



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

EQUALITIES MONITORING

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 05 November 2021

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 30 September 2021.

Recommendations:

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

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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 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 2021. Please note the reporting periods have changed from previous reports to be in line with the financial year.

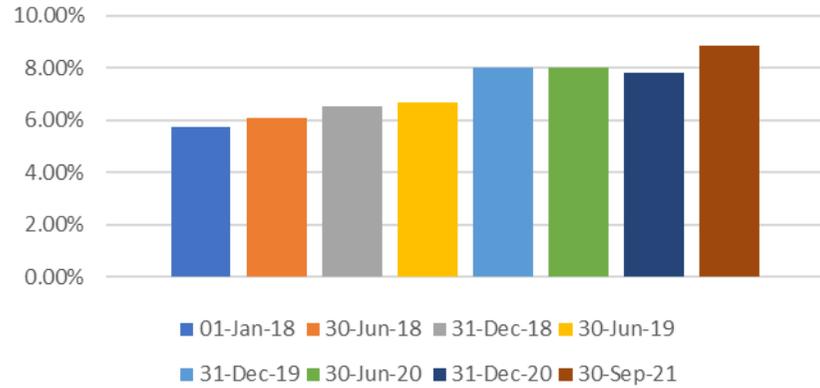
2. REPORT

WORKFORCE PROFILE

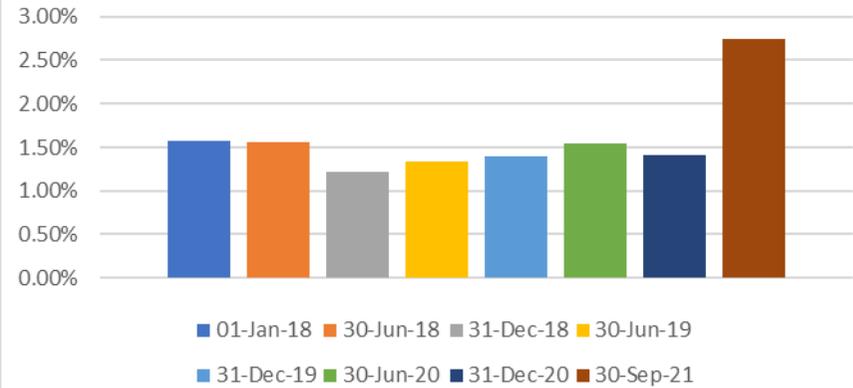
- 2.1 Workforce profile information is analysed by work group (Wholetime, On-Call, Support). Breaking down the workforce in this way allows for the identification of specific issues by distinct employee groups. Each have differences in job type, conditions of service and workforce composition. The table below provides a snapshot of under-represented groups at the Service.

	01 Jan 2018	30 June 2018	31 Dec 2018	30 June 2019	31 Dec 2019	30 June 2020	31 Dec 2020	30 Sept 2021
Total	893	899	902	894	856	845	849	871
Female firefighters (no. of posts)	5.74% (26 of 453)	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)
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)	3.36% (30)	3.56% (32)	3.99% (36)	4.25% (38)	4.67% (40)	4.85% (41)	4.83% (41)	5.17% (45)
Lesbian, gay or bisexual	1.57% (14)	1.56% (14)	1.22% (11)	1.34% (12)	1.4% (12)	1.54% (13)	1.41% (12)	2.75% (24)
Disabled	4.37% (39)	4.23% (38)	4.21% (38)	4.25% (38)	4.32 (37)	4.38% (37)	4.71% (40)	4.82% (42)

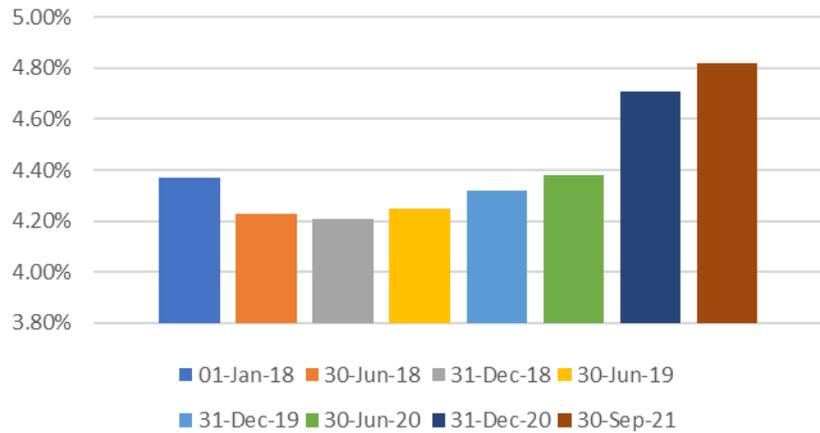
% of Female Firefighters (not including managers)



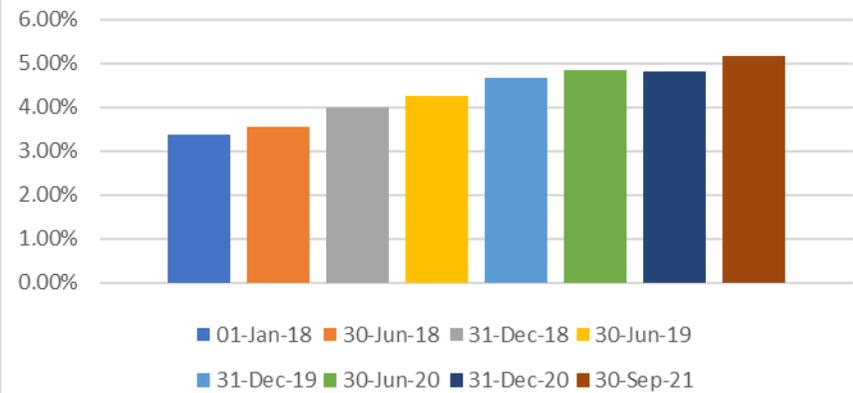
% of employees identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual



% Disabled employees in Workforce



% employees from BAME backgrounds in Workforce



GENDER

- 2.2 Women currently constitute 16.76% (146) of the total workforce. Of these, 32.87% (48) women are employed in operational roles (including management roles), which represents 6.92% of operational roles undertaken.
- 2.3 At strategic level, four members of the Strategic Leadership Team are women (40%) – there is currently one vacancy – and eight (42%) hold senior management support roles at Grade 8 and above. Further information of the breakdown of grade by gender can be found at Paragraph 2.7. This reflects a significant proportion of senior management appointments to professional non-operational roles.
- 2.4 However, this is not representative of operational roles at middle and supervisory levels. All Station and Group Managers are currently male and only 3.72% (8) Crew and Watch Manager roles are held by women. This reflects the proportion of women (6.92%) undertaking operational roles who are able to apply for promotion. This can only be addressed through the recruitment of more women at entry firefighter level and is a stated aim within the People Strategy. Positive action measures to attract more women to apply for a career with the Service is undertaken and the figures in the chart at Paragraph 2.1 show a steady increase in successful applicants since 2018.
- 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. This has been successful in seeing 75% of participants moving into higher level roles.
- 2.6 The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) is currently leading a national project to consider how direct entry at Station and Area Manager level might support a career path that does not necessarily require entry level progression. This is an 18-month project, with up to a three year development programme to attain competence and, if adopted, may address some of the issues relating to the lower representation of women in operational management roles.
- 2.7 Within the support workforce there continues to be more women (98) than men employed (79). However, it should be noted that men occupy higher numbers of senior organisational positions (57.89%) than women (42.10%).

	Men	Women	BAME	LGB
Grades 1-4 (plus Apprentice)	25	43	4	4
Grades 5-7	43	47	5	1
Grades 8-SLSM	11	8		

- 2.8 Table A in Appendix A shows the workforce profile by gender.

ETHNIC ORIGIN

- 2.9 Employees from BAME backgrounds constitute 5.17% (45) of the workforce (excluding employees who defined themselves as Irish and White Other). Of these, 73.33% (33) are employed in operational roles.
- 2.10 To provide some context to these figures, the BAME community in Nottinghamshire is 11.2% based on the 2011 census. This demonstrates that the organisation still faces a challenge to attract and recruit applicants from BAME backgrounds to fire service roles. It should be noted that 42 people have chosen not to define their ethnic origin.
- 2.11 Since April 2021 there has been a slight increase in the number of BAME staff, from 4.84% (41) to 5.17% (45), due to the recent intake of Apprentice Firefighters who have commenced training in April and September. Table B in Appendix A shows the workforce profile by ethnic origin.
- 2.12 It should be noted that On-Call firefighting positions represent 29% of the total employees. However, due to the restrictions of the On-Call application process, which requires that applicants must live/work within a certain distance of the fire station and the local demographics of the fire station locations, lower numbers of ethnic minority applicants are likely to apply for these roles. This is demonstrated in the application rates set out in paragraph 2.34.
- 2.13 There continues to be a low number of employees from BAME backgrounds in operational supervisory roles at 3.72% (8), and there are no middle managers or senior operational managers from BAME backgrounds. This reflects the proportion of BAME employees (5.17%) undertaking operational roles who are able to apply for promotion. This can only be addressed through the recruitment of more BAME applicants at entry Firefighter level and is a stated aim within the People Strategy.
- 2.14 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. This has been successful in seeing 75% of participants moving into higher level roles.
- 2.15 The Service continues to undertake positive action, particularly for firefighter roles which traditionally have received low levels of applications from BAME candidates. A report on positive action undertaken as part of the 2020 recruitment campaign was considered by this committee at its meeting on 23rd April.
- 2.16 The NFCC Direct Entry project, referred to in paragraph 2.6, may address some of the issues relating to the lower representation of BAME employees in operational management roles.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.17 The Fire Authority has invested in the Service's organisational development and inclusion workstreams via transformation and efficiency funding. In particular, a Community Engagement Manager post has been appointed in January 2021. This role is working to improve engagement with black, Asian and minority ethnic communities across Nottinghamshire, as well as contributing to positive action measures across the Service.

DISABILITY

2.18 The declaration rate of disability is 4.82% (42) of the total workforce.

2.19 The declaration rate amongst support employees is at 9.60% (17) which is in line with the working age population in the UK that is disabled, which is approximately 10%. However, when operational employees are included, this figure reduces to 4.82% of the workforce.

2.20 The reduction relates directly to the fitness, strength and other medical requirements, such as sight and hearing, which ensure that prospective candidates are fit for role. This means that some applicants may not successfully pass medical assessment during the recruitment process. It should be noted that as a workforce gets older potential disability issues are more likely to arise. In this instance, the Service will work to apply reasonable adjustments to the role or to consider redeployment where this is possible.

2.21 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.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

2.22 The number of employees identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual has doubled to 2.75% (24) of the work force in the review period. This is against an expected national LGB population of 5 - 7% (quoted by Stonewall).

2.23 The Service continues to work with Stonewall to improve its performance in relation to LGBTQ+ issues. The most recent Wholetime firefighter campaign showed an increase in people who identify as LGB choosing to apply for firefighter roles. This is an encouraging indicator and suggests that the Service's commitment to LGBTQ+ equality is resonating with applicants.

AGE

2.24 Table C 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 31.69% (276) of the workforce.

- 2.25 However, if employees aged over 45 are grouped together, this represents 41% (357) of the workforce – of these, 39.8% (176) undertake wholetime roles and 33% (83) 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, 4.94% (43) of all employees are aged 16-25.
- 2.21 The annual Workforce Plan ensures that the Service has effective succession planning in place to mitigate against this anticipated turnover.

RELIGION

- 2.22 Table D of Appendix A sets out the numbers of employees by religion/faith. 42.94% (374) of the workforce state that they have no religion and 13.66% (119) chose not to specify. The highest number of employees specify their religion as Christian 40.41% (352).
- 2.23 The Service has been delivering Faith training online to wholetime crews since May which provides an interactive overview of the dynamics and demographics of different religions in Nottinghamshire, this is complemented by religion and belief e-learning which has been developed and is currently being promoted to all staff. Faith podcasts are also being produced to raise levels of understanding of particular religions as a resource for staff to refer back to, to date a podcast on Islam and another on the Sikh faith have been delivered, and future podcasts are planned to raise awareness of other faiths.

GENDER IDENTITY

- 2.24 In July 2018, the Service started to monitor gender identity and gender reassignment. Declaration is voluntary and, to date, 17.33% (151) of employees have provided gender reassignment data and 27.33% (238) have provided gender identity data. As such, figures are too low to provide any meaningful analysis. Work continues to raise awareness of this reporting mechanism and why the Service collects the data in an effort to improve declaration levels and improve support for those employees experiencing gender identity or reassignment issues.

RECRUITMENT

- 2.25 A whole-time recruitment campaign was carried out during 2020 and this resulted in 646 applications. The diversity of candidates included 15% BAME, 12% women and 8% identifying as LGBTQ+. Success rates for these groups were good, with 4 women and 6 people from a BAME background appointed and 5 identifying as LGBTQ+. A report on the recruitment process was considered by this committee in April.

STARTERS

- 2.26 There were 45 starters between 1 April – 30 September 2021.

Of these starters (as set out in Table E of Appendix A):

- 17.78% (8) were female and 82.22% (37) were male.
- The majority of appointments were to Wholetime posts 60% (27), 18% (8) were to On-call posts and 22% (10) were to Support Staff posts.
- 68.89% (31) of appointees defined their ethnic origin as White British, 13.33% (6) of appointees were from a BAME background, 17.8% (8) preferred not to declare their ethnic background.
- The majority of new starters 44.44% (20) were in the age range 26 - 35.

LEAVERS

2.27 There were 42 leavers between 1st April – 31 September 2021.

Of these leavers (as set out in Table F of Appendix A):

- 19.05% (8) were female and 80.95% (34) were male. This is fairly representative of the workforce profile. Whilst slightly more women than men left the service (5.5% compared to 4.7%) this is likely to be due the higher turnover in support roles during the period.
- 54.76% (23) defined their ethnic origin as White British, 4.76% (2) described their ethnic origin as White Other and 40.48% (17) preferred not to disclose their ethnic origin.
- The majority of leavers 71.43% (30) were over 46 years old.

2.28 These figures indicate that there is no specific gender or ethnic origin issues relating to retention levels.

SUPPORT STAFF RECRUITMENT

2.29 Between 1 April – 30 September 2021 the Service received 113 applicants in total for 13 vacancies. It should be noted that 7 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	41	72	27	11	9
Shortlisted	10	30	5	5	4
Appointed	3	3	0	3	3

2.30 The highest number of applications 35.40% (40) were from applicants within the age range of 26 - 35.

2.31 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.

2.32 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.

ON-CALL RECRUITMENT

- 2.33 The Service received 58 applications for the recruitment campaign for On-Call firefighters.
- 2.34 Of the 58 applicants, 13.79% (8) of applicants were female, one of whom was shortlisted for interview (11.11%) but was unsuccessful. One application was received from a BAME applicant, but they were not successful at interview. The Service will be investing further in On-Call positive action to address the low levels of diversity entering the on-call workforce.
- 2.35 However, as set out in Paragraph 2.12, applications are restricted to a specific location due to the nature of the On-Call system, and this can adversely impact upon the number of applications from BAME candidates.

CONCLUSION

- 2.36 The above data represents some gradual improvements in the diversity of the Service's workforce and show that the workforce profile is becoming more representative of the local population in terms of employees from BAME backgrounds. The Service currently has a BAME workforce representation of 5.17% which is below the census BAME population figures for Nottinghamshire of 11.2%.
- 2.37 Women represent 16.8% of the NFRS workforce, this accounts for 7.8% of the operational workforce and 55.4% of those undertaking non-operational support roles. Achieving an increase in women undertaking operational roles is an objective within the People Strategy.
- 2.38 The Service is in the process of planning its next Wholetime recruitment campaign due to take place early in 2022 and will be using a range of positive action measures from the 2020 campaign as part of its recruitment strategy to encourage more applications from both women and BAME candidates.
- 2.39 The Service continues to provide targeted development opportunities for women and other under represented groups within the Service's workforce. The Aspiring Leaders Programme and Future Leaders Programme (multi-agency) are some of the opportunities provided by NFRS to encourage a more diverse range of employees to engage in career development. The Service has recently launched a Women's Network, which works with the national Women in the Fire Service group to promote support for all women and address equality issues.
- 2.40 In terms of declaration levels, 'Not Stated' or 'Prefer not to Say' remain an area in need of improvement in religion/belief (12.74%) and sexual orientation (12.28%), although a reduction in levels of 'prefer not to say' has been achieved over recent years. This is important and it demonstrates confidence

within the workforce to share this personal information. Awareness-raising and training will continue to ensure employees understand the reasons why declaration is so important, to provide reassurance and to promote the support available.

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 there is still an under-representation of women in operational roles, and of employees from BAME backgrounds or who define themselves as LGBTQ+, 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 partnership with public services covering a range of protected characteristics in order to promote equality of opportunity.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

TABLE A
Workforce by Gender

Gender	Wholetime	On-call	Support	Total	%
Male	408	238	79	725	83.23%
Female	34	14	98	146	16.76%
Total	442	252	177	871	

TABLE B
Workforce by Ethnic Origin

Ethnic Origin	Wholetime	On-Call	Support	Total	%
BAME	26	7	12	45	5.17%
Not declared	24	8	10	42	4.82%
White British	371	224	148	743	85.30
White Irish / White Other	21	13	7	41	4.71%
Total	442	252	177	871	

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 C
Workforce Profile by Age

	Wholetime	On-call	Support	Total	%
16-25	9	16	18	43	4.94%
26-35	95	80	20	194	22.27%
36-45	162	73	41	276	31.69%
46-55	153	62	49	264	30.31%
56-65	23	21	46	90	10.33%
+65			3	3	0.34%
Total	442	252	177	871	

TABLE D
Workforce by Religious Belief

Religion	Total Number	% Total
Any other Religion	4	0.46%
Buddhist	4	0.46%
Christian (all denominations)	352	40.41%
Hindu	2	0.23%
Muslim	3	0.34%
No Religion	374	42.94%
Not Specified	119	13.66%
Other	9	1.03%
Sikh	4	0.46
Total	871	

TABLE E
Starters by Gender and Ethnic Origin

	Wholetime	On-call	Support	Total	%
Female	5		3	8	17.78%
Male	22	8	7	37	82.22%
Total	27	8	10	45	
BAME	6			6	13.3%
Not disclosed	6	1	3	10	17.8%
White British	17	7	7	31	68.89%
	27	8	10	45	
Age					
17-25	7	2	3	12	26.67%
26-35	16	3	1	20	44.44%
36-45	4	3	4	11	24.44%
46+			2	2	4.44%
Total	27	8	10	45	
Bisexual	4			4	8.89%
Declined to specify	3		1	4	8.89%
Gay/lesbian	2		3	5	11.11%
Straight/Heterosexual	18	8	6	32	71.11%
Total	27	8	10	45	

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 F
Reasons for leaving by gender, ethnic origin and age

	Resignation	Retirement	Other	Total	%
By Gender					
Female	3	1	4	8	17.7%
Male	13	12	12	37	82.2%
Total	16	13	16	45	
By ethnic origin					
White British	11	11	1	23	54.76%
White Irish/ White Other	2			2	4.76%
Not disclosed	3	2	12	17	40.48%
By Age					
<25	1			1	2.38%
26-35	3		3	6	14.29%
36-45	5			5	11.90%
46+	7	13	10	30	71.43%
By sexual orientation					
Straight heterosexual	2	1	12	15	32.51%
LGB	13	12	1	26	61.90%
Prefer not to specify	1			1	2.38%
	16	13	13	45	

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.