



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

Date: Friday, 21 April 2023 **Time:** 10.00 am

Venue: Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue and Police 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

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

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

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

Governance Officer: *Catherine Ziane-Pryor, Governance Officer*
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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 13 January 2023
from 10.01 am - 11.02 am**

Membership

Present

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

Absent

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Candida Brudenell - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Mick Sharman - Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Tracey Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development
Matt Sismey - Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager
Damien West - Area Manager Head of ICT, Corporate Support
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

8 Apologies for Absence

None.

9 Declarations of Interests

None.

10 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held 1 July 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

11 Human Resources Update

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented the report which provides the Committee with an update on key human resource metrics for the period 1 June

to 30 December 2022 for establishment figures, and for the period 30 April to 30 December for absence data.

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

- a) The Service currently employs 804 staff, including 70 dual contract individuals who are Whole-Time firefighters and also provide On-Call cover;
- b) There were 20 full-time equivalent firefighter posts, and 10 full-time equivalent support role posts vacant, some of which have since been filled;
- c) The rates at which firefighters have left the Service is as predicted, but as is the national picture across public services, there are higher levels of turnover within support staff (Green Book roles). However, the rate of turnover is slowing down and recruitment increased following targeted work. The quality of new starters has been very high;
- d) Appendix A to report provides a breakdown of the sickness absence levels for Whole-Time staff, which shows a reduction of absence overall across all work force areas compared to last year's figures;
- e) Absences due to COVID-19 sickness are still recorded, and for this reporting period accounts for 17% of absence. Absence data will continue to be considered both with and without COVID-19 absences;
- f) This Service is above national absence rates against other Services, but only marginally for support staff. This is being considered in detail and solutions sought;
- g) Appendix C to report provides a breakdown of the top 10 reasons for absenteeism for Whole-Time, On-Call, and support staff, with regard to overall days lost to absence, short-term and long-term absences;
- h) There are different reasons but muscular-skeletal and mental health absence continues to rank highest but targeted support is ongoing for these areas;
- i) There were no significant areas of concern regarding disciplinary cases, grievances raised, harassment cases raised, dismissals, appeals and active employment tribunal cases;
- j) Long term absence does have a significant impact on the statistics and accounts for between 62%-71% of absence. Long term is defined as off work with a GP note for more than 28 days consecutive absence. Such staff are referred to the Service's Occupational Health Section to be able to access support with the view of enabling them to return to work when appropriate;
- k) Flu is predicted to be a massive problem nationally this year, with several deaths already having occurred within the county. Seasonal Flu cases have increased but it is anticipated that absence due to flu will have an impact on the Service and will be evident in the next reporting cycle.

Members commented as follows:

- l) It is a concern that Covid rates appear to be increasing across the population;
- m) With regard to the national sickness absence comparisons of other Services, once the anomaly of Cambridgeshire is removed along with non-comparable London, Nottinghamshire isn't far off the overall average sickness rate;
- n) The higher rates within Nottinghamshire are largely attributed long-term sickness of just a few individuals.

Resolved to note the update.

12 Update on Workforce Plan 2022-24

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented the report which provides the Committee with an update on progress against the Workforce Plan 2022-24.

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

- a) The workforce plan sets out an ongoing two-year plan to assist in predicting staffing numbers to inform recruitment and ensure that establishment planning is in place to maintain the required staffing;
- b) Last reported in July, consideration of 2025 workforce predictions will commence shortly as it takes approximately two years from the start of the recruitment process for operational firefighters to be considered fully competent;
- c) Recent turnover rates up to December 2022, have been as predicted at 3.9-4% for firefighters, most of which were due to retirements which are generally known in advance;
- d) A whole time recruitment campaign has just been completed and appointments will be made shortly. Nearly 400 applications were received with just over 100 applicants interviewed, which is very positive;
- e) Whole-Time posts have been recruited to annually, mainly through the migration process of enabling On-Call firefighters to apply to Whole-Time roles, but also via the transfer process of staff from other Fire and Rescue Authorities to fill gaps in Whole-Time establishment;
- f) With regard to the Whole-Time establishment, there has been the backdrop of some uncertainty with the Efficiency Strategy, and unpredicted elements, such as budgetary impact, have complicated workforce planning;
- g) It is anticipated that by the middle of next year, staffing will be at the current establishment levels;
- h) Turnover of the On-Call establishment is slightly lower than initially predicted, at approximately 7%, but recruitment takes place throughout the year and 11 trainee firefighters are currently working their way through the training program. Work continues

with crews of On-Call stations encouraged to locally promote the Service and benefits of the role;

- i) There has been a fairly high turnover of support staff. Exit interviews found that pay issues and the inability to progress through the organisation were the most predominant reasons for leaving. There is frustration that the pay issue is guided by the national pay awards, but since the Committee last met, there has been agreement of the Green Book pay award, which has helped bring the sector more in line with other employers. It is hoped that this will support staff retention but work is underway with regard to career grading to provide clearly defined routes for career progression, including the potential to move between departments;
- j) Apprenticeship routes continue to be developed, including development of 'home grown' in-house employees;
- k) Work has been undertaken to professionally promote the Service as an attractive employer of choice, with what the Service can offer employees, including long-term well-being welfare support, which has had a positive impact with 20 vacant support staff roles being filled this year;
- l) The Efficiency Strategy is having, and will have, an impact going forward. It was impossible to predict some of the budgetary pressures which the Service now faces. The workforce review is ongoing and will address some of the issues raised, including employees desire for more flexibility. The results of the review will be presented to members in due course;
- m) The potential for industrial action had not been predicted, but will be factored in moving forward into next year's plan;
- n) The Service regularly attends school career events across the county, including where possible, accompanied by an operational presence, with the intention of promoting the Service and positively embedding its presence within local communities;
- o) Everybody has at least a basic understanding of what the operational firefighter role is, but the Service is also trying to promote that there are other possibly less glamorously perceived, but still important roles within the Service, such as within Fire Prevention and Protection.

Members of the Committee commented as follows:

- p) The report is welcomed and provides assurance with regard to workforce planning;
- q) It's important to engage with schools and young people, to build intelligence and awareness from a young age to ensure the Service is seen as a positive presence, but also to raise the profile and awareness of the Service as a potential employer.

Resolved to note the report.

13 Equalities Monitoring Report

Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, presented the report which provides a detailed breakdown of the workforce and applicant analysis by protected characteristic for the period 1 April to 30 September 2022.

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

- a) The numbers of female firefighter remains steady, but there is a slight reduction in the numbers of BAME employees;
- b) There was an increased reporting on LGBT numbers by 2.85% as of 30 Sept;
- c) Disability numbers reduced but the Service is actively trying to provide an environment in which staff feel comfortable disclosing disabilities. Work is ongoing to establish 'reasonable adjustment passports' which also ensure that disability information is appropriately shared, and managers receive appropriate training;
- d) A firefighter has been seconded into the EDI team for 6 months to assist in the development of positive action measures in the community. This includes promoting the Service at career fairs, festivals and community events such as the recently attended female football tournament.
- e) Regular fitness sessions were held focusing on fitness activities prior to the recruitment process;
- f) Work is ongoing to further promote the employer branding unique selling point of the Service as an attractive employer for both operational and Green Book roles;
- g) Exit interviews are held, in which their reasons for staff leaving the Service are requested. Resignations can be for a range of reasons, including a career change or personal circumstances;
- h) The Service is working with the Karima Institute, Radio Dawn and Radio Kemet, with further work planned from April to encourage applications and try and determine the reasons why people are not applying to join the Service;
- i) The Service's female Muslim Fire Fighter, Uroosa Arshid, wanted to be a firefighter following a school visit by the Service when she was 5 or 6 years old. As previously mentioned by members, there is value in reaching out to young people from an early age to establish a relationship and achieve longer-term engagement benefits;
- j) Of the 384 applicants for a Whole-Time posts, 50 were women, but proportionally this needs to be near a half to reflect the population balance. Work is ongoing to find new ways of raising women's interest in working for the Service;
- k) The revised census information from 2021, is being considered in detail and will be submitted to the Policy and Strategy Committee in June. Following members comments, social economic deprivation information can be included as an equalities metric.

Councillors commented:

- l) The value of engaging a truly diverse workforce is not just about statistics, but the importance of having employees who understand communities and are also able to promote the benefits of working for the Service;
- m) In some less diverse communities within Nottinghamshire, such as Ashfield, economic equality may be considered of greater relevance. Promoting the Service within some of the more deprived communities, such as council estates, will help people relate to the work of the Service, and feel that they realistically can work for the Service. Inclusion should be about all elements of the community, including economic scales, and not just focusing on BAME and sexual orientation representation;
- n) Councillor Gul Khan informed the Committee that he had promoted the Service on several occasions on the local Asian Radio Station and was disappointed that more applications from BAME community had not been received.

Resolved to:

- 1) **note the content of the report and support the Service's continued commitment to attracting, recruiting and retaining a more diverse workforce;**
- 2) **agree that as there is cross-over and duplication between this report and the workforce planning report, to maximise efficiency, the data provided in this report will be combined with the Workforce Plan report and subsequent Human Resources Update after a six month period.**

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

Damien West, Area Manager Head of ICT, Corporate Support, presented the report which provides an update on addressing the 'Areas For Improvement' (AFI) allocated to this Committee for monitoring and scrutiny.

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

- a) The last HMICFR inspection identified 4 areas for improvement, compared to the 24 identified by the initial inspection;
- b) The only AFI allocated to this committee for monitoring and scrutiny, is AFI 3, 'AFI3 - The Service should assure itself that staff understand how to get wellbeing support';
- c) The Service currently offers a range of information regarding broadly available support, but some crews had expressed concerns on the availability and access to post event support consistency;
- d) A gap analysis has been undertaken to consider this, and also examine the support offer at other services, including how it is promoted and exactly what is provided;
- e) As a result, the service is to take the following action:

- Meeting with the Communications Team about developing a communications 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 communications team to promote wellbeing support. Occupational Health 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.
- f) to ensure that progress to address this AFI can be evaluated, questions will be included within staff survey and staff engagement events, from which feedback can be tracked.

Resolved to:

- 1) **note the 'Areas for Improvement' delegated to the Committee for scrutiny and monitoring;**
- 2) **agree the approach of the Chief Fire Officer for addressing the 'Areas for Improvement';**
- 3) **note the actions undertaken to date.**

15 Apprenticeship Update

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report, which, in line with public sector reporting requirements, provides an annual update on apprenticeship provision within the Service for the period of the 2021/22 financial year.

Following points were highlighted and responses provided to members' questions:

- a) The Service's apprenticeship scheme has been subject to an OFSTED inspection, which provided an overall assessment outcome of 'good' with some elements rated as 'outstanding', which is a very welcome result;
- b) Due to the 'good' 'assessment outcome, OFSTED will not inspect the Service again for at least five years, maybe longer;

- c) The Service is intending to develop a further 6 apprenticeship opportunities, predominantly in the ICT Department, but also including Finance, Fire Protection and Corporate Communications;
- d) Whilst many large employers are struggling to utilise their apprenticeship levy, it is not the case for the Service, which is able to utilise 100% of the levy.

Members of the Committee welcomed the report agreed that the provision of apprenticeships is massively important.

Resolved

- 1) **to 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) **to note the positive outcomes of the recent OFSTED inspection.**

16 Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade (LFB)

Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, presented the report which informs the Committee of the outcome of the Independent Review into the culture of the London Fire Brigade.

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

- a) This review is the result of an internal investigation into the tragic death of firefighter Jaden Matthew Francois-Espirit, who took his own life in August 2020. The review took place over 12 months with more than 2,000 individual interviews of staff, former staff and members of the community;
- b) As a result of the review, further cases of concern, including harassment and bullying have been identified nationally within the sector;
- c) Members are assured that this Service has considered the recommendations of the review and is examining the culture and development of the organisation, and points which may be relevant to this Service, and employee networks. The report sets out the changes proposed as a result;
- d) London Fire Brigade have responded to the recommendations (as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report) and NFRS has set out the context relevant to this Service (which are set out in 2.4 of the report) which are summarised as follows for consideration and discussion by the Strategic Leadership Team and employee networks:
 - i. an acknowledgement that diversity work needs to improve and maintain momentum;
 - ii. staff networks have been helpful in moving forward culture change and identifying behaviours which had not been apparent to the Service;

- iii. a review of training and a new action plan was developed in 2022, including the mainstreaming of equality issues into operational training, and consideration of different identity and background when providing rescue, care and support;
 - iv. a staff survey is undertaken every 2 years and specific monitoring is included to ensure that issues raised and identified are addressed. The results of the survey have shown that line manager and teams are generally looking after each other and working well together, with good morale and job satisfaction, but some issues which were identified are being addressed;
 - v. an inclusive leadership programme for middle managers is to be provided, starting this week;
- e) the Chair and Chief will release a joint statement about culture, to ensure there is awareness and assurance that the Service is taking issues seriously.

Members of the Committee welcomed the report, acknowledged the importance of learning, and the work to ensure that the Service is a good employer, for which people want to work.

Resolved

- 1) to note the content of the report;
- 2) to support the Service's commitment and approach to developing an inclusive culture at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

17 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, 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.

18 Exempt Minutes

The exempt minutes of the meeting held 1 July 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 21 April 2023

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on key human resources metrics for the period 1 January to 31 March 2023, with the exception of absence data which is for the reporting period October to 31 December 2022. This includes equalities monitoring data for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

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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 January 2023 to 31 March 2023, 24 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels as of 1 March 2023 are highlighted below:

	Approved	Actual	Variance
Wholetime	431 (431 fte)	409 (407.3fte)	-23 (-23.7fte)
On-Call	192 Units	244 persons (includes 75 dual contracts)	-61 units
Support	161 (156.5 fte)	159 (147.8 fte)	-2 (-8.7fte)

- 2.2 There have been 17 leavers and 25 starters since the last report. This has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 812 (this includes 75 dual contractors). Leavers are broken down as follows: eight wholetime, seven on-call and two support roles.
- 2.3 As at 31 March 2023, wholetime strength stood at 409 operational personnel (407.3 fte) employees against an establishment of 431 posts.
- 2.4 During the period, the Service has appointed to 5 wholetime, 14 on-call roles and 6 support roles.

Whole Year Overview

- 2.5 As this is the final reporting period for the financial year 2022-23, an overview of workforce movements shows that overall workforce numbers have reduced by 30 between April 2022 and April 2023, mainly as a result of vacancies on the wholetime and support establishment during the course of the year. This

formed part of the management of the salary budget pending confirmation of the budget settlement.

2.6 The outcomes from the wholetime recruitment campaign, which concluded in December 2022, will see 24 new apprentice firefighters commence their training in April and September 2023 which will bring the wholetime numbers back up to establishment levels. The Service also appointed two transferees from other Services and three on-call employees to wholetime roles from this process.

2.7 During 2022-23, the number of starters and leavers were as follows:

	Starters	Leavers
Wholetime	2	27
On-Call	33	26
Support	26 (21.42fte)	36
Total	61 (56.52fte)	89

2.8 During the course of the year, the Service employed two transferees from other Services and nine on-call employees through a separate migration process to wholetime roles. Whilst transferees are counted within the above figures, those who migrate from on-call to wholetime roles are not counted as new starters since they are already in employment with the Service. If these are counted, then this takes the number of new starters into wholetime positions to eleven.

2.9 In addition, several promotion processes have been undertaken to fill vacancies at supervisory, middle manager and strategic level as employees have retired or left the Service for other reasons.

2.10 The number of leavers for wholetime and on-call roles has remained within planning forecasts. However, the number of leavers from support roles was higher than predicted, with 36 leavers compared to a 12-month forecast of 26 leavers. This reflects the history of turnover within this employee group over the last two years. However, it should be noted that this includes the completion of eight fixed-term appointments and four retirements.

2.11 Whilst the turnover rate for support roles has been identified as a potential area of concern for the Service, it is noticeable that turnover rates have markedly decreased in the latter half of the year with 25 leavers between April 2022 and September 2022 compared to 11 leavers between October 22 and April 23 – a 44% reduction in turnover. As previously reported, a review has been undertaken to address recruitment and retention issues.

2.12 A revised Workforce Plan is currently being developed for the period 2023-25 and will be reported to Committee at its next meeting.

SICKNESS ABSENCE – Q3

2.13 The review period covers the three-month period between 1 October and 31 December 2022.

2.14 Target absence figures for 2022/23 are:

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

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

2.15 For the purposes of reporting, on-call absence analysis is shown separately to other workgroups due to the nature of their working arrangements. Absence related to Covid has been included in the total absence figures.

Workforce (excluding On-Call)

2.16 Total absence across the workforce increased by 102 days (+6.54%) in Quarter Three compared to the previous quarter.

2.17 However, this represents a decrease compared to the same quarter of 2021-22 of 349 days (-17.3%).

2.18 Absence related to Covid represents 153 working days lost, which accounts for 9.2% of total absence, compared to 17.2% in Q2.

2.19 Long term absence equated to 57.84% of sickness absence in Q3.

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

On-Call Workforce

2.21 For on-call staff, absence figures in Q3 increased by 299 days (+33.5%) compared to the previous quarter.

2.22 However, this represents a decrease compared to the same quarter of 2021-22 of 143 days (-10.7%).

2.23 Absence related to Covid represents 107 working days lost, which accounts for 9% of total absence.

2.24 Long term absence equated to 56.5% of sickness absence in Q3.

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

NATIONAL ABSENCE TRENDS

- 2.26 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.
- 2.27 Reasons for sickness absence at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) broadly mirror the national trends with musculo-skeletal and mental health related absences featuring significantly in all workgroups.
- 2.28 Appendix B reflects the national absence trends for Quarter 3. 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.
- 2.29 For wholetime staff, NFRS has an average of 7.69 days lost per employee which ranks the Service as 17 out of the 34 Services included in the survey. This figure is below the sector sickness average of 8.83 days per employee. The lowest average was 3.59 days and the highest 19.42 days.
- 2.30 For on-call staff, NFRS has an average of 13.05 days lost per employee which ranks the Service as 15 out of 21 Services included in the survey. This figure is below the sector sickness average of 13.61 days per employee. The lowest average was 2.2 days and the highest 29.26 days.
- 2.31 For support staff (green book) the Service has an average of 8.98 days lost per employee which ranks as 28 out of the 35 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 7.25 days per employee. The lowest average was 2.06 days and the highest 12.53 days.

OTHER WORKFORCE METRICS

- 2.32 This section reviews the following activities: disciplinary cases, grievances raised, harassment cases raised, dismissals, appeals and active employment tribunal cases.
- 2.33 Over the period, there were no grievance, disciplinary or harassment investigations undertaken. As previously reported, it should be noted that a discrimination claim has previously been lodged with the employment tribunal office and will be heard in March 2024.
- 2.34 Two redundancies arising from the Workforce Review (Futures 25) were agreed by the Fire Authority with effect from 31 March 2023.

EQUALITIES MONITORING

- 2.35 A review of key equalities metrics is undertaken every six months to establish any patterns or changes. The following equalities monitoring information is provided for the period of 1 October – 31 March 2023.

Workforce Profile

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

Workforce	Female firefighters (Wholetime and On-call)	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees (whole workforce)	BAME employees in wholetime roles	Lesbian, gay or bisexual (whole workforce)	Disabled (whole workforce)
31 March 2023 Headcount 812	9.76% (40 out of 410 roles)	5.42% (44)	5.88% (24)	2.95% (24)	3.94% (32)
30 Sept 2022 Headcount 809	9.41% (40 out of 425 roles)	5.19% (42)	5.8% (24)	2.85% (23)	4.08 % (33)

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

Whole Workforce

- Women currently constitute 16.26% (132) of the total workforce. Of these, 37.12% (49) women are employed in operational roles (including management roles). Women represent 7.52% of operational roles undertaken. 2.44% (5 of 205) of supervisory managers and 3.44% are (1) of middle operational managers are women. There are four women in strategic operational roles (Area Manager and Assistant Chief Fire Officer) and who are members of the Strategic Leadership Team.
- Employees from BAME backgrounds constitute 5.42% of the workforce. Current census figures show the BAME population of Nottinghamshire as 14.61%.
- Employees who identify as being Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB) constitute 2.95% of the workforce. Current census figures demonstrate an LGB population of Nottinghamshire of 2.68% (however the prefer not to say level was 6% within the last census, suggesting Nottinghamshire's LGB population could be higher).
- Disability declaration is at 3.94% of the workforce. However, this increases to 9.62% of employees in support roles. Census data shows 11.9% of the population of Nottinghamshire identify as having a disability.

Operational Roles

- For wholetime roles, women are employed in 9.3% (38) of operational roles. Of these, 3.8% (5 out of 131) are supervisory roles (Crew or Watch Manager)

and 3.4% (1 out of 29) are middle manager roles (Station or Group manager). There is 1 (1 out of 8) woman in a strategic operational role (Brigade Manager).

- Employees from BAME backgrounds represent 5.88% (24) of operational roles. Of these, 5.97% (8 of 134) are supervisory roles (Crew or Watch Manager). There are no BAME employees in middle or senior manager roles.

On-Call Roles

- For on-call roles, women are employed in 4.5% (11) of operational roles. Of these, 2.74% (2 out of 73) are employed in supervisory roles.
- Employees from BAME backgrounds represent 2% (5) of operational roles. Of these, 1.4% (1 out of 73) are employed in supervisory roles.

Support Roles

- For support roles, women are employed in 49.7% (80) of roles. Of these, 47.7% (42 out of 88) are employed in supervisory roles and 23.6% (4 out of 17) are employed in senior or strategic roles.
- Employees from BAME backgrounds represent 9.3% (15) of roles. Of these, 73.3% (11) are employed in supervisory roles.
- The table below, shows the breakdown of the support workforce by protected characteristic and grade.

Support Employees	Men	Women	Disability	BAME	LGB
Grades 1-4 (plus Apprentice)	22	34	7	4	6
Grades 5-7	46	42	8	11	2
Grades 8-SLSM	13	4			
Total	81	80	15	15	8

STARTERS AND LEAVERS

2.38 There have been 33 starters and 36 leavers. The table below shows details of these starters and leavers by protected characteristic:

	Starters			Leavers		
	On-Call	Wholetime	Support	On-Call	Wholetime	Support
Women	0	1 (50%)	7 (44%)	2 (17%)	0	4 (40%)
Men	15 (100%)	1 (50%)	9 (46%)	10 (83%)	14 (100%)	6 (60%)
BAME	0	0	0	0	0	0
LGB	0	1 (50%)	2 (13%)	1 (8%)	0	0
Disability	0	1 (50%)	0	0	1 (7%)	1 (10%)

2.39 Of the 33 starters, 24% (eight) were women. This was mainly related to the fact that all new on-call trainees (15) were men. Figures for wholetime and support roles reflect a good mix of male and female appointments. It is disappointing that there were no applications received from BAME applicants.

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

RECRUITMENT

Wholetime

2.41 Details of the recent wholetime firefighter recruitment campaign is attached as a separate report on the agenda.

On-Call

2.42 Another on-call recruitment campaign has opened during the reporting period, which has attracted 78 applicants, including 12 women, 5 from BAME backgrounds and 9 identifying as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. It is positive to see this level of diversity in applicant figures and it is hoped that this will translate into trainee appointments.

Support Roles

2.43 In the review period the Service received 96 applicants in total for eight vacancies. It should be noted that two of these vacancies were not filled within the review period. The breakdown of applicants, those shortlisted for interview and appointed are shown in the table below:

	Female	Male	BAME	Disabled	LGBT
Applicants	20 (21%)	76 (79%)	24 (25%)	3 (3%)	4 (4%)
Shortlisted	4 (36%)	31 (40.8%)	11 (45.8%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (25%)
Appointed	0	6 (100%)	1 (17%)	0	1 (17%)

2.44 The number of women and men shortlisted is broadly similar, although more men were successful at interview. The number of applications from those with protected characteristics is quite high and does not indicate that there is bias in the shortlisting process.

CONCLUSION

2.45 The monitoring data shows that the workforce profile is not representative of the local population in terms of employees from BAME backgrounds, Disability and people who identify as LGB. This is particular marked in operational roles.

- 2.46 The Service continues to use positive action to promote the fire service as a career during firefighter recruitment campaigns both wholetime and on-call, it does also promote support staff vacancies through targeted advertising. It should be noted most vacancies are for on-call roles, and these are specific to location, which can reduce the impact on diversity. Positive action is also taken to address underrepresentation in management roles.
- 2.47 Using a range of awareness events, mentoring and fitness/strength development activities prior to wholetime recruitment has helped to lead to positive diversity figures.
- 2.48 From the data presented above, it can be noted workforce is becoming gradually more representative.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

5. EQUALITIES 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

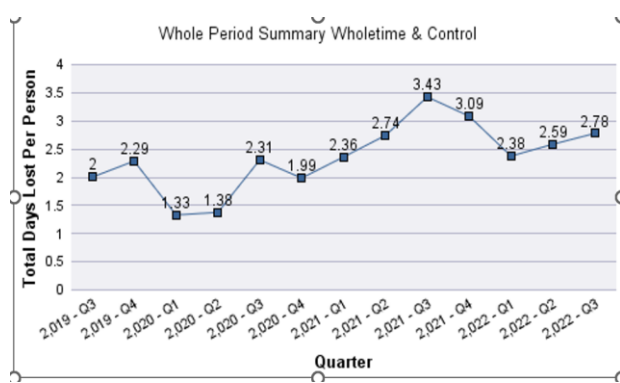
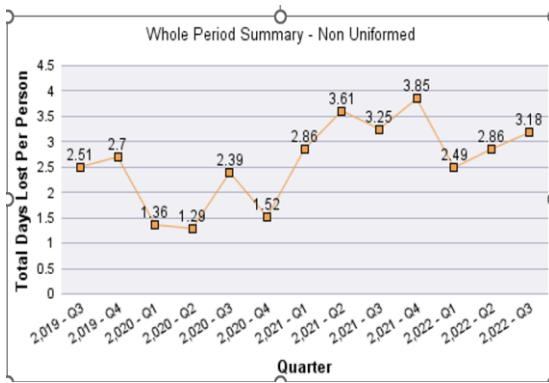
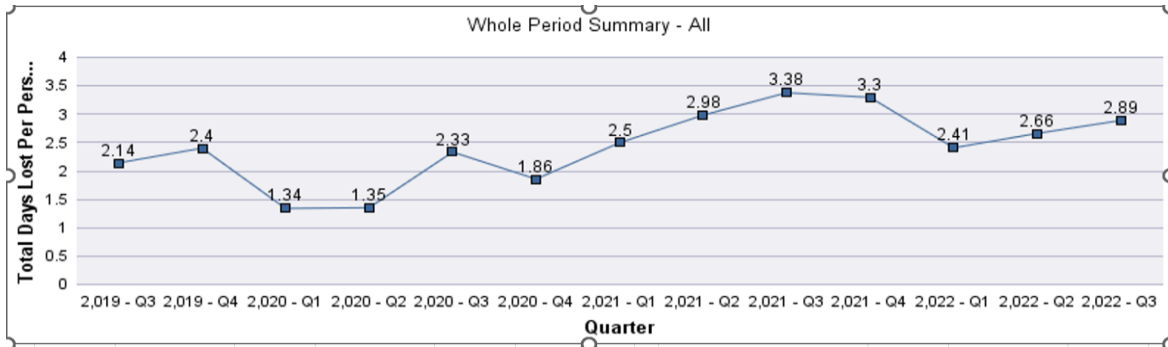
That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

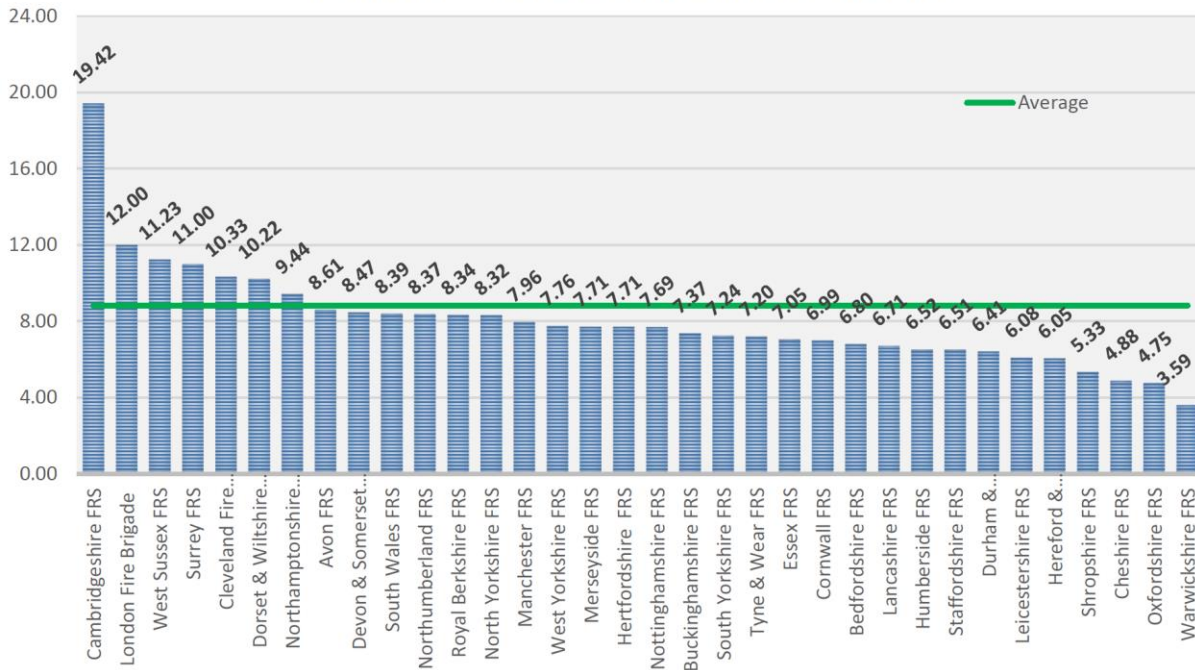
Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

APPENDIX A

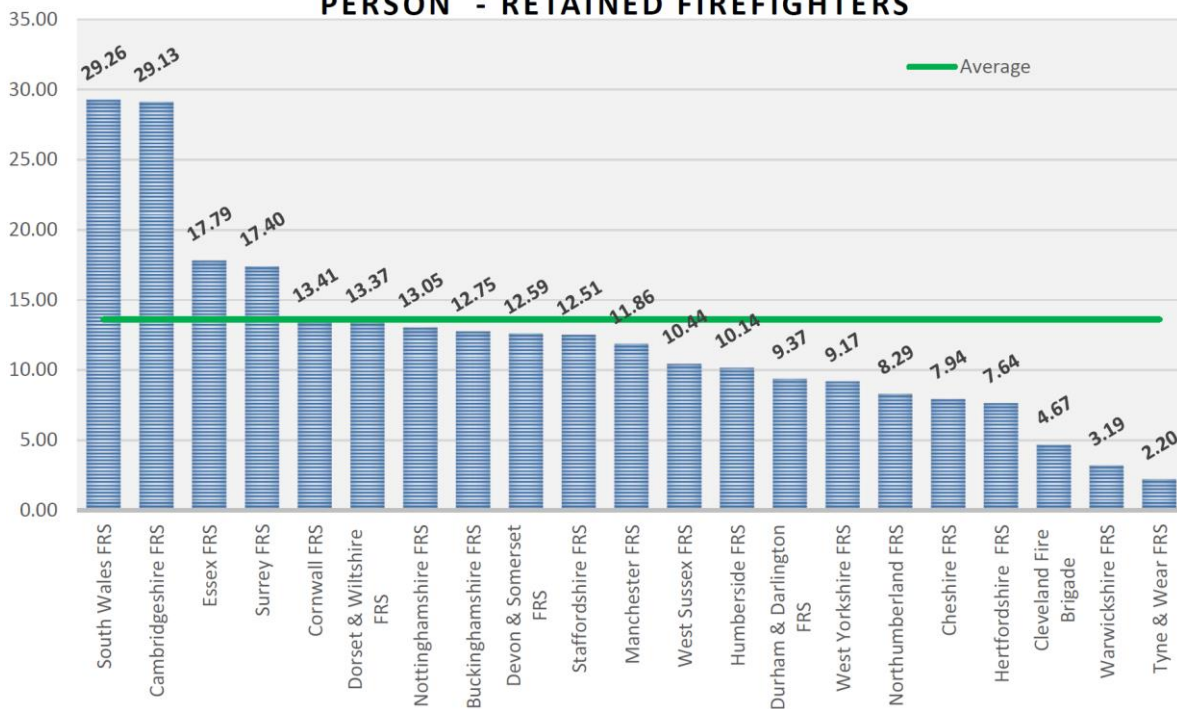


National Absence Survey

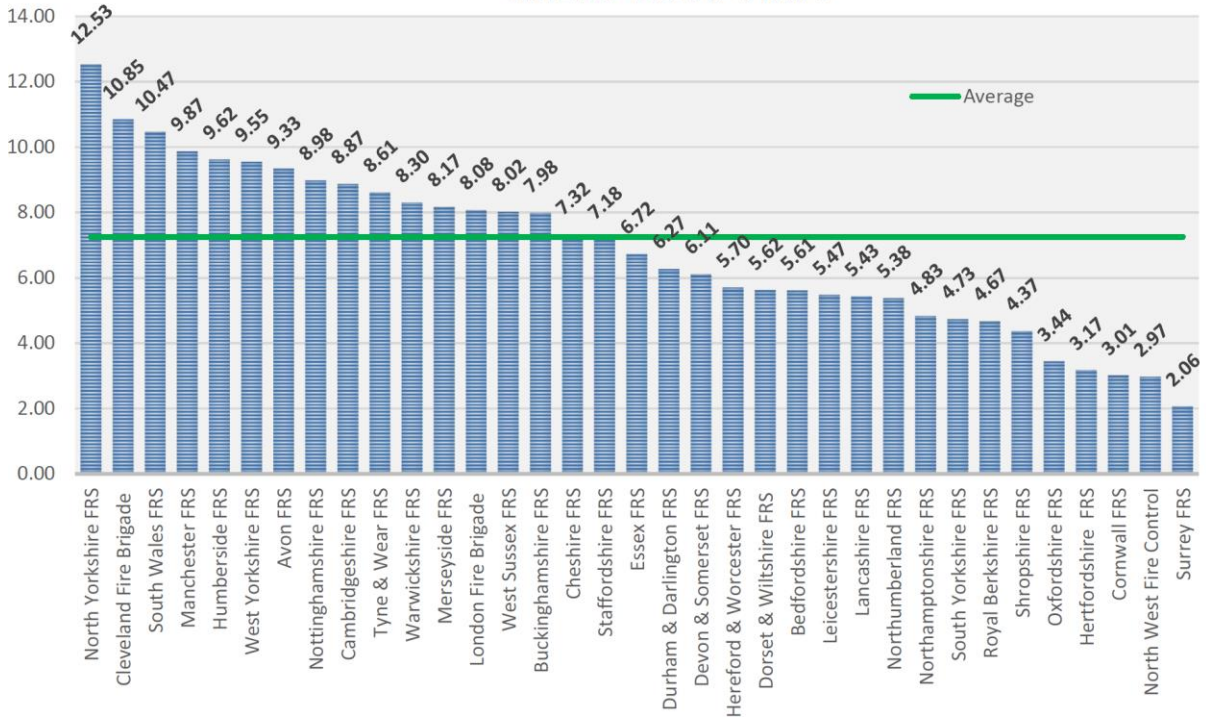
NUMBER OF DAYS/SHIFTS LOST TO SICKNESS PER PERSON - WHOLETIME FIREFIGHTERS



NUMBER OF DAYS/SHIFTS LOST TO SICKNESS PER PERSON - RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS



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



Q3 2022/23 - Wholetime

Wholetime

			Short Term Absences			Long Term		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health	6	274	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	28	118	Mental Health	5	270
Musculo Skeletal	24	247	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	39	112	Musculo Skeletal	5	164
Hospital/Post Operative	9	165	Musculo Skeletal	19	83	Hospital/Post Operative	6	145
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	28	118	Unknown causes, not specified	17	52	Respiratory - Other	1	45
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	39	112	Gastro-Intestinal	17	34	Virus/Infectious Diseases	1	16
Unknown causes, not specified	17	52	Hospital/Post Operative	3	20	Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	13
Respiratory - Other	1	45	Respiratory - Chest Infection	5	15			
Gastro-Intestinal	17	34	Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1	12			
Virus/Infectious Diseases	4	24	Eye Problems	2	10			
Other known causes (not specified in list)	5	20	Virus/Infectious Diseases	3	8			

Q3 2022/23 - On Call absence

Retained

			Short Term Absences			Long Term Absences		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	14	308	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	15	107	Musculo Skeletal	4	215
Hospital/Post Operative	4	193	Musculo Skeletal	10	93	Hospital/Post Operative	2	152
Unknown causes, not specified	8	110	Other known causes (not specified in list)	3	45	Mental Health - Other	1	92
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	15	107	Hospital/Post Operative	2	41	Respiratory - Other	1	92
Mental Health - Other	2	99	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	7	37	Unknown causes, not specified	2	73
Respiratory - Other	1	92	Unknown causes, not specified	6	37	Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1	29
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	2	50	Genitourinary/Gynecological/Reproductive	2	30	Mental Health	1	20
Mental Health	3	50	Mental Health	2	30			
Other known causes (not specified in list)	3	45	Virus/Infectious Diseases	3	30			
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	7	37	Gastro-Intestinal	9	29			

Q3 2022/23 – Support staff absence

Non Uniformed

Short Term Absences

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	6	116	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	22	79
Other known causes (not specified in list)	4	85	COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	9	34
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	22	79	Other known causes (not specified in list)	3	20
Mental Health	1	42	Musculo Skeletal	4	18
Mental Health - Other	2	41	Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	18
COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive	9	34	Unknown causes, not specified	5	14
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1	27	Gastro-Intestinal	4	12
Hospital/Post Operative	2	25	Mental Health - Other	1	6
Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	18	Respiratory - Chest Infection	1	4
Unknown causes, not specified	5	14	COVID-19 Adverse Reaction to Covid Vaccine	1	1
			Ear, Nose, Throat	1	1
			Hospital/Post Operative	1	1

Long Term Absences

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	2	98
Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	65
Mental Health	1	42
Mental Health - Other	1	35
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1	27
Hospital/Post Operative	1	24

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 21 April 2023

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update on the priorities for the People Strategy 2022-25

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A People Strategy forms part of the delivery mechanism for the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), setting out key workforce issues and commitments to ensure that the Service can deliver on its strategic objectives.
- 1.2 The people elements of the CRMP are set out within Strategic Goal 4: "We will continue to support and develop our workforce and promote an inclusive service" and are inherent in the four pillars of the Service's approach. Specifically, those of equality, diversity and inclusion and a professional and committed workforce.
- 1.3 The People Strategy is underpinned by national standards and workstreams developed through the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). A revised NFCC People Strategy is currently in development and will inform and influence the future people priorities for the sector. The Strategy will continue to be reviewed and adapted to reflect emerging national and local issues.
- 1.4 This report provides an overview of those areas of priority for the Service and how it is addressing these within the term of this Strategy. Actions will form part of the Service's Annual Delivery Plan. Supporting people is not just a human resource issue, but translates to the physical workplace, leadership, behaviours and communication.
- 1.5 The four focus areas for the People Strategy are:
 - Shaping our workforce;
 - Positive workplace and culture;
 - Inclusion;
 - Health and wellbeing.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 **Shaping our Workforce to Deliver our Services:** a key component of any People Strategy is the way in which the Service continuously reviews its workforce model to ensure it has the right people, with the right skills, in the right places, at the right times. An annual Workforce Plan is refreshed and published each year, with a two year lookahead at projected turnover, new or changing demands and specific workforce challenges. The current Workforce Plan 2022-24 is currently being revised. This Committee reviewed the Plan at its meeting in January 2023.
- 2.2 Within the Plan, predictions are made regarding future turnover, recruitment and succession planning. The regular human resources update reports to this Committee maintain an overview of workforce issues and how the Service is managing its resourcing requirements. During 2022-23 the Service has

undertaken a wholetime recruiting campaign, appointed to 61 roles across all work groups and undertaken promotion processes at all levels of the organisation. This has placed the staffing establishment in a sustainable position to meet demands and to deliver on the Service's commitments.

- 2.3 The Service has undertaken a workforce review during 2022-23 as part of its Futures 25 efficiency planning, and the next phase of this review will continue into 2023-24. This is a significant review of current structures, systems and processes and will align resources more closely with current and future demands. The outcomes from this review will be reported to the Fire Authority.
- 2.4 The Committee has been made aware through the human resources update reports of the challenge posed by higher-than-expected levels of turnover within support roles over the last two years. This has impacted on administrative, professional and technical roles, and a review of recruitment and retention has been undertaken to address these issues. The level of turnover has reduced in the latter half of 2022-23, which has resulted in better workforce stability and a reduction in the vacancy rate. The Service remains mindful of the need to promote itself as an employer of choice in the employment market through innovative recruitment, positive engagement and competitive employee benefits.
- 2.5 The challenge of recruiting and retaining to on-call roles is a perennial issue, although the Service did appoint 33 new firefighters during 2022-23. The nature of the role leads to historically higher levels of turnover than for wholetime roles and a dedicated on-call recruitment team works throughout the year to attract and recruit new firefighters.
- 2.6 An emerging challenge for the sector is the change to fire safety regulations and the shortage of professional fire safety officers nationally. The NFFC is working to address this shortage and the Service is actively working to increase its capacity in this area. This includes the sponsorship of employees to gain professional qualification through the Institute of Fire Engineers and in-house development to upskill operational employees to undertake fire safety audits.
- 2.7 As part of succession planning, a review of the leadership programme has commenced to ensure that current and future leaders have the skills and knowledge to undertake and develop into higher level roles. A talent management and career conversation process will be introduced to ensure that all employees have access to development opportunities.
- 2.8 **Positive Workplace and Culture:** the Service's aim is to ensure that all employees experience a positive working environment where they feel engaged, motivated and recognised for their contribution to making communities safe. This entails good communication networks where information is shared and feedback encouraged, good performance is recognised and behaviours are in line with Service values and ethical framework.

- 2.9 It is important that employees feel supported to work at their best, with effective training, development, leadership, and welfare support when they need it. It also links to the physical environment and ensuring that employees feel safe and can expect to be treated fairly. Building an effective psychological contract based on mutual trust and expectation.
- 2.10 The Service has developed an effective internal communications network which provides engagement at several different levels so that employees are informed about the issues affecting them. These range from news items on the intranet, employee newsletter and weekly updates, workplace visits by senior managers, staff conferences, Chief's address, involvement in working groups (for instance station refurbishments, new equipment and uniform), as well as the more formal engagement with representative bodies. An internal staff survey every two years also provides a way of gauging how employees feel about the Service and identifying the issues that need to be addressed. This level of internal engagement is central to an effective people strategy and will continue to be developed.
- 2.11 **Values and Culture:** the values and ethical standards that underpin the Service's culture have been reinforced by the NFCC Code of Ethics. Over recent months, external events and reports have provided a focus on the fire service nationally, with the London Fire Brigade (LFB) Independent Culture Review report representing a seminal moment for the sector.
- 2.12 The importance of creating a positive workplace which is free from harassment, discrimination and bullying has been a long-standing commitment for the Service. The Service's Behavioural Framework was revised in 2022 and sets out expectations about conduct and the ways in which values and the NFCC Code of Ethics should form part of how the Service does things – at an individual, managerial and community level. Work to embed these core principles will be on-going over the course of this plan.
- 2.13 The Service has undertaken a gap analysis of issues raised following the LFB review, to add to its own independent equality review undertaken in 2022, to establish the actions that need to be taken and this will form a key element of the People Strategy over the next two years. Ensuring that the experiences recounted in the review, and those raised by subsequent media reports, cannot happen in the future.
- 2.14 **Inclusion:** a positive workplace has inclusion at its heart. It is important that employees understand different communities and service users, that the Service welcomes those from different backgrounds, beliefs, genders, sexual orientation, or those with disabilities into the workplace.
- 2.15 Whilst training and awareness raising is the cornerstone of creating understanding and is built into development programmes, it also means forging relationships with local communities, asking for their views and integrating inclusion into every aspect of business – whether this is operational response, prevention, protection or working with our partners.

- 2.16 It is also important that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's workforce reflects the communities it serves. The Service has undertaken positive action over many years to encourage women, and those from Black, Asian and minority groups to apply for roles with the Service – particularly operational roles. This has met with some success, but women still represent only 6.7%, and BAME employees 5.88%, of the wholetime workforce. As part of a review of the last recruitment campaign, the Service will seek to understand any barriers for female and BAME applicants and measures that we can take to increase the number of applicants and their success rate in the process.
- 2.17 The Service has seen significant development of its employee networks over the last year and this is making a positive impact in terms of engagement, understanding and decision making. These networks will continue to receive support and recognition for the value that they bring.
- 2.18 The Service's Community Engagement Plan sets out aims and objectives to enhance relationships with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. The Community Engagement Officer and prevention teams work with many different established and emerging community groups across the county to ensure that they remain safe from fire and understand the role that the Service can play in this. Recent census data will help the Service to identify the way that communities are evolving and changing, and the impact of this in terms of providing an inclusive service.
- 2.19 **Health and Wellbeing:** an essential element of creating a positive workplace is the support provided to employees to maintain, enhance and address issues related to their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. This is particularly important in an emergency service environment, and where fitness is integral to the role.
- 2.20 The changes to pension schemes will extend working life to 60 for operational employees and to 67 for other employees, and this is likely to impact upon natural age-related conditions, such as loss of hearing, vision etc., and is likely to increase longer-term fitness and health issues. Adjustments such as hearing aids for operational employees may become more commonplace for instance, and the Service may need to consider non-operational roles for those that are unable to maintain their fitness. This will be considered within the next Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- 2.21 The Service maintains a close overview of sickness absence and work-related injury through its Health and Safety Team and has a dedicated Occupational and Fitness Team to support employees in terms of advice, referral, rehabilitation and support for long-term health conditions. In addition, the Service provides information and access to support for mental health through an external Employee Assistance Programme and counselling. Wherever possible, the Service will seek to enhance the wellbeing support provided to employees.
- 2.22 However, the HMI review of the Service in 2021 highlighted that employees did not always understand how to access this support, particularly following a

critical incident. Work is being undertaken to address this and to ensure that all employees can access this information and understand the support available.

- 2.23 A recent review by the NFCC has produced two foundation documents “Mapping the Health and Wellbeing Across the Firefighting Career and Assessing the Current Demands” and “Key Priorities for the next Fire and Rescue Health and Wellbeing Strategy”. Whilst these are currently under discussion, there are likely to be 13 key priorities for Services. This work will be reviewed and incorporated into a future wellbeing plan.
- 2.24 The people priorities for the next two years are set out within the report and reflect current and emerging issues. A report on progress will be provided to Members on an annual basis, and through the regular human resources update report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from the report.

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

An initial equality impact assessment has been undertaken and has not identified any adverse impacts from the Strategy. The commitment to improving the diversity of the workforce and supporting employee wellbeing is likely to lead to positive outcomes for employees and potential employees with protected characteristics.

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 the report. However, a range of the activities above demonstrate continued fulfilment of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

WHOLETIME RECRUITMENT PROCESS 2022

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 21 April 2023

Purpose of Report:

To inform Members of the outcomes from the recent wholetime firefighter selection process and success rates arising from the positive action programme undertaken between March and September 2022.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Workforce Plan 2022-24 identified the need to recruit to up to 36 wholetime firefighter vacancies in response to the projected numbers of retirements and turnover during 2022-23. The proposed commencement date for the wholetime campaign was delayed until the autumn of 2022 to support the budgetary situation and to await the outcomes from the ongoing Fire Cover Review. The selection process itself commenced in August and ran for three months.
- 1.2 Positive action took place between March and September 2022, and focused on increasing the number of applications from those under-represented in the operational workforce, namely women, those from BAME and minority ethnic groups, and LGBT candidates.
- 1.3 This report sets out the outcomes from the selection process and reviews the impact of the positive action measures put in place.

2. REPORT

POSITIVE ACTION

- 2.1 In preparation for the wholetime selection campaign and to actively seek to encourage applications from under-represented parts of the operational workforce, the ODI team undertook a programme of positive action events and applicant engagement from March to September 2022.
- 2.2 Activities were promoted via social media, posters and leaflets, and active engagement with targeted groups within the community. 168 people signed up to participate in the group and activities. Activities included:
 - Fitness sessions – open and women only (led by the Fitness Instructor);
 - Park runs;
 - Station open “have a go” days – open to all;
 - Mentoring sessions – open to all;
 - “Yes You Can” website;
 - Targeted posters, banners and leaflet drops;
 - Online Q&A sessions;
 - Use of social media and radio stations to promote to harder to reach groups (Dawn FM, Kennet FM);
 - Use of YouTube and TikTok video;
 - Sponsorship of a women’s football tournament;
 - WhatsApp group created to facilitate messaging and answer any questions.

- 2.3 The programme was co-ordinated through the Inclusion Team and supported by a seconded firefighter and watch manager. However, many other people gave up their time and energy to support the process.
- 2.4 In the event, of the 168 applicants who engaged with the positive action, 40 were women and 49 were from a BAME background.
- 2.5 Of these, 9 (31%) women and four (13.8%) BAME applicants were ultimately successful in the process. This represents a high level of success for those who had engaged with positive action, 18 out of 29 appointments or 62% of successful candidates.
- 2.6 Whilst positive action events were directly aimed at women and BAME applicants, the Service also sought to encourage interest in firefighting as a career to the LGBT+ community – for instance, through work with Stonewall and visits to women’s sports teams and promotional leaflets.
- 2.7 In the event, 10% of all applications were from LGBT+ applicants and they had the highest success rate in terms of appointments. This is a positive outcome and would indicate that the Service is seen as a trusted employer by the LGBT+ community.

SELECTION OUTCOMES

2.8 The assessment process itself comprised of:

- Application sift;
- Bleep test (fitness and deselection tool);
- Job related testing;
- Assessment centre – team exercise, presentation and interview.

2.9 The numbers that fell out at each stage were as follows:

Stage	All Applicants	Female Applicants	BAME Applicants	
Total Applicant Numbers	384	50	55	
Drop Out Stages				% of all applicants
Application (shortlisting)	137	11 (22%)	17 (31%)	35.6
Bleep Test	95	12 (24%)	3 (5.45%)	24.8
Job Related Tests	35	3 (6%)	3 (5.45%)	9.1
Assessment Centre	88	1 (2%)	18 (32.7%)	22.9
Successful	29	9 (18%)	4 (7.3%)	7.55

- 2.10 Most applicants failed at the shortlisting stage, the bleep test saw the highest drop-out rate for female applicants and the assessment centre stage for BAME applicants. An understanding of the areas where applicants fell out of the process is helpful in providing future support as part of positive action and a review of these areas will therefore be undertaken to identify those aspects that can be targeted for future improvement.
- 2.11 In terms of positive action outcomes, the number of high-quality female candidates has been a highlight with 31% success rate, with BAME applicants also representing 13.8% of successful candidates. The number of successful BAME candidates has not been at the level the Service was hoping given the number of people engaging with the positive action team and this will part of the review for the next campaign. The number of LGBT+ candidates who have been successful is also very positive.
- 2.12 Whilst the recruit numbers entering Service during 2023 will maintain the operational establishment for the foreseeable future, the workforce planning forecast indicates that there will be a shortfall before April 2024 based on the current, budgeted establishment. There will therefore be a need to consider future recruitment which will take the Service through to 2025. This will be presented as part of the refresh of the Workforce Plan for 2023-25.
- 2.13 In the same period the Service undertook a transfer and migration process which saw two transferees and six migrants from the on-call move into wholetime roles to maintain ridership numbers. In addition to the 29 new firefighter appointments, this has meant that the Service has been successful in recruiting 36 new wholetime firefighter roles identified in the Workforce Plan.

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 set out within the report. The next stage will be to successfully on-board the new recruits and support them whilst they become established in their new roles.
- 4.2 A review of the recruitment process, and outcomes from positive action, will be undertaken prior to planning the next recruitment campaign, which is likely to start in early 2024.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment was undertaken as part of the planning process for wholetime recruitment. The aim of positive action initiatives is to increase the numbers of applications from under-represented candidates, with the longer term aim of increasing the diversity of the operational workforce, which is under-represented both in terms of women, BAME and LGBT+ employees.
- 5.2 The figures set out in the report reflect some success in the numbers of women (31% of new recruits), BAME applications (13.8% of new recruits) and a high success rate for LGBT+ applicants.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from the report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The appointment process supports the commitments set out within the Service's Community Risk Management Plan (i) to ensure that the Service has the optimum number of employees to deliver services, (ii) continue with the programme of positive action to encourage those who are under-represented in the workforce to apply for roles and (iii) be a more diverse Service and more reflective of the communities it serves.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from the report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
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Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

HMICFRS VALUES AND CULTURE SPOTLIGHT REPORT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 21 April 2023

Purpose of Report:

To inform Members of the recent publication by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services of a spotlight review of the values and culture in fire and rescue services, and outline the steps being taken by the Service to address the recommendations.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the content of the report from HMICFRS.
- Support the approach of the Chief Fire Officer in addressing the Service's continued cultural journey.
- Accept to receive updates against the specific HMICFRS recommendations.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following recent reports of misconduct, and the findings of the Independent Cultural Review of London Fire Brigade, the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire commissioned a spotlight report into the values and culture of the fire and rescue service.
- 1.2 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) committed to returning a report by April 2023 and, in January 2023, began their assessment of the sector in this area.
- 1.3 HMICFRS considered the specific themes of values and culture (including bullying, harassment, and discrimination); training and skills; fairness and diversity; and leadership.
- 1.4 A focus on the evidence gathered during the second round of inspections of fire and rescue services was used by the Inspectorate, as well as a range of other sources of information, to form the basis of the findings and recommendations for the report.
- 1.5 The report was published by HMICFRS on Thursday 30 March 2023.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 HMICFRS highlight in the report that they have repeatedly expressed concern about values and culture in the fire and rescue service since they began inspections in 2018; reporting that they have found long-standing and apparently deep-rooted issues relating to values, culture, fairness, and diversity across the sector.
- 2.2 The Inspectorate reports that while some progress has been made, it is clear much more needs to be done to improve values and culture in Services and that they continue to find that:
 - Some Services need to get better at promoting positive professional cultures;
 - Most Services need to do more to improve equality, diversity, and inclusion; and
 - Progression opportunities for staff are not equal, which is hindering the potential for greater diversity of thought in Services' leadership teams
- 2.3 The Inspectorate also reflected that whilst around a quarter of Services had improved, they had issued 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' grades to just under half (17) of Services and that 'causes for concern' are currently in place in relation to culture and values in five Services.
- 2.4 The report highlights that a further two Services are currently under the 'engage' enhanced monitoring process, with culture and values findings being contributory to this.

- 2.5 The spotlight report cites examples of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour by some fire service staff and highlights that staff survey results provided examples of bullying, harassment and discrimination in all Services.
- 2.6 HMICFRS reports a culture where staff, including some managers, did not always feel comfortable to challenge poor behaviour and that some people chose not to speak out at fear of it being detrimental to their career. It is highlighted, however, that some Services handle concerns appropriately and have taken steps to addressing cultural issues.
- 2.7 The report presents 35 recommendations from HMICFRS to improve the sector. Of note, 19 are detailed as a requirement for Chief Fire Officers to deliver, whilst the other recommendations are directed to other national bodies such as the Local Government Association, the National Fire Chiefs' Council, the Home Office, Government, the Fire Standards Board, and Chief Constables.
- 2.8 The recommendations are broken down into the areas of:
- Raising concerns;
 - Background checks;
 - Misconduct handling;
 - Leadership;
 - Management and leadership training and development;
 - Diversity data;
 - Improving diversity;
 - The Core Code of Ethics;
 - The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England.
- 2.9 Each recommendation has a timeframe allocated to it by which HMICFRS state that they expect to see implementation. Two of the recommendations are for immediate implementation, with the others spread over a timeframe of 12 months.

LOCAL CONTEXT

- 2.10 Members will recall that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) was graded as 'Good' for the 'People' pillar of inspection, and the areas of 'values and culture' and 'fairness and diversity' by HMICFRS in the most recent round of inspection.
- 2.11 Whilst the Service is rightfully proud of these gradings, there is no room for complacency and work continues to further improve workplace culture and ensure that everyone has a workplace where they are treated with dignity and respect and feel safe. It is highlighted by HMICFRS, and accepted, that even in a 'good' workplace, there are some staff who may behave inappropriately.

- 2.12 Members will be aware that the Service had an independent review of EDI undertaken in 2021 which presented recommendations, and a resulting 12-point action plan, that is being implemented.
- 2.13 This work has complemented and supported the Service's approach to embedding the Core Code of Ethics which has been progressed since their publication in 2021, alongside the Service's values which have been central to the Service's approach since 2015. The Service's own Behavioural Framework was updated in 2020 to incorporate the Core Code of Ethics.
- 2.14 Similarly, the Service has used the publication of the independent review of culture in London Fire Brigade as an opportunity to reflect on current focus and activity within the Service and learn lessons from the recommendations within that report. A report was presented to this Committee on 13 January 2023 setting out the findings and reflecting on the lessons that could be learned from the review.
- 2.15 In order to maintain the focus, resource and momentum on these improvements, and to address the required recommendations of the HMICFRS spotlight report, the Service's EDI strategic lead is drawing together a single approach under the Service's Year Two Annual Delivery Plan.
- 2.16 This approach will see assurance against the delivery of the HMICFRS recommendations, but also oversee the delivery of the Service's commitment to embed an inclusive culture and approach at NFRS which is set out in the Services' Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) (Goals 4 and 5).
- 2.17 Whilst progress of this workstream will be monitored by the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) through the CRMP Assurance Board, it is proposed that actions against the HMICFRS specific recommendation are reported through this Committee, at intervals aligned to the required deadlines, providing assurance to Members of required progress. Deadlines range from immediate assurance to March 2024.
- 2.18 In line with this proposal, it can be reported that the two recommendations requiring immediate assurance from the CFO have already been progressed. These are:
- Recommendation 17 - CFOs should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that:
 - involve allegations of a criminal nature that have the potential to affect public confidence in Services;
 - are of a serious nature; or
 - relate to assistant CFOs or those at equivalent or higher grades
 - Recommendation 34 - CFOs should review their implementation of the Core Code of Ethics and make sure it is being applied across their Services.

2.19 The full spotlight report from HMICFRS can be found [here](#). A summary of actions for Chief Fire Officers is attached as an appendix to this report for reference.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are human resources and learning and development implications arising from this report in terms of the delivering against the recommendations from the HMI review. These will be clarified and progressed as part of the work being undertaken by the Service's EDI strategic lead under the Service's Year Two Annual Delivery Plan.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken due to the nature of this report. However, there are clearly equality implications arising from the HMI recommendations which will become clearer as workstreams are defined and progressed.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Service's corporate risk register identifies the corporate risks which are impacted by this report. The matters covered by this report potentially impact on the risks of 'employee engagement', 'workforce sustainability', 'health, safety and welfare' and 'Service reputation'.

8.2 The approach of the Chief Fire Officer aims to mitigate these risks through continuing a focussed and resourced approach to both addressing the recommendations from HMICFRS and continuing the Service's cultural development journey.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the content of the report from HMICFRS.
- 10.2 Support the approach of the Chief Fire Officer in addressing the Service's continued cultural journey.
- 10.3 Accept to receive updates against the specific HMICFRS recommendations.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

<p>1 Raising Concerns</p>	<p>By 1 October 2023, CFOs should make sure their services provide a confidential way for staff to raise concerns and that staff are aware of whistleblowing processes.</p>	<p>1st October 2023</p>
<p>3 Raising Concerns</p>	<p>By 1 June 2023, CFOs should review the support available for those who have raised concerns and take any action needed to make sure these provisions are suitable.</p>	<p>1st June 2023</p>
<p>4 Raising Concerns</p>	<p>By 1 June 2023, CFOs should assure themselves that updates on how concerns are being handled are shared with those who have raised them.</p> <p>The updates should be given in an accessible way that encourages trust and confidence in the service response.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to creating a professional standards function to handle conduct concerns in service (or from an external service) to have oversight of cases, to make sure they are conducted in a fair and transparent way and to act as a point of contact for all staff involved.</p>	<p>1st June 2023</p>
<p>5 Raising Concerns</p>	<p>By 1 June 2023, CFOs should make sure they provide accessible information for all staff and members of the public on how they can raise concerns and access confidential support (including through external agencies).</p> <p>CFOs should also make sure accessible information is provided on how concerns and allegations will be investigated in a way that ensures confidentiality and is independent of the alleged perpetrator.</p>	<p>1st June 2023</p>
<p>9 Background Checks</p>	<p>By 1 January 2024, CFOs should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immediately review their current background checks arrangements, and make sure that suitable and sufficient background checks are in place to safeguard their staff and communities they serve; and • make sure that appropriate DBS check requests have been submitted for all existing, new staff, and volunteers, according to their roles as identified by the Fire Standards Board. 	<p>1st January 2024</p>

12 Misconduct	By 1 March 2024, CFOs should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling.	1 st March 2024
14 Misconduct	By 1 March 2024, CFOs should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on misconduct allegations and outcomes handling.	1 st March 2024
17 Misconduct	With immediate effect, CFOs should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve allegations of a criminal nature that have the potential to affect public confidence in FRSs; • are of a serious nature; or • relate to assistant CFOs or those at equivalent or higher grades 	Immediate
18 Misconduct	By 1 August 2023, CFOs should provide assurances to HMICFRS that all parties are supported in relation to ongoing investigations.	1 st August 2023
20 Leadership	By 1 June 2023, CFOs should have plans in place to ensure they meet the Fire Standards Board's leading the service standard and its leading and developing people standard.	1 st June 2023
21 Leadership	By 1 June 2023, CFOs should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all senior leaders and managers (ACFO equivalent and above) in service.	1 st June 2023
22 Leadership	By 1 September 2023, CFOs should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all other leaders and managers in service. The process should include gathering feedback from a wide range of sources including colleagues and direct reports.	1 st September 2023
23 Leadership	By 1 June 2023, CFOs should seek regular feedback from staff about values, culture, fairness and diversity, with due regard to the leading and developing people standard. They should show how they act on this feedback.	1 st June 2023
24 Leadership	By 1 October 2023, CFOs should put plans in place to monitor, including through the gathering and analysis of staff feedback, watch and team cultures and provide prompt remedial action for any issues they identify.	1 st October 2023

27 Diversity Data	By 1 June 2023, CFOs should make sure their equality impact assessments are fit for purpose and, as a minimum, meet the requirements of the NFCC equality impact assessment toolkit.	1 st June 2023
28 Diversity Data	By 1 June 2023, CFOs should review how they gather and use equality and diversity data to improve their understanding of their staff demographics, including applying and meeting the requirements of the NFCC equality, diversity and inclusion data toolkit.	1 st June 2023
32 Improving Diversity	By 1 June 2023, CFOs should, as a priority, specify in succession plans how they intend to improve diversity across all levels of the service. This should include offering increased direct-entry opportunities.	1 st June 2023
33 Improving Diversity	By 1 August 2023, CFOs should develop plans to promote progression paths for existing staff in non-operational roles and put plans in place to reduce any inequalities of opportunity.	1 st August 2023
34 Core Code of Ethics	With immediate effect, CFOs should review their implementation of the Core Code of Ethics and make sure it is being applied across their services.	Immediate

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