



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

WHOLETIME RECRUITMENT PROCESS 23-24

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 19 April 2024

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 April and August 2023.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Service Workforce Plan 2023-25 identified that the Service might need to replace up to 43 operational roles in response to the projected number of retirements and turnover during 2023-24.
- 1.2 Positive action took place between April and August 2023, and focused on increasing the number of applications from those under-represented in the operational workforce, namely women and those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates. The selection process commenced in August 2023 and ran for three months.
- 1.3 The report sets out the outcomes from the selection process and reviews the impact of the positive action measures put in place.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 In preparation for the wholetime selection campaign and to actively seek to encourage applications from a diverse range of applicants, the Service undertook a programme of positive action events and applicant engagement.
- 2.2 Activities were promoted through communications team via social media, posters and leaflets and active engagement with targeted groups within the community – 182 participants signed up to participate in the group and activities. Activities included:
 - Weekly fitness sessions aimed at women but open to all;
 - Awareness days on stations, with greater emphasis on the city due to the diverse demographic of potential applicants;
 - Targeted posters and leaflet drops aimed at city centre sites and gyms;
 - Use of social media;
 - Radio adverts to promote the recruitment process to harder to reach groups (Dawn FM, Kemet FM, Radio Faza). This included adverts to promote awareness days, and studio interviews;
 - Attendance at community events.
- 2.3 Of the 182 who engaged with positive action, 52 were women and 73 from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background. Of these, 102 continued to the application stage.

SELECTION OUTCOMES

- 2.4 The assessment process itself comprised of:
 - Application;
 - Telephone sifting undertaken by the Futures Group (part of Nottingham Jobs);

- Fitness test;
- Job related tests;
- Assessment centre – presentation and interview.

2.5 The numbers successful at each stage are set out below:

Stage	All Applicants	Female Applicants	BAME Applicants
Fitness Test Stage	461	52	73
Total Applicant Numbers	317	24	37
Telephone Sift	270	18	26
Job Related Tests	175	15	26
Assessment Centre	160	15	26
Successful	34	5	8
Pass Rate	10.7%	20.8%	21.6%

2.6 Of those who were successful in the process, 15 had attended or engaged with positive action (52%), this included three out of the four (75%) successful external female applicants and seven out of the eight (87.5%) successful Black, Asian and minority ethnic applicants.

2.7 It can be seen that a high number of female and BAME candidates were successful in the process compared to the overall success rate, which is a positive outcome from the campaign.

2.8 It should be noted that five current on-call firefighters were also appointed through the process and will migrate to the wholetime establishment to provide immediate resilience to the ridership.

2.9 Additionally 19 (6%) of applications were from LGBT+ applicants, of which five (26%) were successful in the process.

2.10 Of the successful applicants, 14.7% were women, 23.6% were from Black, Asian or minority ethnic background and 14.7% defined themselves as LGBT+.

2.11 The first course of apprentice firefighters will commence in April 2024, with a second course scheduled for January 2025.

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. This includes the provision of 'off-station' support by a network of volunteers who are available to advise and support new recruits during their first months with the Service.
- 4.2 A review of the recruitment process and outcomes from positive action will be undertaken prior to planning for the next recruitment campaign, to identify any improvement to the current process and applicant experience.

5. EQUALITIES AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment was undertaken as part of the planning process for wholetime recruitment. The aim of the positive action initiatives is to increase the number of applications from under-represented candidates, with a longer-term aim of improving the diversity of the operational workforce, which is under-represented in terms of women, Black, Asian and minority ethnic and LGBT+ employees.
- 5.2 The figures set out in the report reflect some success in increasing the numbers of women (14.7% of recruits), Black, Asian and minority ethnic applicants (23.6% of recruits) and LGBT+ applicants (14.7% of recruits) within the wholetime workforce.
- 5.3 The commitment to improve the diversity of the workforce through positive engagement with potential applicants who are under-represented within the workforce, and reflecting more closely the communities of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, aligns with the principle of promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within the Core Code of Ethics.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental and sustainability implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The recruitment process supports the commitments set out within the Service's Community Risk Management Plan to (i) ensure that the Service has the optimum number of employees to deliver its services, (ii) continue with the programme of positive action to encourage those who are under-represented in the workforce to

apply for roles with the Service and (iii) be a more diverse Service and more reflective of the communities of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

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 OFFIER