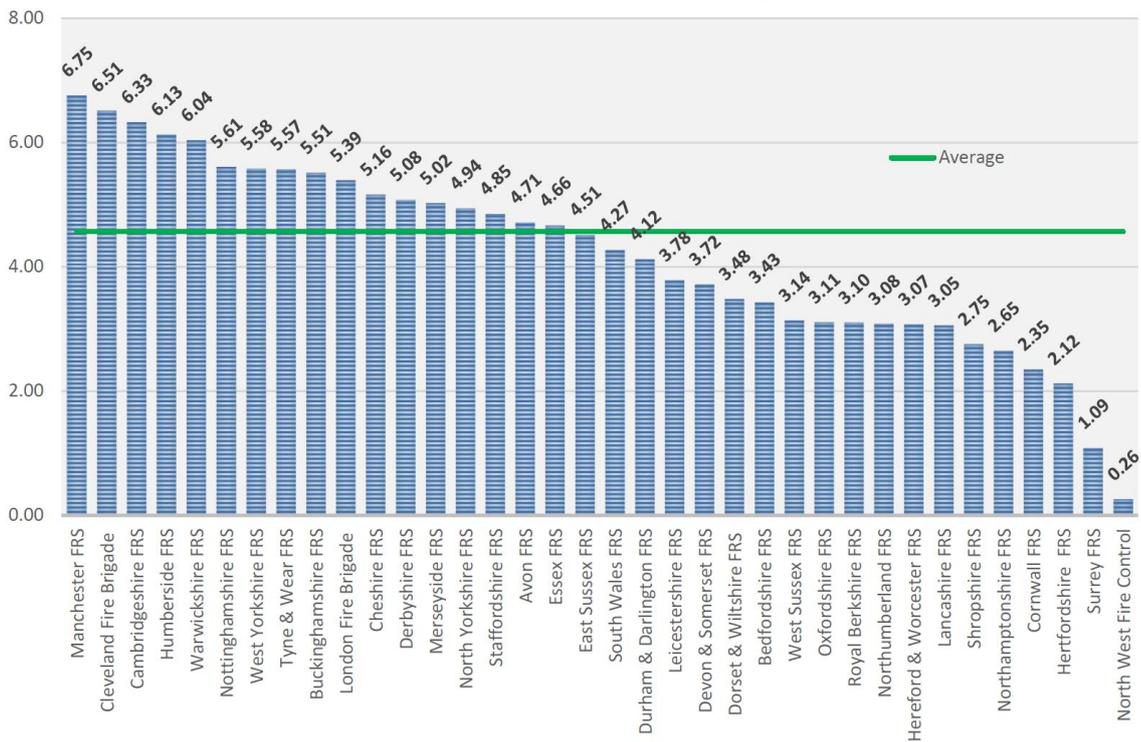
Appendix A



Appendix B



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



Q2 2022/23 - Wholetime

Wholetime

			<u>Short Term Absences</u>			<u>Long Term Absences</u>		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	37	426	Musculo Skeletal	28	134	Musculo Skeletal	9	292
Mental Health	7	241	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	30	128	Mental Health	6	237
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	30	128	Gastro-Intestinal	22	50	Hospital/Post Operative	2	89
Hospital/Post Operative	2	89	Unknown causes, not specified	12	39	Mental Health - Other	2	47
Mental Health - Other	6	81	Mental Health - Other	4	34			
Gastro-Intestinal	22	50	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	4	16			
Unknown causes, not specified	12	39	Other known causes (not specified in list)	5	12			
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	4	16	Eye Problems	3	6			
Other known causes (not specified in list)	5	12	Virus/Infectious Diseases	3	6			
Eye Problems	3	6	Ear, Nose, Throat	2	5			
Virus/Infectious Diseases	3	6						

Q2 2022/23 - On Call absence

On-Call

			<u>Short Term Absences</u>			<u>Long Term Absences</u>		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	16	413	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	26	176	Musculo Skeletal	7	353
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	26	176	Musculo Skeletal	9	60	Mental Health - Other	1	92
Mental Health - Other	1	92	Mental Health	2	27	Respiratory - Other	1	92
Respiratory - Other	1	92	Unknown causes, not specified	5	20	Mental Health	1	38
Mental Health	3	65	Gastro-Intestinal	5	17			
Unknown causes, not specified	5	20	Other known causes (not specified in list)	4	8			
Gastro-Intestinal	5	17	Hospital/Post Operative	1	4			
Other known causes (not specified in list)	4	8						
Hospital/Post Operative	1	4						

Q2 2022/23 – Support staff absence

Non Uniformed

			<u>Short Term Absences</u>			<u>Long Term Absences</u>		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Hospital/Post Operative	4	125	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	17	88	Hospital/Post Operative	3	124
Musculo Skeletal	2	109	Mental Health	3	30	Musculo Skeletal	2	109
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	17	88	Other known causes (not specified in list)	3	16	Other known causes (not specified in list)	2	45
Other known causes (not specified in list)	5	61	Headache/Migraine/Neurological	4	14.5			
Mental Health	3	30	Gastro-Intestinal	7	14			
Headache/Migraine/Neurological	4	14.5	Ear, Nose, Throat	1	9			
Gastro-Intestinal	7	14	Unknown causes, not specified	1	9			
Ear, Nose, Throat	1	9	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	2	5			
Unknown causes, not specified	1	9	Mental Health - Other	1	4			
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	2	5	Respiratory - Chest Infection	1	2			



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Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

UPDATE ON WORKFORCE PLAN 2022-24

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 13 January 2023

Purpose of Report:

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

Recommendations:

That Members note the content 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 (CRMP) and is undertaken by the People and Organisational Development (POD) department to establish workforce trends, identify potential workforce planning issues and formulate an action plan to address these issues. The plan is based upon projections of anticipated turnover and information received from all departments regarding their workforce needs for the forthcoming year.
- 1.2 The plan seeks to forecast:
- Workforce reductions through retirement, projected turnover and other factors;
 - Workforce increases resulting from delivery of new service requirements;
 - The need for succession planning for specialist and managerial roles;
 - Particular areas of concern within the Service;
 - 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. These needs can then be factored into the budget planning process.
- 1.4 The latest Workforce Plan (“The Plan”) for 2022-24 was considered by this committee at its meeting on 1 July 2022. This report provides an update on progress.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The primary aim of workforce planning is to ensure that the Service can anticipate and plan for levels of turnover. This is mainly due to projected retirements but also reflects a prediction about leavers based on previous figures and known issues. There is no compulsory retirement age and therefore projections can only be estimated.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 22 July 2022, authority was delegated to the Chief Fire Officer to appoint, establish, and disestablish and manage all staff positions within existing budgets. Permanent changes to establish levels will therefore be reported on an annual basis to the Authority. This report sets out an overview of the existing establishment and workforce issues.

Wholetime Establishment

- 2.3 In The Plan, it was predicted that up to fifty-four Wholetime operational employees could leave the Service before April 2024. As an average, this

represents 2.25 leavers per month. During the period April-September 2022, 16 wholetime operational employees have left the Service, the majority (62.5%) due to retirement. Overall, resulting in a turnover rate of 3.9%. This is slightly lower than the average predicted. However, it should be noted that retirement decisions tend to increase in the final quarter of the year (Jan-March) and therefore the expectation is that the anticipated turnover figure will be at or just below the predicted level.

- 2.4 During the course of the year, the Service has appointed to six Wholetime roles as a result of transfer of competent Firefighters and the migration of On-call employees. The Service is currently in the final stage of Wholetime recruitment for a course commencing in April 2023 which will see a new cohort of Apprentice Firefighters posted to station from September 2023. This flow of new entrants is essential to protect future resilience, bearing in mind that it takes at least 24-months for an Apprentice Firefighter to reach full competence.
- 2.5 Wholetime establishment is currently 431 operational posts, ranging from Principal Officers to Firefighter roles. Outcomes from the Fire Cover Review, which forms part of the Efficiency Strategy ("Futures 25"), may lead to a reduction in the number of wholetime positions as part of budget savings for 2023-24. For this reason, the timing of the firefighter recruitment process was delayed, and the operational workforce is currently 20 posts below establishment to ensure that any workforce reductions can be achieved through natural attrition rather than redundancies.

On-call Establishment

- 2.6 In The Plan, it was predicted that up to 52 On-call employees could leave the Service before April 2024. As an average this represents 2.2 leavers per month. During the period April to December 2022, 17 On-call employees left the Service, whilst 23.5% (4) were due to retirement the majority were due to resignation. Overall, resulting in a turnover rate of 7%. This is slightly lower than the average predicted.
- 2.7 Due to the nature of the On-call model, it is not unusual for changes to work or home location to result in people leaving the Service as they are required to live or work within ten minutes of their station base. Therefore, this level of turnover is anticipated.
- 2.8 The Service runs recruitment campaigns throughout the year to attract new candidates and have run two appointment processes during 2022.
- 2.9 The Service have appointed to 19 new On-call firefighter roles during 2022.
- 2.10 In previous updates, reference has been made to an On-call Pay and Contracts review which commenced in 2021 at two pilot stations at Bingham and Stapleford to trial changes which offer more flexibility to On-call employees as part of recruitment and retention measures. The pilot ended in August and the pilot stations have now returned to their normal contractual

arrangements. The lessons learned from the pilot will be reviewed and form the basis for any future changes to On-call contracts and ways of working.

Support Establishment

- 2.11 In the Plan, it was predicted that 52 support staff could leave the Service before April 2024. This was predicated on higher than anticipated turnover levels during 2021 and 2022 and a national trend for higher turnover in the post-Covid period. This has previously been reported to Members as a risk identified on the corporate risk register.
- 2.12 In the event, 30 employees have already left the Service since April. This is higher than the predicted level. Analysis has shown that turnover is now abating, with five leavers in Q3 (Oct-Dec) compared to ten leavers in Q2 (Jul-Sept) and 15 leavers in Q1 (Apr-Jun). It should be noted that, of these, six were due to the ending of fixed-term contracts. Overall, equating to a turnover rate of 19.3%.
- 2.13 A recruitment and retention review has been undertaken and measures put in place to make the Service more attractive to potential applicants by enhancing our employee brand, making recruitment adverts more attractive, increased use of social media to advertise roles, and emphasising the benefits of working for the Service. Actions have also been taken to reduce vacancy time by applying a 2-month notice period to new contracts and revising the selection and appointments process. This means that when vacancies arise, there is less impact in terms of maintaining service delivery.
- 2.14 In terms of retention, a review of reasons for leaving showed that salary and lack of development opportunities were cited as the main reasons for seeking alternative employment. Clearly in the current economic climate, there is limited scope to enhance salary, although the recent national pay award has been implemented and has seen an average uplift of 4.04% from April 2022. The Service has also increased the honoraria payment which can be made to staff undertaking higher level duties as this had not been updated for some years and reflects the contribution of staff who go beyond the requirements of their substantive role.
- 2.15 The Service will also be reviewing the use of retention measures such as flexible leave, career graded roles and skills payments, as well as developing internal skills, via apprenticeship roles and development pathways as part of the Workforce Review over the coming year.
- 2.16 To provide some context to the level of turnover during this same period, the Service has appointed to twenty support roles across all functional departments. At the end of 2022, there were 6 active vacancies on the support establishment.

Futures 25 Efficiency Strategy

- 2.17 The Futures 25 Efficiency Strategy was approved by the Authority at its meeting on 13 May 2022. This report set out the financial challenges for the

Service during the term of the current Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-25 and referenced a wider workforce and Fire Cover review to align resources to the delivery of the CRMP and to identify potential savings from both pay and non-pay budgets.

- 2.18 Further information in relation to the workforce review was provided to the Authority at its meeting on 23 September 2022. This set out a proposed saving of £250,00 through the disestablishment of support posts across several departments, to be realised in 2023-24. The next phase of the review will undertake an in-depth review of departmental structures to identify improvements, efficiencies, and potential savings.
- 2.19 The report also set out the recommendation of the independent Fire Cover Review regarding proposed changes to operational response to achieve a saving of £2m. The proposals are currently subject to public consultation, finance settlements and, if approved by the Authority, could result in a reduction of up to 44 operational posts through natural attrition during the life of the CRMP.
- 2.20 There are clearly workforce implications arising from the need to achieve savings and deliver a balanced budget, whilst maintaining essential services and CRMP commitments. These will form part of the next Workforce Plan 2023-25.

Other Workforce Plan Priorities

- 2.21 The need to make the workforce more representative and diverse continues to be a priority for the Service, with the aim of improving the current workforce profile to better reflect the local population. Positive action has been undertaken to encourage applicants who are under-represented in our workforce to apply for Wholetime fire-fighter positions and success rates will be reported to committee at the end of the current process. Equalities monitoring information is contained within a separate report on the agenda.
- 2.22 A focus on employee well-being and improved sickness absence rates were also identified within the workforce plan. In addition to the wide range of well-being provisions in place, the Service has recently implemented a well-being platform which is available through our Employee Assistance programme and provides information on a range of health issues and self-help support mechanisms. Sickness absence rates have decreased since last year (2021-22) and monitoring information is contained within the HR update report.

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

- 4.1 Human Resources implications are set out within the report. There are no Learning and Development implications.
- 4.2 Outcomes from the Workforce and Fire Cover reviews will be subject to consultation with the representative bodies in terms of potential workforce impacts, in line with local agreements and statutory responsibilities.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken as this review does not represent a change to existing policy or service delivery. However, it is a stated objective within the Workforce Plan to make the workforce more representative and diverse, with the aim of improving the current workforce profile to better reflect the local population. Updates on progress against this aim is reported through a bi-annual equalities monitoring report to this committee.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

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, within approved budgets.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

EQUALITIES MONITORING REPORT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 13 January 2023

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an update on the breakdown of the workforce and applicant analysis by protected characteristic for the period 1 April to 31 October 2022.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the content of the report and support the Service's continued commitment to attracting, recruiting and retaining a more diverse workforce
- It is noted there is cross-over and duplication between this report and the Workforce Plan report. To maximise efficiency, it is proposed for this report to be combined with the workforce planning report and subsequent Human Resources Update after a six month period.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's (NFRS) commitment to promoting equality and diversity, the Human Resources (HR) Committee considers updates on the breakdown of the workforce and the work being done to address under-representation by protected characteristic.
- 1.2 This report constitutes a six-month period from 01 April – 30 September 2022.

2. REPORT

WORKFORCE PROFILE

- 2.1 Workforce profile information is analysed by work group (Wholetime, On-call, Support). Breaking down the workforce in this way allows for the identification of specific issues by distinct employee groups. Each have differences in job type, conditions of service and workforce composition. The charts below provide a snapshot of under-represented groups at the Service and how they have changed over a 4-year period. The data from which these charts have been created can be found at Appendix A. With the exception of disability, all groups show an increase of under-represented groups across the workforce.

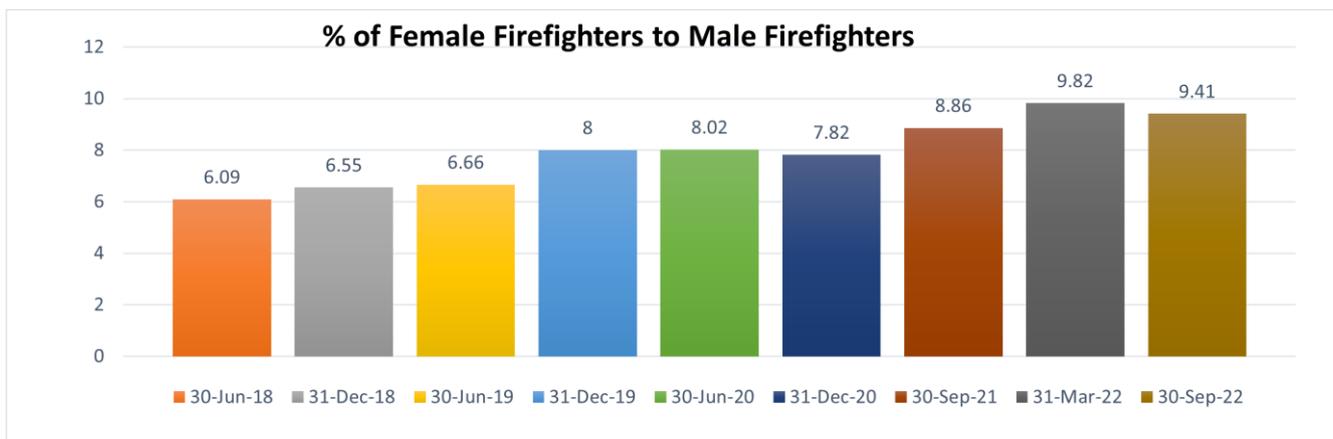


Table 1 – of all firefighters (wholetime and on-call) does not include Crew or Watch Managers

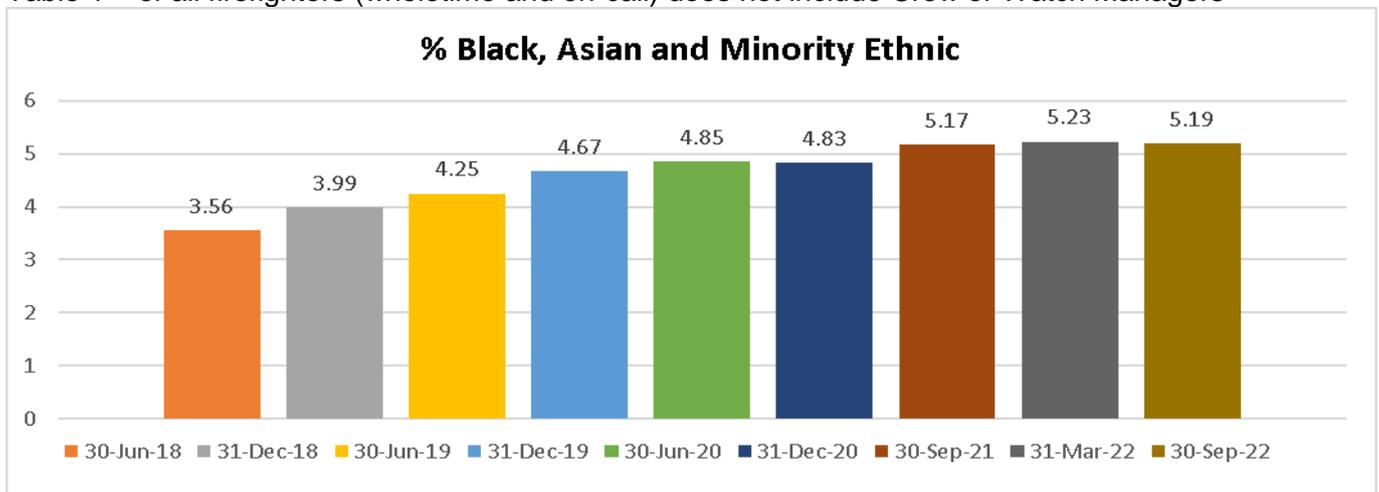


Table 2 – of all employees

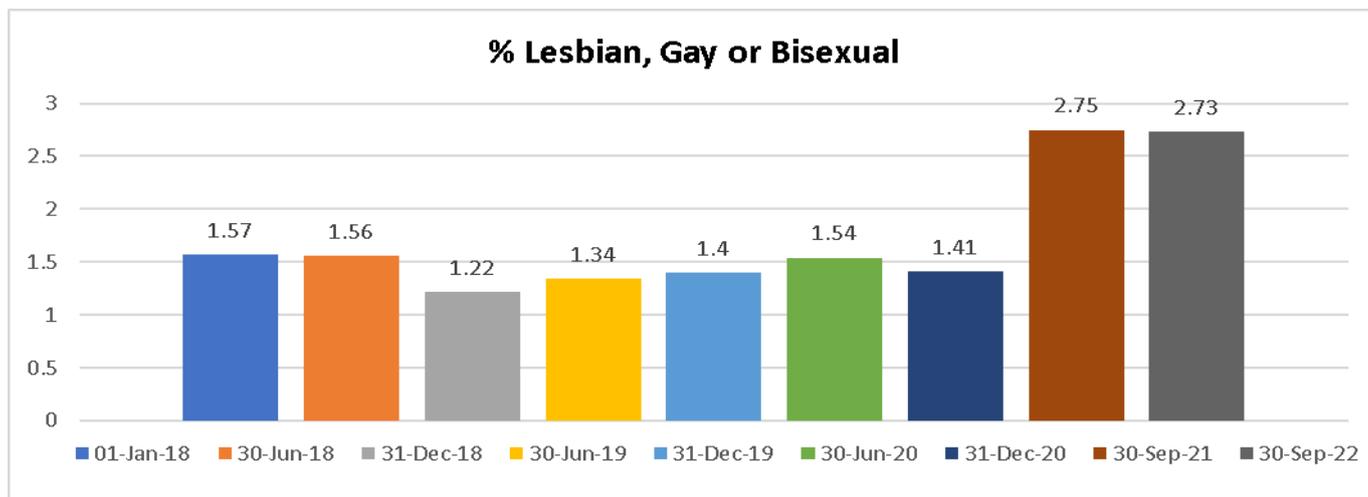


Table 3 – of all employees

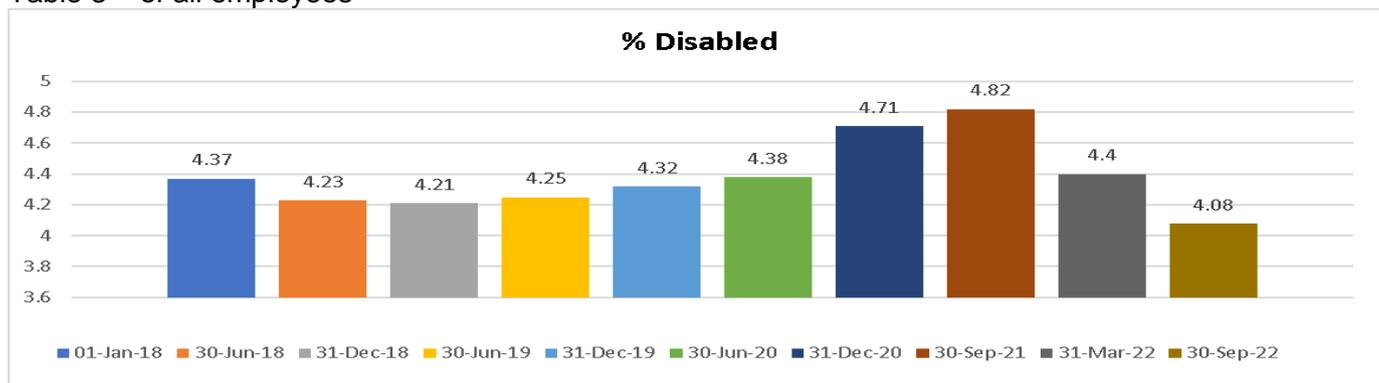


Table 4 – of all employees

GENDER

- 2.2 Women currently constitute 15.82% (128) of the total workforce. Of these, 38.28% (49) women are employed in operational roles (including management roles), which represents 7.46% of operational roles undertaken.
- 2.3 At a senior level, four members of the Strategic Leadership Team are women (33.33%) – and seven (28%) hold senior management support roles at Grade 8 and above, it should be noted there is currently one vacancy within the Service’s senior management team.
- 2.4 The recent station manager process which has taken place within the last six months, has seen substantive station manager appointments made up of 14.29% (1) female and 85.71% (6) male.
- 2.5 The Service supports career progression through its Aspiring Leaders and Look Ahead programmes for those considering a step up to supervisory or middle manager roles, which are open to all employees, and sponsors applications to the local Future Leaders programme for women.
- 2.6 Within the support workforce there continues to be more women 51.97% (79) than men employed 48.03% (73). However, it should be noted that men occupy higher numbers of senior organisational positions 64.7% than women 35.3%.

Support Employees	Men	Women	Disability	BAME	LGB
Grades 1-4 (plus	20	29	6	8	5

Apprentice)					
Grades 5-7	42	44	9	9	1
Grades 8-SLSM	11	6	0	0	

Table B in Appendix A shows the workforce profile by gender.

ETHNIC ORIGIN

- 2.7 Employees from BAME backgrounds constitute 5.19% (42) of the workforce (excluding employees who defined themselves as Irish and White Other). Of these, 4.3% (29) are employed in operational roles.
- 2.8 To provide some context to these figures, BAME communities constitute 11.2% of Nottinghamshire's population based on the 2011 census. This demonstrates that the organisation still faces a challenge to attract and recruit applicants from different ethnic backgrounds to fire service roles.
- 2.9 Since 31 March 2022 there has been a slight decrease in the number of BAME staff, from 5.23% (44) to 5.19% (42). Table C in Appendix A shows the workforce profile by ethnic origin. It can be noted there has been 4.7% (2) leavers from BAME backgrounds of the leavers within the last six months and 10.71% (3) starters from BAME backgrounds.
- 2.10 The Service supports career progression through its Aspiring Leaders and Look Ahead programmes for those considering a step up to supervisory or middle manager roles, which are open to all employees, and sponsors applications to the local Future Leaders programme for BAME employees.
- 2.11 The Service continues to undertake positive action, particularly for firefighter roles which traditionally have received low levels of applications from BAME candidates.

DISABILITY, REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND NEURODIVERSITY

- 2.12 The declaration rate of disability is 4.08% (33) of the total workforce. It can be noted this has decreased from 4.40% (37) when compared with 31st March 2022, there have been 3 disabled staff leave within the six-month period of this report, all 3 are support staff however it should be noted 1 was a dual contractor and thus accounts for 2 leavers.
- 2.13 The declaration rate amongst support employees is at 9.87% (15) which is just under the working age population in the UK that is disabled, which is approximately 10%. However, when operational employees are included this figure reduces to 4.08% (33) of the workforce.
- 2.14 The reduction relates to the fitness, strength and other medical requirements, such as sight and hearing, which ensure that prospective candidates are fit for role.
- 2.15 Whilst disability declaration rates remain relatively low, the Service continues to raise awareness of disability issues, such as dyslexia and mental health, to support employees to undertake their role and will consider reasonable adjustments wherever possible to allow them to continue in their role.

- 2.16 The Service is implementing an electronic reasonable adjustments process, this will better enable the Service to maintain up to date records but also to monitor reasonable adjustments in addition to disability, as it is noted a number of employees require a reasonable adjustment but may not think of themselves as disabled.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- 2.17 The number of employees identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual is 2.85% (23) of the workforce as of the 30 September 2022. The expected national LGBT+ population of is 5 - 7% (quoted by Stonewall).
- 2.18 The Service has worked hard to maintain LGBT+ equality within its workforce and engage with its LGBT+ communities. This hard work was rewarded with a Top 100 place in the 2022 Stonewall Workplace Equality.
- 2.19 The 2020 Wholetime firefighter campaign showed an increase in people who identify as LGBT+ choosing to apply for firefighter roles and the applicant figures in the current Wholetime recruitment campaign are very positive. This is an encouraging indicator and suggests that the Service's commitment to LGBT+ equality is resonating with applicants.

AGE

- 2.20 Table D of Appendix A sets out the numbers of employees by age and work group. These are grouped in ten-year intervals. The figures show that the largest single group are those people aged between 36 – 45 years old who make up 33.37% (270) of the workforce.
- 2.21 However, if employees aged over 45 are grouped together, this represents 41.41% (335) of the workforce – of these, 40.86% (168) undertake wholetime roles and 10.24% (25) undertake On-call roles. As the typical retirement age for operational personnel is between 50 and 60, this has implications for projected turnover over the next ten years, and the associated loss of experience and knowledge to the service. At the other end of the age scale, 4.20% (34) of all employees are aged 16-25.
- 2.22 The annual Workforce Plan ensures that the Service has effective succession planning in place to mitigate against this anticipated turnover.

RELIGION

- 2.23 Table E of Appendix A sets out the numbers of employees by religion/faith. 42.65% (345) of the workforce state that they have no religion and 12.85% (104) chose not to specify. 41.29% (334) employees specify their religion as Christian.

GENDER IDENTITY

- 2.24 In July 2018, the Service started to monitor gender identity (how someone feels about their gender) and gender reassignment (declaring whether gender is different from that assigned at birth). Declaration is voluntary and, to date,

27.79% (224) of employees have provided gender reassignment data and 40.54% (328) have provided gender identity data.

RECRUITMENT

Substantive promotions

2.25 During the six-month period from 1 April – 30 September 2022, a station manager process took place. Some detail of the results of these processes can be found below:

	Station Manager			
	Female	Male	BAME	LGBT
Applicants	1 (5.88%)	16 (94.12%)	2 (11.76%)	1 (5.88%)
Interview	1 (8.33%)	11 (91.66%)	1 (8.33%)	1 (8.33%)
Appointed	1 (14.29%)	6 (85.71%)	0	1 (14.29%)

2.26 While representation of female, LGBT and BAME applicants remains low within both processes it is positive to see success of one female station manager and it is positive to see the success of an applicant identifying as LGBT.

Migration

2.27 A firefighter migration process has taken place, within the last six months.

2.28 The process attracted 28 applicants, all were male, 1 was from a BAME background and one identified as LGBT, 16 applicants were shortlisted, all were white British and one of whom identified as LGBT, 4 applicants were appointed to firefighter roles.

2.29 While these figures do not help the diversity of the workforce, migration is a means to help meet the services need for firefighters as they are already competent and trained.

Wholetime Recruitment

2.30 The Service opened Wholetime recruitment during summer 2022, the applicant figures to date are as follows:

	Female	Male	BAME	LGBT
Applicants 384 in total	50 (13.02%)	330 (85.94%)	34 (8.85%)	39 (10.16%)
Invited to Job-Related Tests (JRTs) 149 in total	13 (8.72%)	136 (91.28%)	18 (12.95%)	19 (13.67%)

2.31 It is noted female applicant numbers have reduced significantly between application and JRT stage, 10 female applicants withdrew from the process, 15 were rejected after application and 12 failed the fitness test. It should be noted the fitness test and JRTs are the stages where female applicants most commonly fall out of the process.

2.32 A range of positive action measures have been taken to attract a diverse range of applicants and prepare them for the process. This work has included bespoke mentoring and support regarding the recruitment process, awareness of the role, fitness sessions and events in the community and on fire stations. A firefighter was seconded to the People and Organisational Development Department to co-ordinate this work.

Support Staff Recruitment

2.33 Between 1 April 2022 – 30 September 2022 the Service received 60 applicants in total for 11 vacancies. It should be noted that 4 of these vacancies were not filled within the review period. The breakdown of applicants, those shortlisted for interview and appointed was as follows:

	Female	Male	BAME	Disabled	LGBT
Applicants	33	27	8	4	3
Shortlisted	11	10	2	1	0
Appointed	4	3	1	0	0

2.34 The highest number of applications 28.33% (17) were from applicants within the age range of 26 - 35.

2.35 To extend the range of recruitment adverts for vacancies the Service utilises social media messaging, national and local recruitment platforms and shares vacancy information with organisations representing under-represented groups to try to increase the diversity of applicants, wherever possible.

2.36 It is worth noting that the Service guarantees applicants with a disability an interview providing they meet the essential criteria if they opt into being assessed under the guaranteed interview scheme. All applicants are interviewed and appointed according to merit.

STARTERS AND LEAVERS

	Starters			Leavers		
	On-call	Wholetime	Support	On-call	Wholetime	Support
Women	2	0	5	0	0	16
Men	16	0	5	9	11	7
BAME	0	0	0	0	0	0
LGB	0	0	0	0	0	2

2.37 There have been 28 starters and 43 leavers, please note leavers may still be counted within the headcount due to the report date. The table below shows details of these starters and leavers.

2.38 It can be noted the Service recruited 2 (11.11%) female firefighters to On-call firefighters roles out of 18 recruits, it is noted there were no recruits from BAME or from LGBT backgrounds. The service does continue to develop positive action measures to achieve a more diverse workforce.

2.39 The figures for both On-Call and Wholetime leavers are not unusual and are a result of resignations, retirements, end of fixed term contracts etc. It can be noted there have been 25 leavers within the support workforce, this is higher than usual, there isn't evidence to suggest any factors relating to protected characteristics.

CONCLUSION

2.40 The above data represents the diversity of the Service's workforce overall, it shows some slight improvements in employee numbers of female fighters, a slight dip of staff from BAME backgrounds and staff who identify as being disabled but numbers of LGBT staff remain consistent. The longer-term trend shows the workforce profile is becoming more representative of the local population. Clearly, further work is required to improve upon diversity figures.

2.41 Women represent 15.82% of the NFRS workforce, and account for 7.46% of the operational workforce and 61.32% of those undertaking non-operational support roles. Improving the diversity of the workforce, including the numbers of women in operational roles remains a priority for the Service.

2.42 It should be noted there have not been any On-Call recruitment campaigns which have closed within the period. Although the report does show starters from a recruitment campaign which closed before the reporting period of this report. It is positive to see 2 female On-Call starters within the reporting period.

2.43 The Service is in the process of undertaking a wholetime recruitment campaign and at the time of writing this report, job related tests are being carried out. diversity figures are shown in the body of the report. Female applicant figures are lower than desired, though from previous campaigns, the fitness test stage is the part of the process where female applicants are commonly lost along with strength, it is noted the Service has undertaken work to prepare female applicants for the strength requirements. Representation of BAME and LGBT applicants is positive to see, the Service works hard to continue to attract diverse range of applicants and uses relevant positive action measures to do this. As the process progresses, outcomes and diversity figures will continue to be reported.

2.44 The Service continues to provide targeted development opportunities for staff from underrepresented groups within its workforce. Particularly through its Ethnic Minority Alliance, Disability Matters, Women's and LGBT networks but also through bespoke conferences, mentoring, leadership development and career development conversations.

2.45 In terms of declaration levels, 'Not Stated' or 'Prefer not to Say' remain an area in need of improvement in religion/belief (12.85%) and sexual orientation (11.75%), although a reduction in levels of 'prefer not to say' has been achieved over recent years, a data verification communication was used late last year which has had an impact and will be repeated before the end of the year.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Human resources implications are addressed throughout the report. The monitoring shows that there is still an under-representation of women in operational roles, and of employees from BAME backgrounds or who define themselves as LGBT, or who declare a disability across the workforce.
- 4.2 Whilst measures have been put in place to address the issues leading to under-representation, the Service continues to commit to further improve both the applicant and appointment rates from under-represented groups. This includes the continued requirement for targeted positive action measures and support through the provision of appropriate resources.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this is not a policy, function, or service. However, it should be noted that this information is used to analyse equality outcomes and inform changes to practices and positive action.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The advancement of equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it is a key element of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A failure to represent the community being served can impact upon trust and confidence in public services. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is cognisant of this as a risk to its reputation and ability to engage with its communities and service users.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

The Service attends community engagement events in collaboration with Nottinghamshire Police and works as a key stakeholder on the Future Leaders of Nottingham steering group. The Service also holds events in partnerships with public

services covering a range of protected characteristics to promote equality of opportunity.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the content of the report and support the Service's continued commitment to attracting, recruiting and retaining a more diverse workforce
- 10.2 It is noted there is cross-over and duplication between this report and the workforce planning report. To maximise efficiency, it is proposed for this report to be combined with the Workforce Plan report and subsequent Human Resources Update after a six month period.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Appendix A

Table A

	30 June 2018	31 Dec 2018	30 June 2019	31 Dec 2019	30 June 2020	31 Dec 2020	30 Sept 2021	31 st Mar 2022	30 th Sept
Total	899	902	894	856	845	849	871	841	809
Female firefighters No. of posts	6.09% (28 of 460)	6.55% (31 of 473)	6.66% (31 of 465)	8% (36 of 450)	8.02% (35 of 436)	7.82% (33 of 422)	8.86% (39 out of 440)	9.82% (39 out of 416)	9.41% (40 out of 425 roles)
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)	3.56% (32)	3.99% (36)	4.25% (38)	4.67% (40)	4.85% (41)	4.83% (41)	5.17% (45)	5.23% (44)	5.19% (42)
Lesbian, gay or bisexual	1.56% (14)	1.22% (11)	1.34% (12)	1.4% (12)	1.54% (13)	1.41% (12)	2.75% (24)	2.73% (23)	2.85% (23)
Disabled	4.23% (38)	4.21% (38)	4.25% (38)	4.32% (37)	4.38% (37)	4.71% (40)	4.82% (42)	4.40% (37)	4.08% (33)

Table B

Workforce by Gender

Gender	Wholetime	On-call	Support	Total	%
Male	378	230	73	681	84.18%
Female	35	14	79	128	15.82%
Total	413	244	152	809	

Table C

Workforce by Ethnic Origin

Ethnic Origin	Wholetime	On-Call	Support	Total	%
BAME	24	5	13	42	5.19%
Not declared	22	6	7	31	3.83%
White British	347	220	127	694	85.78%
White Irish / White Other	20	13	5	38	4.70%
Total	413	244	152	809	

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.

Table D

Workforce Profile by Age

	Wholetime	On-call	Support	Total	%
16-25	5	19	10	34	4.20%
26-35	83	64	23	170	21.01%
36-45	157	80	33	270	33.37%
46-55	145	56	45	246	30.41%
56-65	23	25	38	86	10.63%
+65			3	3	0.37%
Total	413	244	152	809	

Workforce by Religious Belief

Table E

Religion	Total Number	% Total
Any other Religion	6	0.74
Buddhist	3	0.37
Christian (all denominations)	334	41.29
Hindu	2	0.25
Muslim	3	0.37
No Religion	345	42.65
Not Specified	104	12.85
Other	9	1.11
Sikh	3	0.37
Total	809	

Table F

Starters by gender ethnic origin and sexual orientation

	Wholetime	On-call	Support	Total	%
Female		2	5	7	25.00%
Male		16	5	21	75.00%
Total		18	10	28	
Ethnicity					
BAME		1	2	3	10.71%
Not disclosed		17	8	25	89.29%
White British		18	10	28	
Age					
17-25		5	3	8	28.57%
26-35		5	3	8	28.57%
36-45		1	4	5	17.86%
46+		18	10	28	
Total					
Sexual Orientation					
Bisexual		0	0	0	
Declined to specify			2	2	7.14%
Gay/lesbian					
Straight/Hetrosexual		18	8	26	92.86%
Total		18	10	28	

Please note – to protect the identity of those in small 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.

Table G

Reasons for leaving by gender, ethnic origin and age

	Resignation	Retirement	Fixed Term	Other	Total	%
By Gender						
Female	13	2	1		16	38.10%
Male	13	8	3	2	26	61.90%
Total	26	10	4	2	42	
By ethnic origin						
BAME	2					4.76
White British	19	10	4	1	36	80.95%
White Irish/ White Other	1			1	2	4.76%
Not disclosed	4				4	9.52%
Total	26	10	4	2	42	

By Age						
<25	5		1		6	14.29%
26-35	6				6	14.29%
36-45	3		1	2	6	14.29%
46+	12	10	2		24	57.14%
Total	26	10	4	2	42	
By sexual orientation						
Declined to specify	1		2	2.33%	3	2.33%
LGB			2	4.66%	2	2.33%
Straight heterosexual	10	9	19	44.19%	38	88.37%
Total	11	9	23		43	

Please note – to protect the identity of those in small ethnic groups, a classification of BME 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.



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES, AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 13 January 2023

Purpose of Report:

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

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the 'Areas for Improvement' delegated to the Committee for scrutiny and monitoring
- Agree the approach of the Chief Fire Officer for addressing the 'Areas for Improvement'
- Note the actions undertaken to date

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1. BACKGROUND

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

2. REPORT

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

Area for Improvement 3

- 2.4 The Service current has information about a range of well-being provisions on the Well Being page of the intranet however, feedback from HMICFRS and the internal staff survey highlighted that employees were unaware how to access this information. The inspection from HMICFRS also highlighted concerns raised by operational Crews that there was a lack of consistency in post-incident support.
- 2.5 Despite there being a number of support mechanisms available to NFRS staff, it is evident that these are not widely, or consistently, understood.
- 2.6 A gap analysis has been undertaken to understand the current position of provision and steps that to be undertaken to close the gap in knowledge.

- 2.7 A range of steps are now planned and work has started on progressing this AFI. These include:
- Meeting with the Communications Team about developing a comms plan to raise awareness of Vivup (The Service employee benefit and EAP provider)
 - Refresher training on post-incident support has been completed for Station Manager roles and above.
 - A task and finish group to review the post-incident support process has commenced with support from a Service Delivery District Manager.
 - Work with the comms team to promote wellbeing support. OH to take a lead role in promoting the support available and a wellbeing message to all staff by, for instance, having more visibility on stations and other sites.
 - The Occupational Health team will promote and deliver a well-being message through activities such as station hubs (holding clinics at different locations) and a Wellbeing roadshow to raise visibility and access.
- 2.8 Work has formally commenced on this AFI in September 2022 and aims to be delivered by September 2023. Progress will be monitored through the CRMP Assurance Board.
- 2.9 Improvement against the AFI will be evaluated through the staff survey which asks about employee understanding of current wellbeing provision and will provide feedback. Engagement events will be evaluated to gauge satisfaction with existing provision.
- 2.10 Regular updates will be provided to Members on progress against the AFI when there is pertinent information to share.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Human resources implications are set out within the report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places a duty on NFRS in respect of the delivery of its services to communities.
- 7.2 The Local Government Act 1999 places a statutory duty on NFRS to '*secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised*'. The reporting of Service Delivery's performance ensures that the Service is focusing on key objectives as set by the Fire Authority and continuous improvement. This ensures that Members can apply effective scrutiny to be satisfied that statutory obligations are being met.
- 7.3 The Police and Crime Act (2017) Chapter 4 Section 11, outlines that the English inspectors must inspect, and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of, fire and rescue authorities in England.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

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

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the 'Areas for Improvement' delegated to the Committee for scrutiny and monitoring.
- 10.2 Agree the approach of the Chief Fire Officer for addressing the 'Areas for Improvement'.
- 10.3 Note the actions undertaken to date.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 13 January 2023

Purpose of Report:

To provide an annual update on apprenticeship provision within the Service. The information compiled for this report covers Financial Year 2021/22 and aligns to the public sector reporting requirements from Central Government.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

1. Members recognise the progress made in the employment of apprenticeship roles within the Service during Financial Year 2021/22 including the Service exceeding the public sector targets relating to apprenticeship delivery;
2. That members note the positive outcomes of the recent Ofsted inspection.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 28 January 2022, Members received an update report on the implementation of the apprenticeship levy and introduction of a public-sector apprenticeship target through the enactment of the Enterprise Bill 2016. This report provides an update on developments since this time.
- 1.2 The standard reporting to the Human Resources Committee has been moved from January to October to better align the reporting timetable with the annual reporting requirements relating to public sector apprenticeship targets as required by Central Government.
- 1.3 Since the previous report the Service has been subject to a full Ofsted inspection as an Apprenticeship Employer Provider. The outcome of the inspection are included within the report, together with a copy of the full inspection report (included as Appendix A).

2. REPORT

Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship Programme

- 2.1 Since 2019, the Service has aligned its Wholetime Duty System (WDS) firefighter development programme to the Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship Level 3 Standard. There are currently 25 apprentice firefighters progressing through the 24 month programme.
- 2.2 All operational firefighter apprentices are trained and developed in-house by the Service as an employer provider. This enables the Service to draw down £14000 from the levy fund per operational firefighter apprentice to support the cost of training and development.
- 2.3 The development pathway follows the established internal development programme, with an initial training period at the Service Development Centre (SDC) to develop core skills, knowledge and behaviours, followed by deployment to a designated Watch where apprentices attend operational incidents whilst continuing their development against the firefighter role map.
- 2.4 During this time, apprentices are supported by their line managers and an assigned mentor who review and guide on station development including undertaking periodic assessment of development progress. As part of the apprenticeship programme, they are also monitored by the Workplace Assessment Team at six weekly intervals. The SDC training staff conduct assessment of the apprentices at the 12 month and 18 month points in their development.
- 2.5 At the end of the apprenticeship programme, the apprentices undergo an End-Point Assessment (EPA) by an independent provider, which consists of a formal theory examination, practical assessments and professional discussion

to confirm that the apprentice has met the requirements of the Apprenticeship Standard.

Ofsted Inspection

2.6 In July 2022, Ofsted conducted a full inspection of the Service's Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship Programme. The inspection was comprehensive with 4 inspectors attending for a period of 4 days to review all elements of apprenticeship delivery. A copy of the full inspection report is included at Appendix 1 to this report.

2.7 Apprenticeship provision is assessed against 5 criteria as outlined below. Overall the Service provision was rated as 'Good' and inspectors were very complimentary about the quality of the programme and the commitment of both learners and employees involved in its delivery. This is reflected in the 'Outstanding' grading received against the behaviours and attitudes assessment criteria.

- Quality of education – Good
- Behaviour and attitudes – Outstanding
- Personal development – Good
- Leadership and management – Good
- Apprenticeships - Good

2.8 Following the success of the full inspection the Service will not receive a further routine inspection by Ofsted for at least 5 years.

Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers

2.9 The Service is periodically required to reapply to the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers. The reapplication process was completed in July 2022 and the Service has been successful in maintaining its accreditation. This enables the Service to continue to directly draw down funding from the apprenticeship levy.

Other Apprenticeships

2.10 The Service currently has 7 apprentices in non-operational roles as follows:

- Finance Department undertaking Level 4 Accounting Technician Apprenticeship;
- ICT Department undertaking a Level 3 Digital Support Technician Apprenticeship;
- ICT Department undertaking a Level 4 Cyber Security Technologist Apprenticeship;
- ICT Department undertaking a Level 3 Infrastructure Technician Apprenticeship;
- Fire Protection undertaking a Level 3 Business Administration apprenticeship (x2);
- Corporate Communications undertaking Level 3 Junior Content Producer apprenticeship.

- 2.11 One Apprentice successfully completed their Level 3 Personal Trainer Apprenticeship in April 21. In addition one new station manager migrated across their Departmental Manager Level 5 Apprenticeship from their previous employer.
- 2.12 The Service is able to draw down funds from the levy to support the formal training and development for the apprenticeships, however the levy cannot be used to fund salary costs. The apprenticeships outlined in section 2.10 are all delivered through external training providers.

Public Sector Apprenticeship Target

- 2.13 The Service is required to report, to Government, an annual Apprenticeship return in September to cover the previous Financial Year. The data reported this year covered the period 31 Mar 2021 to 31 March 2022. During the reporting period, 42% of all new starters were apprenticeships. This represents 3.15% of the total workforce.
- 2.14 As detailed at previous reports, public-sector employers have been set a target of 2.3% of the workforce to be new apprenticeship starters. Therefore, the Service has exceeded the target set for FY 21/22.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 In Financial Year 2021/22 the Service has drawn down £170 044 overall from the Service's apprenticeship levy digital account. This money is used to support training and development of all apprentices.
- 3.2 During Financial Year 2021/22 the Service paid £116 562 into the apprenticeship levy, based on payroll. The monthly levy contribution to the account paid by the Service is approximately depending on payroll numbers in a given month.
- 3.3 During Financial Year 2021/22, the Service, as employer provider for the Operational Firefighter Apprentice Programme, directly drew down £136 371 from our digital account for the provision of that programme.
- 3.5 During the same period, £33 673 was paid to external training providers from our digital account for the external provider apprenticeships.
- 3.6 Further, an additional funding of £38 750 was received in FY 2021/22 from the Government Hire a New Apprentice payment scheme. This money has been reinvested into operational training development in the form of a temporary eLearning Developer to develop operational training eLearning packages
- 3.7 As at September 2022, the Service had £127 738 in its digital apprenticeship account.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Human Resources and Learning and Development implications are set out within the report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An initial equality impact assessment has not been undertaken as there has been no change in policy or delivery.
- 5.2 Of the 27 apprentices employed by the Service in FY21/22: 4 (14%) were women and 6 (22%) were from BAME backgrounds.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The apprenticeship levy is a statutory payment under the Enterprise Bill 2016 and is payable by all employers with more than 250 employees.
- 7.2 The public-sector apprenticeship target was established under the Public-Sector Public Sector Apprenticeship Targets Regulations 2017. Public sector bodies with more than two hundred and fifty employees have a target to employ at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentices. Reporting against the target was until April 2022 a legal requirement.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The apprenticeship levy is paid over irrespective of usage and must be used within 24 months or lost as a source of funding for apprentice employment. By being an employer provider, the Service is able to best utilise the apprenticeship levy to fund our WDS firefighter development as an apprenticeship programme.
- 8.2 Apprenticeships support the Service's recruitment and retention priorities. The use of apprentices in part mitigates the risk associated with the limited availability of certain professional skills in the labour market.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 10.1 Members recognise the progress made in the employment of apprenticeship roles within the Service during Financial Year 2021/22 including the Service exceeding the public sector targets relating to apprenticeship delivery;
- 10.2 That members note the positive outcomes of the recent Ofsted inspection.

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

None

Craig Parkin
Chief Fire Officer



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

INDEPENDENT CULTURE REVIEW OF LONDON FIRE BRIGADE (LFB)

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 13 January 2023

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an update on the London Fire Brigade's Independent Culture Review.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the content of the report.
- Support the Service's commitment and approach to developing an inclusive culture at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 An independent review of the culture of London Fire Brigade (LFB) was recommended as part of the internal investigation into the death of development firefighter Jaden Matthew Francois-Espirit, who tragically took his own life in August 2020.
- 1.2 The Review is a thorough examination of the culture at London Fire Brigade, chaired by Nazir Afzal OBE. Over a period of twelve months, he and his team heard from more than 2,000 current and former members of staff and community groups who shared their experiences of the Brigade. At the end of this period Nazir, and his team wrote a report explaining their findings, which can be found on the [LFB website](#).
- 1.3 It is suggested that Members of the HR Committee should be made aware of this report, given the potential impact on the rest of the Fire sector and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, more locally.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The LFB report paints a picture of poor behaviour and painful experiences over many years. It highlights that women, Black, Asian and minority ethnic, LGBTQ+ and neurodiverse staff experience poor treatment and do less well in their careers at LFB.
- 2.2 Issues were also identified with leadership, and with staff fearing to speak out about abuse. Additionally, the report includes examples of very poor behaviour towards members of the public.
- 2.3 LFB have said they are taking immediate steps to end discrimination, harassment and bullying at London Fire Brigade. These steps include:
 - Establishing a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment and bullying. Anyone accused of this behaviour is to be immediately suspended and dismissed if the accusation is upheld.
 - Introducing a new external complaints investigation service so that staff can feel safe to speak up and cases can be handled objectively and confidentially.
 - Reviewing all of their people-related processes to eliminate discrimination, including involving independent people to make immediate improvements where practical.
 - Making it much easier and quicker for staff to access help and support. LFB Staff provide an essential emergency response service and are frequently exposed to traumatic incidents, which requires improved support.
 - They're making a permanent shift in their approach to leadership ensuring leaders are setting and uphold high standards, so those

leaders who do not value transparency, accountability and fairness will no longer have a place at LFB. There will also be an expectation that leaders own their past mistakes.

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Context

- 2.4 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has been committed to, and investing in, the development of its workforce and culture for a significant period of time. Whilst acknowledging the evident challenges the sector has and understanding that some of these are shared in Nottinghamshire, the Service has made some significant progress in becoming a more inclusive and welcoming organisation and service provider.
- 2.5 Whilst changes to the diversity of the workforce are incremental, the Service continues to make improvements in this area. In particular, the work the Service has done with Stonewall and more locally to become a more LGBTQ+ friendly employer is impacting on attraction rates for jobs.
- 2.6 Internally, the Service's proactive employee networks are providing a platform for staff to ensure that diverse voices are heard and that this influences decision-making. This will be further developed early in 2023 with the inclusion of an 'open-seat' at Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) meetings, facilitating greater inclusion and diversity at these internal governance meetings.
- 2.7 Training has been reviewed and the Service is starting to ensure that the needs of diverse communities are woven into operational training and command scenarios. The introduction of a communication guide for firefighters to interact with Deaf service users more confidently is another positive step.
- 2.8 Staff Survey data from 2022 demonstrates that employees are trusted to get on with their jobs and that they feel a real sense of belonging to the organisation. Teams look after one another and line managers are managing their employees' health and wellbeing at work. This data does not demonstrate differential experiences for minority groups but it does show that the SLT need to do more to engage with staff to build trust and communicate a vision. The survey also showed that systems and processes are not always making it easy for employees to do their jobs.

Next Steps

- 2.9 The Service understands, however, that it still has work to do to ensure that all staff can bring their best, most authentic selves to work. The Service commissioned its own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Review at the end of 2021 and started work on its 12-point plan in April 2022. This review highlighted a range of workstreams for the organisation to focus on and the LFB Report will strengthen the organisation's resolve to make long-lasting changes to improve culture, services and workplaces at NFRS.
- 2.10 The first part of this work will be to release a Joint Statement from the Chief Fire Officer, Chair of the Fire Authority, employee networks and other key stakeholders respond to the LFB report and some of the other stories which have been emerging from Fire and Rescue Services in recent months.

2.11 During 2023, the Service will be:

- Acting on the EDI training review to improve awareness and understanding for staff.
- Further embedding EDI considerations into strategy development, business planning and policy development.
- Working harder to understand new and emerging communities via Census 2021 data.
- Enhancing the Service’s built environment to ensure dignity for all.
- Improving openness and transparency in decision-making via use of internal and external advisory groups and networks.
- Working to further embed the National Core Code of Ethics.

2.12 It is essential that the Service maintains the trust of its communities to ensure that it can deliver its services effectively, whilst enhancing its reputation as an employer of choice across the City and County. This will be a key focus for the Chief Fire Officer and his Strategic Leadership Team over the next 12 months and beyond.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The human resource or learning and development implications are noted in the report and will be met by existing budgets.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this is not a policy, function or service. However, it should be noted that the contents of the LFB report may influence the way in which NFRS delivers its EDI aims and objectives.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The advancement of equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it is a key element of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A failure to represent the community being served or to provide an inclusive workplace can impact upon trust and confidence in public services. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is cognisant of this as a risk to its reputation and ability to engage with its communities and service users.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this work. However, NFRS works closely with partners locally and nationally to share, develop and implement best practice.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the content of the report.
- 10.2 Support the Service's commitment and approach to developing an inclusive culture at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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