



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

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

# **AUDIT OF RECRUITMENT OUTCOMES**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 27 January 2017

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide Members with the results of the internal audit work undertaken in relation to applications received to support staff and retained duty system recruitment.

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

**Name :** Tracy Crump  
Head of People and Organisational Development

**Tel :** 0115 9670880

**Email :** [tracy.crump@notts-fire.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.crump@notts-fire.gov.uk)

**Media Enquiries Contact :** Therese Easom  
(0115) 8388690 [therese.easom@notts-fire.gov.uk](mailto:therese.easom@notts-fire.gov.uk)

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. Members received a Human Resources (HR) update at the Human Resources Committee on 4 November 2016 which outlined data from recruitment processes undertaken by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) during 1 March 2016 – 30 September 2016 (for Support Staff roles) and October 2015 – February 2016 for retained fire fighter roles.
- 1.2. It was noted in the report that some applicants from under-represented groups (people from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds, disabled people, women and people who may identify as LGBT) appeared less likely to be shortlisted or successful at interview stage. As a result of this an audit of applications and interview processes has been undertaken.

## **2. REPORT**

### **METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1 The audit has reviewed applications and interview notes against the criteria described in the relevant person specification and also assessed the process, application and criteria as much as possible for any cultural issues, potential unconscious bias or trends between these applications. This takes into consideration where the application was rejected to ensure the Service's recruitment processes do not unjustifiably adversely impact upon people from different backgrounds.
- 2.2 Thirty unsuccessful support staff applications from under-represented groups have been assessed by the Service, received for seven positions, which were recruited to between 01 July 2015 and 02 July 2016. Ten of these applications were shortlisted for interview. In addition six applications to retained duty system (RDS) recruitment campaigns have also been reviewed
- 2.3 All applications assessed, were from applicants identifying as being lesbian gay or bisexual (LGB), disabled or from a BME background, additionally female applicants were also included when assessing applications for RDS positions. The audit has assessed a number of areas within the application and recruitment process and the findings are outlined below.

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Retained Firefighter Roles**

- 2.4 The six applications to retained firefighter positions (2 x female/4 x from BME backgrounds) were deemed to be unsuccessful at the availability and location sift. This means that either the individual could not provide the hours of cover suitable for that station or their home address meant that they could not meet the required turnout time. On further investigation three of these applicants did fall outside the travelling distance and three failed on availability.

- 2.5 It is recommended that the Service reviews how it communicates availability and location requirements to applicants – this may mean that applicants self-deselect prior to completing an application. There may also be a need for the Service to request more information about an individual's circumstances prior to rejecting their application.

### **Support Staff Roles**

- 2.6 With regards to the applications for support staff roles, it is evident that some applicants have not understood the Service's recruitment process. In certain applications evidence was not provided against all criteria within the person specification or has only been partially provided against a particular criterion. It is apparent that some applicants had entered generic statements into the application form rather than addressing the requirements of the person specification.
- 2.7 Those that had produced good applications but still had not been shortlisted, it was evident and justifiable as to why this was the case. Some roles had received a lot of applications and so shortlisting was a very competitive part of the process.
- 2.8 Some of the person specifications for the roles could have been improved and so the Service will review the guidance and advice it provides to line managers. Of the under-represented applicants who were interviewed but unsuccessful, consistent scoring with detailed notes were evident by all members of the interview panels reviewed.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

- 2.9 No undue bias was found in assessing the evidence recorded through the applications and interview notes assessed. It is evident that NFRS follows best practise in order to ensure that the anonymity of applicants during the shortlisting process is maintained. In addition to this, HR Business Partner involvement within the recruitment process helps to ensure best practice and minimise the potential for discrimination.
- 2.10 In order to ensure fairness in the selection process, HR Business Partners are involved in all shortlisting and interview panels and all applicants are assessed against criteria set out in a person specification. All equalities monitoring information is removed from applications at the point of shortlisting – this includes information about gender, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation and age. Adjustments are made for those who may require them, for instance due to disability, and candidates with a disability are guaranteed an interview if they meet the essential criteria and opt into the guaranteed interview scheme.
- 2.11 The Head of People and Organisational Development will address the issues outlined in the review in order to improve candidate experience and ensure equality in the recruitment process.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The Head of People and Organisational Development will address the issues outlined in the paper.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this report does not consider matters of policy. The conclusions and data from this paper will inform future equality impact assessments of the Service's recruitment policy and process.

### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report

### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Service has a legal duty to advance equality of opportunity through the Equality Act and its public sector equality duty, this paper seeks to ensure compliance with such legal duties.

### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The Service has a legal duty to advance equality of opportunity through the equality Act and its public sector equality duty, this paper seeks to ensure compliance with such legal duties.

### **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the outcomes from the report.

### **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**