



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: 29 April 2022

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 October to 31 March 2022.

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 (HR) Committee considers updates on the breakdown of the workforce and the work being done to address under-representation by protected characteristic.
- 1.2 This report constitutes a six-month period from 01 October – 31 March 22. 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 charts below provide a snapshot of under-represented groups in the Service and how they have changed over a 4-year period. The data from which these charts have been created can be found at Appendix A. With the exception of disability, all groups show an increase of under-represented groups across the workforce.

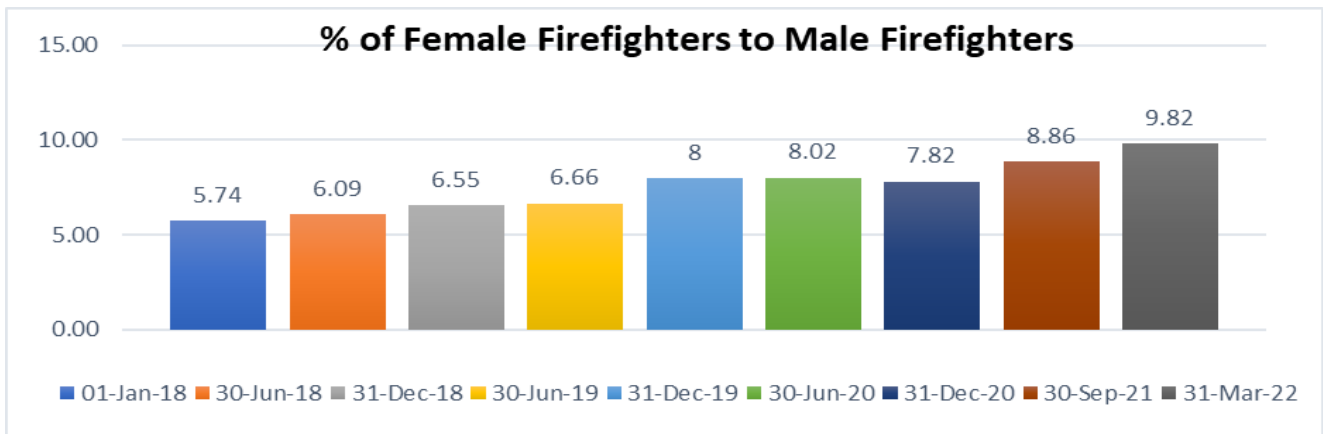


Table 1 – of all firefighters (wholetime and on-call) does not include Crew or Watch Managers

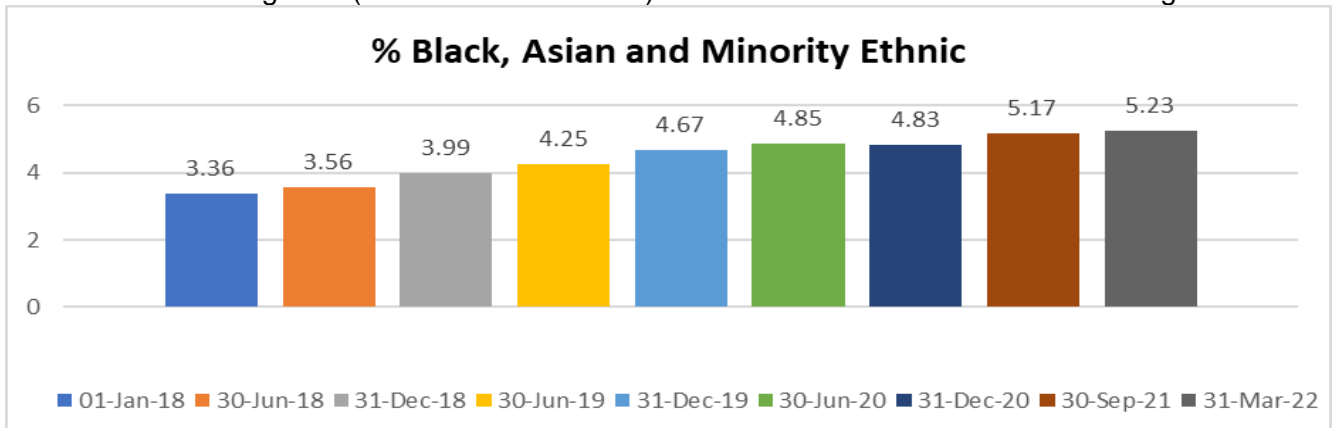


Table 2 – of all employees

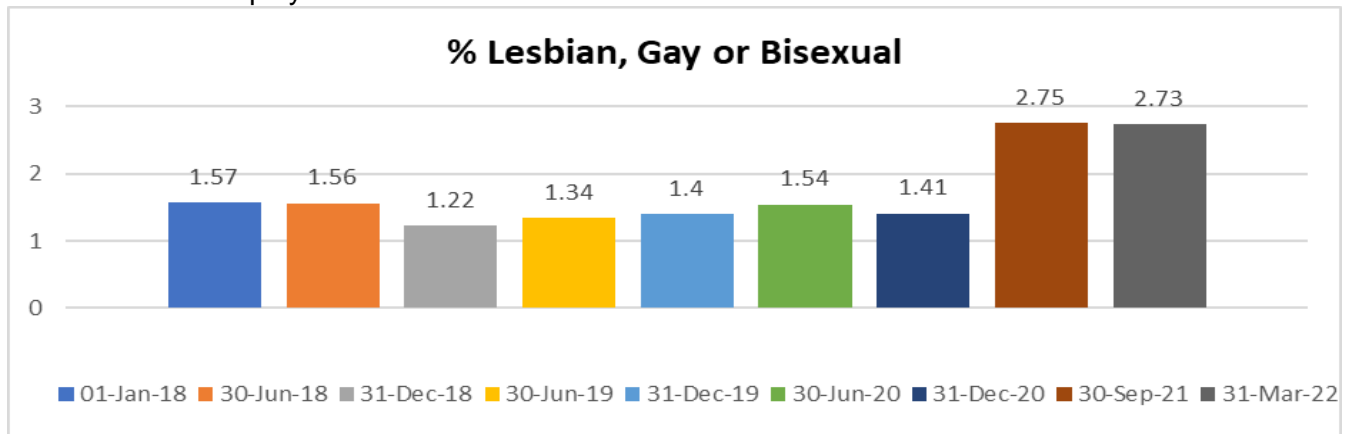


Table 3 – of all employees

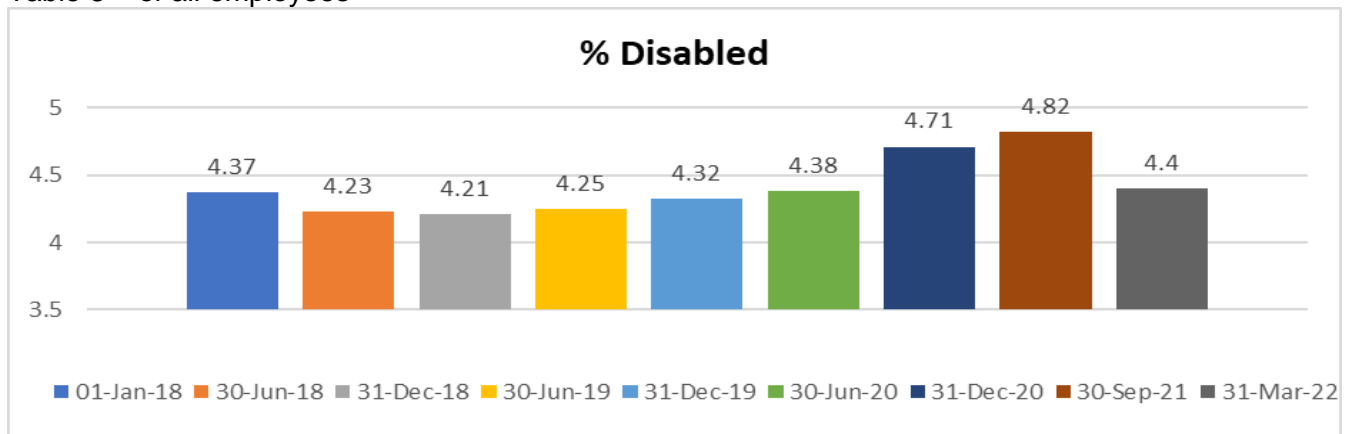


Table 4 – of all employees

GENDER

- 2.2 Women currently constitute 17% (143) of the total workforce. Of these, 35.57% (48) women are employed in operational roles (including management roles), which represents 7.20% of operational roles undertaken.
- 2.3 At a senior level, four members of the Strategic Leadership Team are women (33.33%) – and seven (38.88%) hold senior management support roles at Grade 8 and above, it should be noted there is currently one vacancy within the Service's senior leadership team.
- 2.4 The recent Watch (WM) and Crew Manager (CM) processes which have taken place within the last six months, have seen 17 substantive CM appointments made up of 5.88% (1) female and 94.12% (16) male, 8 WM appointments, 12.5% (1) female and 87.5% (7) male.
- 2.5 The Service supports career progression through its Aspiring Leaders and Look Ahead programmes for those considering a step up to supervisory or middle manager roles, which are open to all employees, and sponsors applications to the local Future Leaders programme for women.
- 2.6 Within the support workforce there continues to be more women (98) than men employed (79). However, it should be noted that men occupy higher numbers of senior organisational positions (61.11%) than women (38.88%).

Support Employees	Men	Women	BAME	LGB
Grades 1-4 (plus Apprentice)	24	41	5	6
Grades 5-7	44	47	9	2
Grades 8-SLSM	11	7		

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

ETHNIC ORIGIN

- 2.7 Employees from BAME backgrounds constitute 5.23% (44) of the workforce (excluding employees who defined themselves as Irish and White Other). Of these, 3.56% (30) are employed in operational roles.
- 2.8 To provide some context to these figures, BAME communities constitute 11.2% of Nottinghamshire's population based on the 2011 census. This demonstrates that the organisation still faces a challenge to attract and recruit applicants from different ethnic backgrounds to fire service roles and better reflect the communities it serves.
- 2.9 Since September 2021 there has been a slight decrease in the number of BAME staff, from 5.23% (45) to 5.17% (44). Table C in Appendix A shows the workforce profile by ethnic origin. It can be noted there has been 8.19% (5) leavers from BAME backgrounds of the 61 leavers within the last six months and 21.05% (4) starters from BAME backgrounds of the 19 starters.
- 2.10 The Service supports career progression through its Aspiring Leaders and Look Ahead programmes for those considering a step up to supervisory or middle manager roles, which are open to all employees, and sponsors applications to the local Future Leaders programme for BAME employees. This has been successful in seeing 75% of participants moving into higher level roles.
- 2.11 The Service continues to undertake positive action, particularly for firefighter roles which traditionally have received low levels of applications from BAME candidates.

POSITIVE ACTION

- 2.12 The Service is currently undertaking a range of positive action measures to address under-representation for the wholetime firefighter recruitment campaign taking place in Summer 2022. Over 300 individuals have responded to social media and other advertising. A range of events are being run to develop a greater interest in and understanding of the role, as well as addressing some of the barriers that some people may face when applying to become a firefighter. This work includes bespoke mentoring and support regarding the recruitment process, awareness of the role, fitness sessions and events in the community and on fire stations. A firefighter has been seconded to the People and Organisational Development Department to co-ordinate this work.

DISABILITY, REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND NEURODIVERSITY

- 2.13 The declaration rate of disability is 4.40% (37) of the total workforce. It can be noted this has decreased from 4.80% (44) when compared with 30th September 2021, there have been 7 disabled staff leave within the six-month period of this report, 2 Wholetime, 1 On-call and 4 Support staff. In addition, there have been 2 disabled starters within the six months of 1October 2021 – 31March 2022.
- 2.14 The declaration rate amongst support employees is at 10.34% (18) 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 4.40% of the workforce.
- 2.15 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.
- 2.16 Whilst disability declaration rates remain relatively low, the Service continues to raise awareness of disability issues, such as dyslexia and mental health, to support employees to undertake their role and will consider reasonable adjustments wherever possible to allow them to continue in their role.
- 2.17 It is worth noting the Service has a commitment to making its work environment accessible for disabled employees including those who are neurodiverse. The Service has made Read and Write Gold software (designed to assist those who show traits of dyslexia and related conditions) available on all its devices since 2018 and has a Dyslexia Policy in place to provide a commitment of proactive support to employees and applicants who may need it. NFRS also works closely with a dyslexia consultant to ensure that appropriate reasonable adjustments are in place.
- 2.18 Employees also act as Dyslexia champions – sharing their experience and knowledge with others. Additionally, the Service has reasonable adjustments guidance (with a Reasonable Adjustments 'Passport' in development) and a disability equality policy for its employees and managers. Disability awareness and dyslexia awareness training courses are also available for staff.
- 2.19 The Service's efforts to actively create employee networks have been detailed in recent reports. A disability network incorporating neurodiversity and accessibility was advertised late last year and held its first meeting in January this year, where its role and terms of reference were established. The initial meeting was well attended, members shared experiences/ideas and voted to call the network 'Disability Matters'.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- 2.20 The number of employees identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual is 2.73% (23) of the workforce as of the 31 March 2022. This is against an expected national LGB population of 5 - 7% (quoted by Stonewall).

- 2.21 The Service has worked hard to maintain LGBT+ equality within its workforce and engage with its LGBT+ communities. This hard work has been rewarded with a Top 100 place in the 2022 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index with a ranking of 86th with a Gold award.
- 2.22 An LGBT+ and Proud Friends employee network has become established during 2021 and has undertaken a number of initiatives to raise understanding of LGBT+ issues within the workforce.
- 2.23 The most recent Wholetime firefighter campaign showed an increase in people who identify as LGBT+ choosing to apply for firefighter roles. This is an encouraging indicator and suggests that the Service's commitment to LGBT+ equality is resonating with applicants, and NFRS aspires to build upon this trend.

AGE

- 2.24 Table D of Appendix A sets out the numbers of employees by age and work group. These are grouped in ten-year intervals. The figures show that the largest single group are those people aged between 36 – 45 years old who make up 32.46% (273) of the workforce.
- 2.25 However, if employees aged over 45 are grouped together, this represents 41.97% (353) of the workforce – of these, 49.29% (174) undertake wholetime roles and 23.51% (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, 4.28% (36) of all employees are aged 16-25.
- 2.26 The annual Workforce Plan ensures that the Service has effective succession planning in place to mitigate against this anticipated turnover.

RELIGION

- 2.27 Table E of Appendix A sets out the numbers of employees by religion/faith. 43.16% (363) of the workforce state that they have no religion and 12.72% (107) chose not to specify. The highest number of employees specify their religion as Christian 41.38% (348).
- 2.28 The Service has been delivering Faith training online to wholetime crews since May 2021 which provides an interactive overview of the 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.
- 2.29 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, Hinduism and Sikhism have been delivered, and future podcasts are planned to raise awareness of other faiths.

GENDER IDENTITY

2.30 In July 2018, the Service started to monitor gender identity and gender reassignment. Declaration is voluntary and, to date, 22.94% (193) of employees have provided gender reassignment data and 34.37% (289) have provided gender identity data.

RECRUITMENT

SUBSTANTIVE PROMOTIONS

2.31 During the six-month period from 1 October – 31 March 2022, a crew and watch manager promotion process took place. Some detail of the results of these processes can be found below:

	Watch Manager				Crew Manager			
	Female	Male	BAME	LGBT	Female	Male	BAME	LGB
Applicants	2 – 7.69%	24 – 92.31%	2 – 7.68%	1 – 3.85%	1 - 3.03%	32 – 96.97%	2 – 6.06%	0
Interview	2 - 8%	23 – 92%	2 – 8%	1 – 4%	1 – 3.03%	31 – 3.03%	2 – 6.06%	0
Appointed	1 – 12.5%	7 – 87.50%	0	1 – 1.11%	1 – 5.88%	16 – 94.12%	2– 11.76%	0

2.32 While representation of female, LGBT and BAME applicants remains low within both processes it is positive to see success of one female Watch Manager and one Watch Manager identifying as LGBT, one female Crew Manager and two BAME Crew Managers. Those unsuccessful within these processes will be provided with feedback and in many cases are given temporary posts to develop their experience.

SUPPORT STAFF RECRUITMENT

2.33 Between 1 October 2021 – 01 March 2022 the Service received 54 applicants in total for 13 vacancies. It should be noted that 4 of these vacancies were not filled within the review period. The breakdown of applicants, those shortlisted for interview and appointed was as follows:

	Female	Male	BAME	Disabled	LGBT
Applicants	19	35	6	9	6
Shortlisted	11	22	1	7	4
Appointed	3	6	0	3	1

2.34 The highest number of applications 31.48% (17) were from applicants within the age range of 26 - 35.

2.35 To extend the range of recruitment adverts for vacancies the Service utilises social media messaging, national and local recruitment platforms and shares

vacancy information with organisations representing under-represented groups to try to increase the diversity of applicants, wherever possible.

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

ON-CALL RECRUITMENT

- 2.37 The Service received 39 applications for one recruitment campaign for On-call firefighters.
- 2.38 Of the 39 applicants, 15.38% (6) of applicants were female, 1 failed at the location and application stage and the remaining five were not successful at the job-related tests stage, this equates to 31.25% of those rejected at this stage. 1 of these applicants has reapplied and after working on their fitness from a structured training program provided by the Service, they have been successful and will be start on the April course. The other five female applicants have been contacted with feedback and are encouraged to reapply.
- 2.39 5.12% (2) applications were received from BAME applicants, but they were not successful at the application and location sift. The Service will be investing further in On-Call positive action to address the low levels of diversity entering the on-call workforce.
- 2.40 However, 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.
- 2.41 The Service is undertaking a range of activities to make On-call firefighting more appealing to underrepresented groups, measures include introducing a range of contracts specifying differing levels of hour commitments, breaking the training up so trainees don't have to complete it all at once and it can be more flexible around other commitments and better engagement with target groups via 'have a go sessions' prior to on-call recruitment.

WHOLE YEAR WORKFORCE REVIEW

- 2.42 On 1 April 2021 the total of the workforce was 847 on 31 March it was 841, whilst the difference in the headcount of the organisation is marginal, the changes within the diversity of the workforce can be noted from the figures below.

	1st April 2021	31st March 2022
Female firefighters	8.83% (37 out of 419)	9.82 % (39 out of 397)
Women employed in operational roles	6.72% (45 out of 669)	7.20 (48 out of 667)
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)	4.72% (40)	5.23% (44)

Lesbian, gay or bisexual	1.77% (15)	2.73% (23)
Disabled	5.19% (44)	4.40% (37)

2.43 Improvements can be noted in the numbers of female firefighters, BAME staff and LGB staff, however a reduction in disabled staff can also be noted.

STARTERS AND LEAVERS

2.44 There have been 64 starters and 87 leavers, please note leavers may still be counted within the headcount due to the report date. The table below shows details of these starters and leavers.

	Starters			Leavers		
	On-call	Wholetime	Support	On-call	Wholetime	Support
Women	0	14.29% (4)	34.78% (8)	0	0	38.46% (15)
Men	100% (13)	85.71% (24)	65.22% (15)	100% (22)	100% (26)	64.54% (24)
BAME	0	21.43% (6)	17.39% (4)	9.09% (2)	7.69% (2)	7.69% (3)
LGB	0	21.43% (6)	17.39% (4)	4.55% (1)	3.85% (1)	0

2.45 Whilst the Service did not recruit any On-call firefighters from underrepresented groups, it does continue to develop positive action measures to develop a more diverse workforce. It is really positive to see the diversity of starters from the 2020 wholetime recruitment campaign. While it can be noted more men have commenced employment with the Service in support roles, BAME and LGBT figures are very positive and are greater than the proportion of the local community according to census data.

2.46 The figures for both On-call and Wholetime leavers are not unusual and are a result of resignations, retirements, end of fixed term contracts etc. It can be noted there have been 39 leavers within the support workforce, this is higher than usual, there isn't evidence to suggest any particular factors relating to protected characteristics.

ON-CALL RECRUITMENT AND SUPPORT STAFF RECRUITMENT

2.47 Two on-call recruitment campaigns have taken place over the last financial year, attracting 97 applicants between them. Of the 97 applicants 14 were female but none were appointed. 3 of the 97 applicants were from BAME backgrounds but were unsuccessful in the process. The Service continues to invest in how it can attract more applicants to on call roles from underrepresented groups and work with those applicants from underrepresented backgrounds who were unsuccessful to develop their skills/strength were eligible to apply.

2.48 Within support staff recruitment 214 applications were received for 34 roles, however it should be noted 11 of these roles were not appointed to. The table below shows the demographics of these applicants.

	Application	Interview	Appointed
Female	39.25% (84)	34.61% (36)	43.47% (10)
Male	60.75% (130)	65.38% (68)	56.52 (13)
LGB	20.09% (43)	11.53% (12)	17.39% (4)
Disability	13.55% (29)	18.27% (19)	26.09% (6)
BAME	8.41% (18)	10.58% (11)	17.39% (4)

2.49 Of the support staff applications and appointments, there have been a diverse range of applicants and it is really positive to be able to evidence.

CONCLUSION

2.50 The above data represents some gradual improvements in the diversity of the Service's workforce overall and shows that the workforce profile is becoming more representative of the local population in terms of employees from BAME backgrounds. However, further work is required to improve upon this.

2.51 Women represent 17% of the NFRS workforce, and accounts for 7.2% of the operational workforce and 54.6% of those undertaking non-operational support roles. Achieving an increase in women undertaking operational roles is an objective within the People Strategy.

2.52 The Service is in the process of planning its next Wholetime recruitment campaign which has been delayed but is expected to take place during the Summer of this year. The Service will be using a range of positive action measures as part of its recruitment strategy to encourage more applications from both women and BAME candidates.

2.53 The Service continues to provide targeted development opportunities for women and other underrepresented groups within the Service's workforce. Within the last six months, the Service received interest from nine women in attending the women in the fire service weekend with a focus on career development and was very pleased to fund all nine requests. The Service has recently launched a Women's Network, which works with the national Women in the Fire Service group to promote support for female staff and address equality issues.

2.54 In addition to the Disability and Women's network, the Service has also established an Ethnic Minority Alliance and a LGBT+ and Proud Friends Network. All networks within the Service have an SLT strategic sponsor and report into Inclusion Steering Group. The networks have an important role in maintaining an inclusive work environment and providing support to staff from minority groups. As networks develop, it is envisaged development opportunities can be shared and may help those from minority groups to access support in considering career development opportunities.

- 2.55 In terms of declaration levels, 'Not Stated' or 'Prefer not to Say' remain an area in need of improvement in religion/belief (12.72%) and sexual orientation (10.58%), although a reduction in levels of 'prefer not to say' has been achieved over recent years, a data verification communication was used late last year which has had an impact and will be undertaken annually.
- 2.56 As part of a wider review of the workforce structure, there is an aspiration to address resourcing requirements to take forward the inclusion and diversity agenda.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

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

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**APPENDIX A
TABLE A**

	1 Jan 2018	30 June 2018	31 Dec 2018	30 June 2019	31 Dec 2019	30 June 2020	31 Dec 2020	30 Sept 2021	31 st Mar 2022
Total	893	899	902	894	856	845	849	871	841
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)	9.82 % (39 out of 397)
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)	5.23 % (44)
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)	2.73 % (23)
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)	4.40 % (37)

TABLE B

Workforce by Gender

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

TABLE C

Workforce by Ethnic Origin

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

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

TABLE D**Workforce Profile by Age**

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

Workforce by Religious Belief**TABLE E**

Religion	Total Number	% Total
Any other Religion	5	0.59%
Buddhist	3	0.36%
Christian (all denominations)	348	41.38%
Hindu	2	0.24%
Muslim	3	0.36%
No Religion	363	43.16%
Not Specified	107	12.72%
Other	8	0.95%
Sikh	2	0.24%
Total	841	

TABLE F**Starters by gender ethnic origin and sexual orientation**

	Wholetime	On-call	Support	Total	%
Female			5	5	26.32%
Male	1	5	8	14	73.68%
Total	1	5	13	19	
BAME			4	4	21.05
Not disclosed			1	1	5.26
White British	1	5	8	14	73.68%
	1	5	13	19	
Age					
17-25		4	2	6	31.58%
26-35			2	2	10.53%
36-45	1	1	3	5	26.32%
46+			6	6	31.58%
Total	1	5	13	19	

Bisexual			1	1	5.26%
Declined to specify	0	0	0	0	
Gay/lesbian	0	0	00	0	
Straight/Heterosexual	1	5	12	18	94.74%
Total	1	5	13	19	

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

TABLE G

Reasons for leaving by gender, ethnic origin and age

	Resignation	Retirement	Fixed Term	Other	Total	%
By Gender						
Female	10	1	1	1	13	21.31%
Male	22	17	7	2	48	78.69%
Total	32	18	8	3	61	
By ethnic origin						
BAME	3		1	1	5	8.20
White British	24	18	4	2	48	78.68
White Irish/ White Other	2		1		3	4.92
Not disclosed	5				5	8.20
Total	34	18	6	3	61	
By Age						
<25	5	0	2	0	7	10.93
26-35	5	0	2	2	9	14.75
36-45	12	0	0	0	12	19.67
46+	12	18	2	1	33	54.10
Total	34	18	6	3	61	
By sexual orientation						
Straight heterosexual	23	16	5	3	47	77.05
LGB	2				2	3.27
Prefer not to specify	9	2	1	0	12	19.67
Total	34	18	6	3	61	

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.