



HEREFORD & WORCESTER Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

AGENDA

Wednesday, 17 January 2024

10:30

**Wyre Forest House Council Chamber
Wyre Forest District Council, Wyre Forest House,
Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY11 7WF**

Wyre Forest House Location Map

SAT NAV: DY11 7FB

Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF
Reception at Wyre Forest House 01562 732101

From Stourport:

Head towards Kidderminster on the A451 Minster Road, passing Stourport High School and Stourport Sports Club on your left. When you reach the traffic lights at the crossroads, turn left into Walter Nash Road West (signposted Wyre Forest House). Then take your first left onto Finepoint Way. Follow the road around to your left and Wyre Forest House is at the end of the road on the left. Visitor parking is available and signposted from the mini roundabout.

From Kidderminster:

From Kidderminster, follow the signs for Stourport and head out of Kidderminster on the A451 Stourport Road, this road becomes a dual carriageway. You will pass 24/7 Fitness and Wyre Forest Community Housing on your left. At the crossroads with traffic lights turn right into Walter Nash Road West (there is a dedicated right hand-turn lane), signposted for Wyre Forest House. Then take your first left onto Finepoint Way. Follow the road around to your left and Wyre Forest House is at the end of the road on the left. Visitor parking is available and signposted from the mini roundabout.



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- the right to inspect background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting.

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WELCOME AND GUIDE TO TODAY’S MEETING. These notes are written to assist you to follow the meeting. Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Councillors** who are democratically elected representatives and they will be advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals. The Fire and Rescue Authority comprises 25 Councillors and appoints committees to undertake various functions on behalf of the Authority. There are 19 Worcestershire County Councillors on the Authority and 6 Herefordshire Council Councillors.

Agenda Papers - Attached is the Agenda which is a summary of the issues to be discussed and the related reports by Officers.

Chairman - The Chairman, who is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting, sits at the head of the table.

Officers - Accompanying the Chairman is the Chief Fire Officer and other Officers of the Fire and Rescue Authority who will advise on legal and procedural matters and record the proceedings. These include the Clerk and the Treasurer to the Authority.

The Business - The Chairman will conduct the business of the meeting. The items listed on the agenda will be discussed.

Decisions - At the end of the discussion on each item the Chairman will put any amendments or motions to the meeting and then ask the Councillors to vote. The Officers do not have a vote.



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 17 January 2024, 10:30

Agenda

Councillors

Mr M Hart (Chairman), Mr A Amos (Vice Chairman), Mr D Boatright-Greene, Mr B Brookes, Mr B Clayton, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr J Kenyon, Mrs E Marshall, Ms N McVey, Mr R J Morris, Ms D Toynbee

No.	Item	Pages
1	Apologies for Absence To receive any apologies for absence.	
2	Named Substitutes To receive details of any Member of the Authority nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
3	Declarations of Interest (if any) This item allows the Chairman to invite any Councillor to declare an interest in any of the items on this Agenda.	
4	Confirmation of Minutes To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2023.	1 - 5
5	Internal Audit Progress and Audit Plan Revision Report 1. To provide the Committee with an update regarding the delivery of the Internal Audit plan 2023/24. 2. To provide the Committee with the 2023/24 Audit Plan Revision.	6 - 18
6	National Fraud Initiative 2022/23 To update Members on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI).	19 - 21

7	Safeguarding Assurance – Annual Report	22 - 26
	To provide an update on the Service’s commitment to Safeguarding.	
8	Equality & Gender Pay Gap Report 2022-2023 and Equality Objectives Progress Update	27 - 73
	1. To present the Equality & Gender Pay Gap Report 2022-2023.	
	2. To provide a summary of work completed during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2023-2024 against the Service’s Equality Objectives 2021-2025.	
9	Update on the Activities of the Women@HWFire Group	74 - 77
	To update the Audit and Standards Committee on the work of Women@HWFire.	
10	Health and Safety Committee Update: April to Sept 2023 (Quarters 1 & 2)	78 - 99
	To provide a Health and Safety update on activities and items of significance.	



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 19 July 2023, 10:30

Chairman: Mr M Hart
Vice-Chairman: Mr A Amos

Minutes

Members Present: Mr A Amos, Mr B Brookes, Mr B Clayton, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr M Hart

0282 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Boatright-Greene, Cllr Hardman, Cllr McVey, Cllr R Morris, Cllr Toynbee.

0283 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

0284 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

0285 Confirmation of Minutes

The Treasurer confirmed that at the meeting on 19th April 2023, he had advised that the Audit of the 2021/22 accounts was finally complete. However, the Auditors have since indicated that as they were late signing off the report, the valuation of LGPS pension liabilities should, in their view, be updated and the accounts amended accordingly.

The Actuaries to the LGPS have stated that, in their opinion, the liabilities have not changed, but there will be a further delay whilst the Treasurer provides the Auditor with further evidence to justify the approach.

The Chairman enquired how much time this was taking to deal with and the cost to the public.

The Treasurer confirmed that not a large amount was being spent on this issue, but it would cause a delay in producing the accounts for 2022/23.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0286 Internal Audit Annual Report 2022/23

Helen Tiffney from Internal Audit Shared Service presented Members with an update on the delivery of the Internal Audit annual programme for 2022/23.

Members noted the Internal Audit Annual report 2021/22, that the audit plan had provided an assurance level of 'full' for three core financial areas, no limited or below assurance areas had been reported or any high priority recommendations had been made.

The Chairman commented that it was good to hear that there were no concerns.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the Internal Audit Charter and that the audit plan delivered in 2022/23 had provided an assurance level of "full" for three core financial areas and that no limited or below assurance areas had been reported or any high priority recommendations made.

0287 Equality Objectives 2021-2025 Update for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2022-2023

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer updated Members on Equality Objectives for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2022/23.

Since the report was published, the report of the cultural review undertaken by Dr D Willoughby had been published and circulated to all Members.

A number of the areas highlighted as amber, are closer to green. Training as mentioned in the report by Dr Willoughby is already being rolled out across the Authority.

The Chairman asked what the time line was for the converting of the items from amber to green. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the training was being provided to over 700+ members of staff and therefore this is estimated to take between 12 – 18 months.

It was agreed that future updates would indicate the percentage of staff who had completed the training.

The Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that the Member EDI Champions continued to be very engaged in the work being undertaken.

The Committee noted its satisfaction with the work being undertaken and the strategies that the Authority is putting into place to deal with EDI.

RESOLVED that:

i) the progress made against the Equality Objectives 2021-2025 for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2021-2022 be noted; and

ii) the future delivery and governance of the Service's Equality Agenda from 2023-2024 be noted.

0288 Risk Management and Strategic Risk Register – Annual Update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer discussed the Risk Management and Strategic Risk Register.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer highlighted the five generic risks running across the whole organisation as well as the specific risks included on the Strategic Risk Register.

A Member required clarification on how the residual score was calculated. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that a number of factors were taken into consideration e.g., likelihood of risk, the impact it would have if it occurred and the control measures the Authority has in place to mitigate the risk. All factors are given a number which are multiplied to give a residual score.

Members complimented officers on the thoroughness of the approach and were reassured that the Authority were challenging issues and considering potential risks before they occurred.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

0289 Minimising Firefighter Exposure to Carcinogens – Service Update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided an update on steps taken to minimise the exposure that firefighters have to carcinogens, including those arising from contaminated fire kit. He set out some of the steps that the Authority have already put into place to try to ensure a clean space while returning from an incident in the fire appliance.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer was thanked for producing the comprehensive report. However, a Member wanted clarification on keeping the cabs as a clear zone. It was enquired whether there was a clear cab policy nationally that the Authority could work within.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Authority is working within the guidance and advice provided by the NFCC Health & Safety Committee. The Authority are moving with technology to ensure that contaminated equipment is kept contained.

The Chairman wished to know if an external body was looking at the steps the Authority were undertaking to ensure they were being followed correctly. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that every 2 years the Service participates in a Health and Safety audit by other FRSs in the region. The Authority can select the areas that need auditing and advice is given if the other FRSs believe that additional steps are required to be taken.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Treasurer confirmed that the issue of carcinogens and the measures taken were being reflected in the current tender for insurances.

RESOLVED that current and planned measures being taken by the Service to minimise the risk of carcinogens to firefighters be noted.

0290 Update from the Health and Safety Committee

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided Members with an update from the Health and Safety Committee.

Members were informed that the Health and Safety Executive would be visiting 10 Fire Authorities in the next 12 months to look at the steps being taken in response to the risks from contamination. No Fire Authority will know if they will be selected for the visit until close to the date of the visit.

Work is being undertaken within regional driving instructors in relation to slow driving, as this is where most of the property of the public is damaged.

RESOLVED that the following issues, in particular, be noted:

i) The involvement of the Service in Health and Safety initiatives;

ii) Health and Safety performance information recorded during January to March (Quarter 4)

iii) Workforce Health & Wellbeing performance (Quarter 4)

The Meeting ended at: 11:18

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman

Report of the Interim Audit Team Leader – WIASS

Internal Audit Progress and Audit Plan Revision Report

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Committee with an update regarding the delivery of the Internal Audit plan 2023/24.
 2. To provide the Committee with the 2023/24 Audit Plan Revision.
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Recommendations

The Treasurer recommends that:

- (i) The report is noted; and***
- (ii) The 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan Revision is noted.***

Introduction and Background

3. The Authority is responsible for maintaining or procuring an adequate and effective internal audit of the activities of the Authority under the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2018. This includes considering, where appropriate, the need for controls to prevent and detect fraudulent activity. These should also be reviewed to ensure that they are effective. This duty has been delegated to the Treasurer and Internal Audit is provided by Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service (WIASS). Management is responsible for the system of internal control and should set in place policies and procedures to ensure systems function correctly.
4. Normally the Head of WIASS, as Chief Internal Auditor, would attend this meeting to present this report. Unfortunately, WIASS lost both the Head and deputy Head at around the same time (*both moving to Worcestershire CC Internal Audit*), and the service has been operating with an interim Audit Lead until the new Head starts in late January. The interim Audit Lead is unable to attend this meeting in person and we do not have capability to provide a hybrid meeting arrangement. The Treasurer will be able to answer Members general queries, but if there are any specific questions for the interim Audit Lead they may have to be provided after the meeting.

Objectives of Internal Audit

5. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (as amended) defines internal audit as: “an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes”. WIASS is committed to conforming to the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (as amended).

Aims of Internal Audit

6. The objectives of WIASS are to:
 - Examine, evaluate and report on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control and risk management across the Fire Service and recommend arrangements to address weaknesses as appropriate.
 - Examine, evaluate and report on arrangements to ensure compliance with legislation and the Fire Service’s objectives, policies and procedures.
 - Examine, evaluate and report on procedures that the Fire Service’s assets and interests are adequately protected and effectively managed.
 - Undertake independent investigations into allegations of fraud and irregularity in accordance with Fire Service’s policies and procedures and relevant legislation.
 - Advise upon the control and risk implications of new systems or other organisational changes.
7. Internal audit will work with external audit to try and avoid duplication of effort, provide adequate coverage for the 2023/24 financial year so that an internal audit opinion can be reached and support External Audit by carrying out reviews in support of the account’s opinion work. The audit plan is made available to the external auditors for information.

Audit Planning

8. To provide audit coverage for 2023/24, an audit operational programme delivered by WIASS was discussed and agreed with the Authority’s Senior Management Board and the Section 151 Officer and Treasurer. It was brought before Committee on 18 January 2023 for consideration. The audit programme provided a total audit provision of 111 audit days including support days and draw down budgets which may not be used in full during the year.

Audit Delivery

9. To assist the Committee to consider assurance on the areas of work undertaken, an overall assurance level is given, when appropriate, to each audit area based on a predetermined scale (Appendix 3). Also, the findings are prioritised into 'high', 'medium' and 'low' within audit reports with all 'high' priority recommendations being reported before committee (Appendix 2 and 3).

Assurance Sources

10. We recognise there are other review functions providing other sources of assurance (both internally and externally) over aspects of the Authority's operations. Where possible we seek to place reliance on such work thus reducing the internal audit coverage as required.

Independence and Safeguards

11. WIASS internal audit activity is organisationally independent. Internal Audit reports to the Treasurer but has a direct and unrestricted access to the senior management board and the Audit Committee Chair. Where WIASS provides assistance with the preparation of areas of work there are clear safeguards in place to ensure independence is not compromised. Safeguards include review within the audit service by an independent person to those who have completed the work as well as independent scrutiny by the Treasurer of the Authority. Audit Committee can also challenge the reported findings and the minutes would record this.

Risk Management

12. Risk Management is a high-profile activity due to the nature of the Authority. Regular updates are brought before Committee and a robust and embedded risk management process exists within the Fire Authority. Regular review of the risk profile takes place with appropriate mitigation agreed and reported.

2023/24 Audit Progress

13. The following reviews have been finalised:
 - Procurement (Reasonable Assurance)
 - Business Continuity (Reasonable Assurance)
14. Several reviews are currently in progress including:
 - Main Ledger (inc. Budgetary Control & Bank Reconciliation)
 - Payroll & Pensions (inc. GARTAN)
15. These are progressing through the planning stages and will be reported on completion.

2023/24 Audit Plan Revision

16. The Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24 approved by this Committee was based upon a resource allocation of 111 productive days, as agreed with the Section 151 officer. Since this time, several pressures have been placed upon the service that have affected and will affect its ability to complete the annual audit plan. These include the loss of key personnel (Head of Service and Audit Team Leader) and vacancies within the team. As a result, productive days have been reduced by 32 from 111 to 79 days.
17. The Interim Audit Team Leader and S151 Officer have reviewed the current status of the plan and considered whether the number of planned audits can be reduced, or specific audits deferred, if it is prudent to do so from a risk assurance perspective.
18. As a result of this exercised it is proposed to remove the following audits:
 - **His Majesty Inspectorate – Action Plan (11 days)**
Rationale: 3rd HMI inspection undertaken so deemed low risk. Remove from 2023/24 Audit Plan.
 - **Declaration of Interest and Hospitality (3 days)**
Rationale: Deemed low risk. Remove from 23/24 Plan. Remove from 2023/24 Audit Plan.
 - **Main Ledger (inc. Budgetary Control & Bank Reconciliation) (From 7 to 6 days)**
Rationale: Control environment historically robust. Undertake light touch approach or consider reduction in scope. Planned days reduced. May reduce further subject to light touch approach and that assurance coverage is sufficient.
 - **Creditors (Accounts payable) (From 8 to 6 days)**
Rationale: Control environment historically robust. Undertake light touch approach or consider reduction in scope. Planned days reduced. May reduce further subject to light touch approach and that assurance coverage is sufficient.
 - **Debtors (Accounts receivable) (From 5 to 4 days)**
Rationale: Control environment historically robust. Undertake light touch approach or consider reduction in scope. Planned days reduced. May reduce further subject to light touch approach and that assurance coverage is sufficient.
 - **Payroll & Pensions inc. GARTAN (From 12 to 9 days)**
Rationale: Control environment historically robust. Undertake light touch approach or consider reduction in scope. Planned days reduced. May reduce further subject to light touch approach and that assurance coverage is sufficient.
 - **Culture Whistleblowing & Ethics (12 days)**
Rationale: Defer to 2024/25.

19. The Business Continuity Plans audit budget has been increased by 1 day.

Follow Up Reviews

20. Follow up takes place regarding previously completed audits e.g. Safeguarding, Fire Cadets, Covid 19 lessons learnt, to provide assurance that recommendations have been implemented and any risk mitigated. Where there is a programmed annual visit to an area the ‘follow up’ is included as part of the audit review e.g. financials. Any material exceptions arising from audit ‘follow up’ will be brought to the attention of the Audit Committee. The Key Performance Indicator follow up found a positive direction of travel with all reported points either implemented or in progress of implementation. For the follow ups undertaken to date there are no material exceptions to report.

Conclusion/Summary

21. The Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24 continues to see progress. However, revisions have been made to the plan due to resourcing issues. There has been no significant reduction in risk assurance and coverage. For the 2023/24 finalised reports issued to date there are no high priority recommendations to report, and, robust management action plans have been agreed and are in place to address the findings from the review. All finalised reviews will be reported to Committee on completion.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	There are no financial issues that require consideration.
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	Selected audits are risk based and linked to the delivery of priorities and policy framework.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	Yes, whole report.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	N/A – no policy change is recommended.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A

Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	N/A
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Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – 2023/24 Audit Plan summary.

Appendix 2 – ‘High’ priority recommendations for completed audits.

Appendix 3 – ‘Assurance’ and ‘priority’ definitions

Appendix 4 – ‘Follow Up’ reporting

Audit Area	Source	Planned days 2023/ 2024		Service	Comment/ Outline Scoping	Strategy link	Indicative Quarter	Current Position
Accountancy & Finance Systems								
Main Ledger (inc. Budgetary Control & Bank Rec)	Fundamental to HWFRS CRMP delivery	6		Finance	Full Audit	Resourcing for the Future	Q3	To commence in Q3
Creditors (a/c's payable)	Fundamental to HWFRS CRMP delivery	6		Finance	Full Audit	Resourcing for the Future	Q3	To commence in Q3
Debtors (a/c's receivable)	Fundamental to HWFRS CRMP delivery	4		Finance	Full Audit	Resourcing for the Future	Q3	To commence in Q3
Payroll & Pensions inc. GARTAN	Fundamental to HWFRS CRMP delivery	9		Service Support	Full Audit	Resourcing for the Future	Q3	To commence in Q3
SUB TOTAL		25						

Audit Area	Source	Planned days 2023/24	Service	Comment/Outline Scoping	Strategy link	Indicative Quarter	Current Position
Corporate Governance							
Culture, Whistleblowing & Ethics	Fundamental to HWFRS CRMP delivery	-	Service Support	Implementation of recommendations of the 2022/23 audit -hybrid review	Fire & Rescue Authority	Q4	Removed
Business Continuity Plans	Fundamental to HWFRS CRMP delivery	12	Service Support	Linked to those relevant areas of the risk register (including emerging industrial action)	Fire & Rescue Authority	Q2	Testing in progress
His Majesty Inspectorate – Action Plan	Fundamental to HWFRS CRMP delivery	-	Protection	Areas of improvement	Fire & Rescue Authority	Transferred from Q1 to Q3	Removed
SUB TOTAL		12					
System / Management Arrangements							
Declaration of Interests & Hospitality	Good governance	-	Service Support	Process and registration transparency	Fire & Rescue Authority	Q3	Removed

Audit Area	Source	Planned days 2023/2 4	Service	Comment/Outline Scoping	Strategy link	Indicative Quarter	Current Position
Procurement	Fundamental to HWFRS CRMP delivery	9	Service Support	Contract Management to ensure value for Money	Fire & Rescue Authority	Q1 / 2	Completed
Follow up Reviews	Good Governance	7				Q1 to Q4	Ongoing
SUB TOTAL		16					
Advice, Guidance, Consultation, Investigations	Support	5				Q1 to Q4	Ongoing
Audit Cttee support, reports and meetings	Support	11				Q1 to Q4	Ongoing
Contingency		10					
SUB TOTAL		26					
TOTAL CHARGEABLE		79					

Appendix 2

'High' Priority Recommendations Reported for 2023/24 Finalised Reviews.

There have been no 'high' priority recommendations reported to date within finalised reviews.

(Where recommendations are reported these definitions can also be applied to Appendix 4 where applicable)

Definition of Priority of Recommendations

Priority	Definition
High	Control weakness that has or is likely to have a significant impact upon the achievement of key system, function or process objectives. Immediate implementation of the agreed recommendation is essential in order to provide satisfactory control of the serious risk(s) the system is exposed to.
Medium	Control weakness that has or is likely to have a medium impact upon the achievement of key system, function or process objectives. Implementation of the agreed recommendation within 3 to 6 months is important in order to provide satisfactory control of the risk(s) the system is exposed to.
Low	Control weakness that has a low impact upon the achievement of key system, function or process objectives. Implementation of the agreed recommendation is desirable as it will improve overall control within the system.

Definition of Audit Opinion Levels of Assurance

Opinion	Definition
Full Assurance	<p>The system of internal control meets the organisation's objectives; all of the expected system controls tested are in place and are operating effectively.</p> <p>No specific follow up review will be undertaken; follow up will be undertaken as part of the next planned review of the system.</p>
Significant Assurance	<p>There is a generally sound system of internal control in place designed to meet the organisation's objectives. However isolated weaknesses in the design of controls or inconsistent application of controls in a small number of areas put the achievement of a limited number of system objectives at risk.</p> <p>Follow up of medium priority recommendations only will be undertaken after 6 months; follow up of low priority recommendations will be undertaken as part of the next planned review of the system.</p>
Moderate Assurance	<p>The system of control is generally sound however some of the expected controls are not in place and / or are not operating effectively therefore increasing the risk that the system will not meet it's objectives. Assurance can only be given over the effectiveness of controls within some areas of the system.</p> <p>Follow up of high and medium priority recommendations only will be undertaken after 6 months; follow up of low priority recommendations will be undertaken as part of the next planned review of the system.</p>
Limited Assurance	<p>Weaknesses in the design and / or inconsistent application of controls put the achievement of the organisation's objectives at risk in many of the areas reviewed. Assurance is limited to the few areas of the system where controls are in place and are operating effectively.</p> <p>Follow up of high and medium priority recommendations only will be undertaken after 6 months; follow up of low priority recommendations will be undertaken as part of the next planned review of the system.</p>
No Assurance	<p>No assurance can be given on the system of internal control as significant weaknesses in the design and / or operation of key controls could result or have resulted in failure to achieve the organisation's objectives in the area reviewed.</p> <p>Follow up of high and medium priority recommendations only will be undertaken after 6 months; follow up of low priority recommendations will be undertaken as part of the next planned review of the system.</p>

Follow Up Reviews

There are no exceptions to report before Committee for 'follow up' reviews that have been completed. Direction of travel is positive with all the findings either implemented or in progress and working towards implementation.

Report of the Treasurer

National Fraud Initiative 2022/23

Purpose of report

1. To update Members on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI).
-

Recommendation

The Treasurer recommends that the Committee notes that the process of examining all National Fraud Initiative matches is now complete and no fraud has been detected.

Introduction and Background

2. The NFI is a biennial exercise carried out since 2006/07 for local government and other public bodies and currently undertaken by the Cabinet Office.
3. Authorities are required to provide certain mandatory datasets for the Fire Authority: the mandatory datasets comprise of creditors, payroll and pensions payroll. Payroll and pensions payroll data is subject to a series of data matches against data provided by other public bodies including payroll, pensions, housing benefit, Home Office (removed and failed asylum seekers), UK visas and Department for Work and Pensions deceased persons. Creditor payments are matched only within Authorities.
4. The data provided is processed by a specialist contractor on behalf of the Cabinet Office. Data matches are notified to Authorities for examination to eliminate the possibility of fraud and/or error. The existence of a match in an NFI report does not mean that there is a fraud, only that there is a need to investigate further to eliminate the possibility of fraud or error.
5. The initial NFI reports were received in early March 2023 and, as usual, the very low overall number of matches (a 29% reduction on 2021/22) means that each one continues to be examined in detail, and this process is now complete. A summary list of matches is shown at Appendix 1.
6. At the date of the previous report to this Committee (19 April 2023) a review had been undertaken for all, except the one following report. This has now been completed.

Outstanding Matches

7. The outstanding data matches all refer to one report which has now been fully investigated.

Report 708 – Duplicate records by invoice amount and creditor reference

8. There were 117 matches relating to 234 individual invoices. As in previous years the matches were annual monthly payments to the same supplier, or the same type of goods/services at different periods, or multiple purchases made separately e.g. software licenses.

Conclusion

9. Every NFI match has been reviewed and no fraud has been detected.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	No direct implications
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	Helping to demonstrate Integrity in our actions
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	N/A
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	N/A relevant Privacy Notices issued
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	Data is processed in accordance with the Code of Data Matching Practice 2018, produced by the Cabinet Office under paragraph 7, Schedule 9 of the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014. The Act provides the statutory basis for the whole exercise.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: National Fraud Initiative – 2022/23 Raw Match.Data

**Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority
National Fraud Initiative: 2022/23 Raw Match Data**

	2020/21 Raw Matches	2022/23 Raw Matches
<u>Employee Related</u>		
65 Payroll to Payroll (<i>within bodies</i>)		
66 Payroll to Payroll (<i>between bodies</i>)	15	26
Total Raw Matches - Payroll	15	26
<u>Creditor Related</u>		
700 Duplicate creditors by creditor reference		
701 Duplicate creditors by creditor name	6	2
702 Duplicate creditors by address detail	4	6
703 Duplicate creditors by bank account number	2	
707 Duplicate records by reference, amount and creditor reference	44	6
708 Duplicate records by amount and creditor reference	146	117
709 VAT over Paid	1	1
711 Duplicate records by invoice number and amount but different creditor reference and name	1	
713 Duplicate records by postcode, invoice amount but with different creditor reference and invoice reference and date	1	
Total Raw Matches - Creditors	205	132
<u>Procurement Related</u>		
81 Payroll to Creditors	1	1
750 Procurement - Payroll to Companies House (Director)	4	1
Total Raw Matches - Procurement	5	2
 Total Raw Matches	 225	 160

Report of the Assistant Chief Officer: Director of Prevention

Safeguarding Assurance – Annual Report

Purpose of report

1. To provide an update on the Service's commitment to Safeguarding.
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that the progress of the Prevention department's activity against the Fire Standards Board's Safeguarding Fire Standard is noted.

Introduction and Background

2. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) personnel and volunteers undertake a wide range of public facing roles, which includes education and engagement with all members of our communities including children, young people, and adults with complex needs and vulnerabilities. Employees and people working on behalf of the Service have a legal and moral obligation to recognise and report concerns about abuse or neglect along with having the necessary skills and training to ensure they are safe and effective practitioners.
3. Fire and Rescue Services also have a responsibility to safeguard and protect those that represent their service and it is, therefore, imperative that they are provided with guidance and support in order to effectively safeguard themselves and others.
4. Safeguarding is a Service wide responsibility. HWFRS is fully committed to its legal and moral duties placed upon it and ensures our safeguarding responsibilities are practiced well and that they are fully embedded into the culture of the organisation.
5. The NFCC Safeguarding Self-assessment states 'Where applicable those that hold governance for the Fire and Rescue Service are regularly made aware of safeguarding issues and risks affecting the Service. They demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding and can hold the Service to account regarding their safeguarding responsibilities'.
6. This paper provides an overview of the work the Service has undertaken over the last 12 months and provides assurance that it is compliant with safeguarding legislation.

Safeguarding Fire Standard

7. In January 2022, the Fire Standards Board launched the Safeguarding Fire Standard. The Standard aims to ensure that Fire and Rescue Services are doing all they can to support and promote the safeguarding outcomes for communities, employees and volunteers.
8. The desired outcomes are to have:
 - *A Fire and Rescue Service that actively promotes the safeguarding of those in its community and its employees and volunteers along with working to proactively reduce the risk of abuse, harm and neglect.*
 - *One that is compliant with safeguarding legislation, understanding and effectively fulfilling its obligations and responsibilities to its Local Safeguarding Adults Boards and Local Safeguarding Children's Board or Partnership.*
 - *A service whose employees and volunteers are trained, supported and empowered to respond to safeguarding needs, appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.*
 - *A service that collaborates appropriately with others to ensure a coordinated approach to safeguarding.*
9. An annual review of the Service's progress against the Safeguarding Fire Standard takes place each year to examine progress made. Outstanding actions are incorporated into the future planning for the Prevention directorate and feature within a Prevention department Safeguarding Action Plan and associated plans.
10. There are ten requirements to be met for the Standard. Analysis for 2023 identified full compliance with nine of the requirements and partial compliance with one of the requirements. There were no areas identified as non-compliant.
11. Full details of the Safeguarding Fire Standard are set out on the Fire Standards Board website - [Safeguarding - Fire Standards Board](#).

Key Developments

12. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) provide a suite of guidance, risk assessments and training options which enables the sector to meet their safeguarding duties. This assists the Service in working towards achieving the requirements of the Safeguarding Fire Standard. Included is the Safeguarding Guidance for Adults and Young People and a self-assessment toolkit. The self-assessment toolkit is designed to enable Services to carry out a review of its safeguarding practices.
13. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the Service is the Assistant Chief Officer: Director of Prevention. Their role is to ensure that the Service is and remains compliant with legislation and that relevant safeguarding guidance is adhered to. The DSL has received the appropriate safeguarding training and are partners on the local Safeguarding Adults and Childrens Boards.

14. It is important that all staff understand what safeguarding is and that everyone is aware of their duty in the reporting of any concerns and the processes to follow to do this. In order to give employees the knowledge and tools it is essential that all staff complete the level of safeguarding training which is relevant to their role. To assist with this, the Service introduced a Safeguarding Training Competency Framework in May 2023.
15. The contents of this Framework meet the requirements for Service personnel to be competent in the most appropriate level of safeguarding training. The Level 1 Safeguarding training package, which is completed by all Service personnel and volunteers is reviewed on an annual basis and is updated based on amendments in legislation or recommendations following Serious Case Reviews.
16. Appropriate staff groups have completed specific targeted awareness training in relation to local and national trends which includes Suicide Awareness and Prevent Duty training. A plan is in place to deliver safer recruitment training to those staff who are involved in the recruitment of staff.
17. The Prevention Management team are members of the NFCC Safeguarding Practitioners Group, meeting bi-monthly with colleagues across the country. The group provides an opportunity to share best practice.
18. The Head of Prevention attends the Regional Safeguarding Leads meetings where best practice and learning is shared and contributes to the continual improvement of safeguarding practice and processes across the Service.
19. A Safeguarding Steering Group meet on a quarterly basis, chaired by the Assistant Chief Officer. Delegates from a cross section of departments attend and it has a Terms of Reference which are reviewed on an annual basis. This group provides oversight and assurance with regards to all areas of safeguarding. An Action Plan is in place for this meeting and the actions are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis
20. To ensure all staff are regularly informed of developments in safeguarding policies and procedures, a suite of promotional items have been produced that includes posters and credit cards for all staff on the safeguarding reporting procedure. Triple play videos have been produced to assist staff in embedding their understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding Safeguarding and the Service website and SharePoint sites have been reviewed and updated.
21. In April 2023, the Service submitted their response to the Section 11 Children Act and Care Act compliance audit. Partners from across the two counties completed this regional audit tool which allows for the benchmarking of responses to compare across partnership areas.

The year ahead - 2024

22. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Prevention Committee led a proposal, with the support of the Home Office, for the inclusion of Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) employees in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exemptions) Order 1975. The Service has committed to a DBS Checking programme for all staff which is expected

to be in full in progress from the 1 January 2024. An implementation plan is currently under development.

23. In July 2023, the NFCC produced Managing Allegations Guidance. The aim of this guidance is to provide a framework for all Services to effectively manage cases where an allegation or concern of harm has been made against a representative of the Service. As a result, a Managing Allegations Policy will be produced and training will be delivered.
24. A peer review of the Services' progress and approach against the Safeguarding Standard and NFCC Self-assessment tool will be carried out by regional colleagues. Any recommendations resulting from this will be considered and formulated into an action plan. These will be continually monitored, reviewed and updated accordingly.

Conclusion

25. All activities related to safeguarding continue to be developed and evolved to align with the Safeguarding Fire Standard and Prevention Strategy. Activities will be quality assured, monitored and reviewed regularly.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	No resource implications
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	The Safeguarding Fire Standard aligns with the Safeguarding Adults and Children and Young People Policies. The Fire Standard also compliments the Prevention Strategy. CCofE – Putting our Communities First / Leadership / Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	There are links to the Strategic Risk Register.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Not required

Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	Not required

Report of Assistant Chief Officer – Director of Prevention

Equality & Gender Pay Gap Report 2022-2023 and Equality Objectives Progress Update

Purpose of report

1. To present the Equality & Gender Pay Gap Report 2022-2023.
2. To provide a summary of work completed during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2023-2024 against the Service’s Equality Objectives 2021-2025.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- i. Members note the content of the Equality & Gender Pay Gap Report 2022-2023.*
- ii. Members note the good progress made against the Service’s Equality Objectives.*

Introduction and Background

3. In line with the Equality Act 2010, the Service is required to publish equality information annually to show how it has complied with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 also require employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations every year showing the pay gap between their male and female employees.
4. The Equality & Gender Pay Gap report provides information on our workforce diversity and gender pay gap. The information informs our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) priorities in support of our Equality Objectives, People Strategy and Core Organisational strategies. A summary of progress made against the Equality Objectives is provided later in this paper. The Service’s Equality Objectives are published on the Service website:

<p>Our Organisation: Leadership and Corporate Commitment</p> <p>Our leaders will provide visible leadership to ensure our people, our partners and our communities see the personal commitment to inclusion.</p>	<p>Our Communities: Understand, engage and build good relationships</p> <p>We will better understand our communities by ensuring we put in place systems that enable the collection,</p>
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<p>We will maximise the transparency of our organisation so our activities can be scrutinised and we can be held accountable.</p>	<p>collation and analysis of community data and information. We will enhance our engagement with our communities to foster good relationships and understand the community priorities.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Our People: Develop, engage and understand</p> <p>We will develop our people to better understand diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>We will create an inclusive culture where our people feel able to be themselves.</p> <p>We will better understand our workforce composition through our workforce data.</p> <p>We will put in place effective strategies to enable engagement with our staff and networks to continue to develop an inclusive culture.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Our Partners: Working together</p> <p>We will work with external partners to develop strategies that enable effective service provision to our communities.</p> <p>We will collaborate across our own business functions and staff networks to better build equality and inclusion into our policies, processes and practices to ensure inclusion and our ethical principals are at the heart of everything we do.</p>

5. The report covers the period from the 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and can be found in Appendix 1.

Workforce Diversity Summary

Sex

6. 19% of the workforce are female which is an increase from 18% in 2021-2022. However, male employees continue to make up the majority of the workforce. Women are mainly under-represented in operational roles (9%), although female representation has increased by 1% from last year. The proportion of women appointed into operational roles has doubled this year, with 18% female appointments, in comparison to 9% last year. This difference is due to the increase in the number of females appointed to On-Call roles, which may be attributed to the work of the On-Call Marketing Project and practical support provided to female applicants in preparation for the physical tests.

Gender Reassignment

7. Information in relation to transgender employees is highly sensitive and for data protection reasons this data is not currently published.

Ethnicity

8. 5% of the workforce identify as belonging to an ethnic minority group (including White minority groups) – a slight decrease from 6% in the previous year. This is the first reporting year that the 2021 Census has been used for comparator data and it is evident that the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire have become more ethnically diverse since the 2011 Census. 10% of the

population now identify as belonging to an ethnic minority group (including White minority groups)¹, an increase from 7%.

Sexual Orientation

9. 3% of employees have declared their sexual orientation as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual, which remains the same proportion as last year. This protected group continues to have lower levels of disclosure when compared to other groups, although our disclosure rate has continued to increase, with a current declaration rate of 70%. This is slightly above the national average for FRS staff in England (68%²).

Disability

10. 2% of the workforce have declared a disability which has been the case for the previous 3 years. Although conditions such as Dyslexia may meet the definition of disability in the Equality Act 2010, individuals with Dyslexia and other similar learning differences do not necessarily consider it a disability. This may go some way to explain why our workforce disability profile figures continue to be low.

Religion or Belief

11. 36% of the workforce have declared their religion or belief as Christian, followed by 32% with no religion or belief at all. The proportion of other faiths when combined account for 1% of the workforce.

Age

12. The largest proportion of our overall workforce is aged between 36 and 45 years (29%), which is unchanged from last year. The average age of our workforce continues to be 43 years.
13. Data continues to be monitored relating to other protected characteristics such as pregnancy and maternity, with 2% of female employees on maternity leave during 2022-2023. No employees opted to take shared parental leave.

Gender Pay Gap Reporting

14. The gender pay gap is the difference between the average (mean or median) earnings of men and women across a workforce. The Service is required to report on:
 - i) Mean gender pay in hourly pay** – the percentage difference between the mean average hourly rates of men and women's pay.
 - ii) Median gender pay gap in hourly pay** – the percentage difference between the midpoints in the ranges of men and women's pay.
 - iii) Mean bonus gender pay gap**³
 - iv) Median bonus gender pay gap**³
 - v) Proportion of men and women receiving a bonus payment**³

¹ Office of National Statistics (2021) Census

² Home Office (2023) Fire statistics data tables - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

³ We do not pay bonuses to staff and therefore do not provide calculations relating to points 3, 4 and 5.

vi) Proportion of men and women in each pay quartile – calculated by dividing employees into four even groups according to their pay. The upper quartile with the highest level of pay and the lower quartile with the lowest levels of pay.

15. All employees who were deemed to be full-pay relevant employees at 31 March 2023 were included and the figures are based on established contracted posts within the Service.

The Gender Pay Gap

16. The mean gender pay gap shows the difference between male and female hourly earnings. On average, female employees earn 5% less than male employees in the Service. The pay gap has reduced from 7% in 2021-2022. It is important to note that men and women in our organisation undertaking the same role are paid the same.
17. The median pay gap (the midpoint in the range of pay) for female employees is 5% lower than for male employees, an increase from 3% in 2021-2022.
18. The pay quartile data shows a higher proportion of male employees across all quartiles and reflects the Service's current workforce profile. The quartile data shows there are increases in the proportion of females within the upper and middle quartiles, which reflects the increase in females appointed to higher paid roles and a decrease in the number of females leaving the Service.
19. Men and women in our organisation undertaking the same role are paid the same. The gender pay gap continues to arise because there are essentially more men occupying higher-level salaried positions within the organisation than women, although we are seeing an increase in the representation of women in more senior leadership roles within the organisation.
20. The equality data helps the Service to identify potential key areas of focus including evidence of any pay gaps. The key findings from the data indicate a continued disparity in the diversity profile of our workforce primarily in relation to the representation of women in operational roles.

Equality Objectives Progress Q1 – Q2 2023-2024

21. The Service continues to strive to create a diverse workforce that is truly representative of the communities that we serve, where people of all backgrounds can thrive. Good progress has been made in support of our Equality Objectives and wider People Strategy and is summarised as follows:

Equality Objective 1: Our Organisation – Leadership and Corporate Commitment

- **Organisational communication**
SLB have promoted numerous organisational EDI communication pieces, including videos on Workplace Culture to accompany the Culture Audit, the Core Code of Ethics and Challenging Inappropriate Behaviours.

- **Core Code of Ethics**
The Code of Ethics continues to be embedded through the development of interactive ethical dilemma workshops to be facilitated by managers with their teams and the production of a refreshed staff Code of Ethics booklet.
- **Positive Action Statement of Intent**
This statement of intent published in June 2023, provides a framework for the organisation to embed the principles of positive action into our recruitment activities and workforce planning. The aim is to encourage underrepresented groups to engage with recruitment, career progression and prevention activities.

Equality Objective 2: Our Communities – Understand, engage and build good relationships

- **Inclusive EDI events**
Local Pride events at Malvern and Worcester were supported as an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to inclusivity, highlighting the Service as a potential career choice and promoting Home Fire Safety Visits. The Service was also represented at Birmingham Pride, as part of a tri-service attendance from the Police, Fire and Ambulance services from across the region.
- **Community contacts**
A central Community Group Directory has been produced in collaboration between HR and Prevention, enabling a cohesive engagement and consultative approach across departments to community groups.

Equality Objective 3: Our People – Develop, engage and understand

- **EDI training programme**
A bespoke Service-wide EDI training programme commenced in April 2023 provided by ioda Ltd as part of mandatory training for all staff. The first tranche of workshops “Inclusive Leadership” have been delivered with excellent feedback received from delegates. The next phase of delivery is focused on “Inclusive Behaviours”. The current programme is due to conclude in Summer 2024.
- **Code of Conduct**
A new Code of Conduct was developed and published to all staff which outlines our expected professional standards and is based on the Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard.
- **Staff Survey**
The results from the Staff Survey, completed in early 2023, have been considered and communicated Service-wide with a pre-recorded webinar, and a staff survey report.

- **Practical and Reasonable Adjustments Toolkit**
This new toolkit, developed with feedback from our Neurodiverse Staff Network, provides guidance for managers on implementing reasonable adjustments for employees and job applicants as part of our inclusive approach.
- **Menopause in the Workplace Guidance**
Refreshed menopause guidance has been developed following learning gained by staff who attended the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) Menopause Conference.
- **Staff Networks**
Women@HWFIRE supported the Wholetime Firefighter recruitment campaign and a fitness programme for female candidates. Members have also participated in the national Women in the Fire Service (WFS) Development weekend, as well as forming a national women's team that climbed Snowdon, raising money for the Fire Fighter's Charity. The Chair of Women@HWFIRE, Group Commander Deborah Davies was awarded the Dany Cotton Inspiring Leadership Award.

The Neurodiverse Staff Network has continued to grow, with meetings held quarterly. Awareness communications have been published in support of Dyslexia Awareness Week.

The Service also attended the newly formed UK Fire Pride Network - the national LGBT+ Fire network.

Conclusion

22. The Service continues to make good progress against its Equality Objectives which serves as a testament to its commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive organisation. The progress achieved demonstrates tangible results, from an increase in representation in leadership roles to the implementation of inclusive policies and practices. As we move forward, our focus remains on enhancing EDI within the Service in order to continue to provide the best possible service to our communities.
23. Members are asked to note the contents of the Equality & Gender Pay Gap Report 2022-2023 and approve its publication on the Service website. In addition, the gender pay gap information will be submitted to the government reporting website as per the Regulations.

Corporate Considerations

<p>Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no resource implications arising from publishing the report. • Implications of championing and embedding equality into mainstream business may incur financial and management support for implementation, dissemination of resources and consideration of different ways of working. • The report helps the Service meet its statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.
<p>Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRMP • Core organisational strategies • People Strategy • Core Code of Ethics ad Code of Conduct • Positive Action Statement of Intent
<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to EDI may damage our reputation as an employer of choice and attract public, media and political scrutiny. • Publishing equality information on at least an annual basis is a requirement of the PSED. • Publishing our gender pay gap calculations is a requirement of the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.
<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing engagement with staff networks and Representative Bodies continues to take place.
<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As this is an update report, no people impact assessment is required. However, any actions arising from the implementation of the equality outcomes may require individual assessment.
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Equality and Gender Pay Gap Report 2022-2023



Equality & Gender Pay Gap Report 2022-23

1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



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Foreword

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) is fully committed to meeting the diverse needs of the communities we serve. Building a diverse and inclusive workforce remains our priority, whilst striving to grow, learn and develop our culture to continually improve our behaviours at work, underpinned by the Core Code of Ethics. This report outlines the work we have undertaken over the year 2022/2023, as well as our statutory duty to report on the following:

Monitoring of Equality Information

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector Equality Duty. The Equality Duty requires public bodies with 150 or more employees to publish information at least annually about their employees, furthering the aims of the Equality Duty and to consider how activities affect people who have protected characteristics.

Gender Pay Gap

The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 require employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations every year showing the average difference in pay between their male and female employees (known as the gender pay gap). **It is important to note that, our gender pay gap does not stem from paying men and women differently for the same or equivalent work.**

What is clear, however, is that our gender pay gap is affected by the roles in which men and women currently work within the Service and the associated salaries that these various roles attract.

Declaration

I can confirm that the Gender Pay Gap data included within this equality report is accurate and has been calculated according to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.



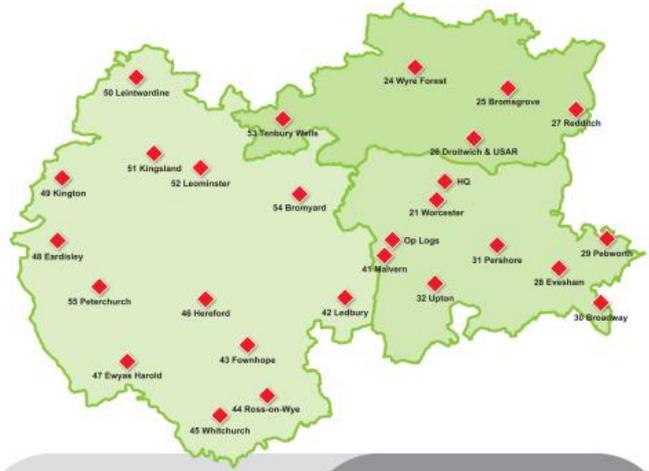
Jonathon Pryce

Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive

Our Purpose, Vision and Mission

Who We Are

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service receives approximately 17,000 emergency calls each year requesting assistance at a wide variety of incidents, including property and countryside fires, road traffic collisions, collapsed structures, water rescues, hazardous materials and animal rescues. We attend on average 7,366 incidents each year – that equates to 142 incidents every week across the counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.



25
Fire
Stations



41
Fire
Engines



Purpose

Why we are here

Keeping people safe from fire and other risks. Responding efficiently and effectively to incidents and emergencies.

Vision

What we want to do

Saving More Lives: Building on our successes to continue to make a difference, improve lives and help secure resilient communities.

Mission

What we do every day

As one professional team we will work hard every day to deliver high quality, sustainable services to our communities.

Our Fire Stations are staffed by a mix of 'Wholetime' Firefighters – operating on a full-time basis and providing an immediate response, and On-Call Firefighters who live or work locally and are available within five minutes should they be needed. All our Fire Stations respond to emergencies 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Some Stations are crewed by Wholetime Firefighters as well as On-Call colleagues. We also operate three 'day-crewed' stations that have Firefighters operating Wholetime during the day and On-Call overnight. The remaining Stations are all staffed solely by On-Call Firefighters.

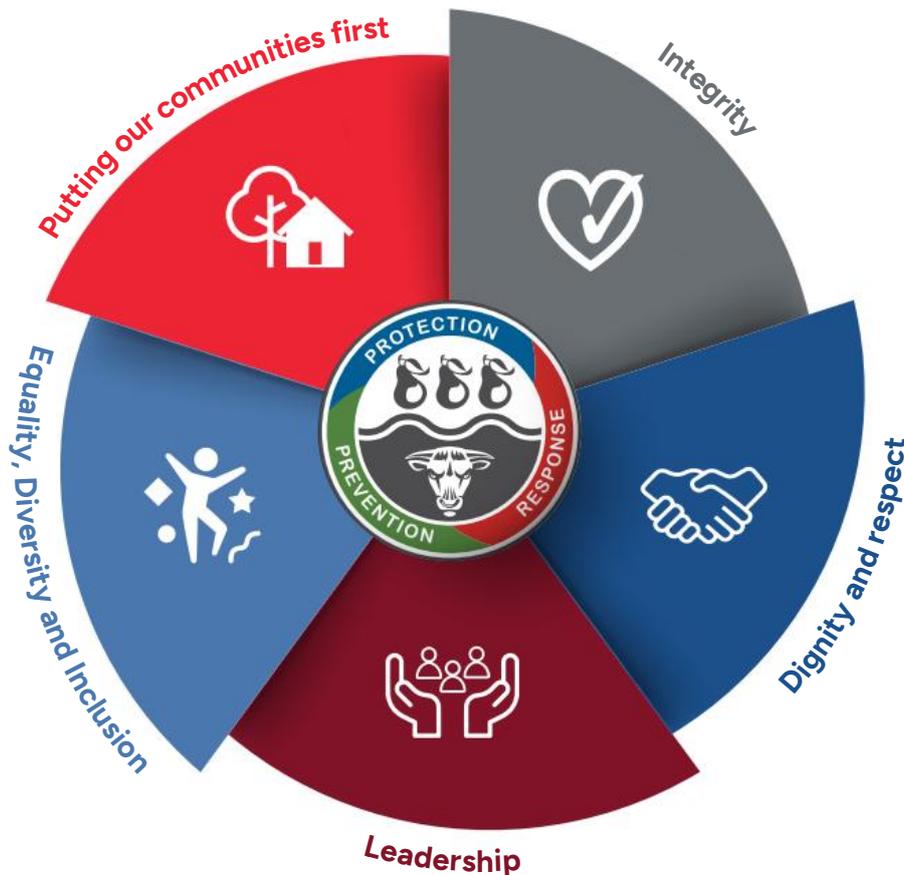
Our Service is supported by our Fire Control team who answer emergency calls and deal with mobilising, communications and other activities and also our Support teams in our corporate areas such as ICT, HR & Development and Payroll, Operational Logistics and Finance.

Our core purpose, vision and mission are what drives and motivates our people to make the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire safer. To do this effectively we need to understand and appreciate the diversity of the communities we serve and have a workforce that is inclusive; where our people fully represent and understand those communities.

Our Ethical Principles

We are guided by the [Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services \(FRS\)](#) in England.

The Core Code of Ethics sets out five ethical principles, which provide a basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour. These principles are our guiding set of values and help us to improve organisational culture and workforce diversity, ensuring that communities are supported in the best way.



Putting our communities first 

We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.

Integrity 

We act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.

Dignity and respect 

We make decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

Leadership 

As positive role models, we are accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 

We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations and celebrate difference.

The Statutory Context

The Equality Act should make it easier for individuals to be aware of their rights under the law and for services and organisations to meet their legal responsibilities. The purpose of the Act is to ensure that everyone, whether at work or in using a service has the right to be treated fairly. It protects people from discrimination on the basis of certain characteristics. These are known as the nine protected characteristics¹.



Age

A person belonging to a particular age or range of ages.



Disability

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day- to-day activities.



Gender reassignment

Where a person undergoes, or proposes to undergo, a process of reassigning their sex.



Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage and civil partnerships are legally recognised relationships between a same-sex or opposite-sex couple.



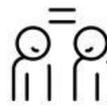
Sex

A man or a woman.



Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context.



Race

A race is a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnicity or national origins.



Religion or belief

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.



Sexual orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

¹ Definitions provided are aligned to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) (2021).

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** is a duty on public authorities like Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority to consider how policies or decisions affect people with protected characteristics

General duty

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination; harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Specific duty

- Publish equality information at least once a year to show how we are complying with the equality duty.
- Prepare and publish equality objectives every four years.



Our Service Area

Our Service area extends from the metropolitan borders of the West Midlands to the rural southern borderland between England and Wales and covers two counties; Worcestershire in the east and Herefordshire to the west. The infographic gives a summary of what the population of Herefordshire and Worcestershire looks like. This helps us to see how reflective we are as a workforce, in comparison to the communities we serve.

Population

790,709

total estimated population of Herefordshire and Worcestershire



Sex

49% male

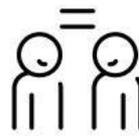
51% female



Age

176,827

people aged 66+ years



Race

10.18%

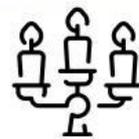
belong to an ethnic minority group (including White minority groups)



Disability

143,322

have a disability or condition which limits their day to day activities



Religion or belief

53% Christian

38% no religion or belief



Gender

Reassignment
0.5%

of people in England and Wales identified as a gender different from the sex they were registered with at birth



Sexual

Orientation
2%

of people over 16 identified as LGB+

Reporting

The information in this report has been compiled from data provided voluntarily by our staff or applicants and covers the protected characteristics.

The data reported here is anonymised which means that a person cannot be identified from the information provided. We may only provide percentages in relation to the overall workforce for some protected groups in order to effectively anonymise, particularly where numbers of people with that characteristic are numerically low, potentially making it easier to identify individuals.

The data in this report covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Where possible, an arrows shows where there is a negative change, no change or positive change from last year's report 2021/2022.



Our Equality Objectives

Key highlights 2022/23

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to develop and publish equality objectives at least every four years. As part of the Service's on-going work and commitment to equality, we formally set our [equality objectives for 2021-2025](#) in July 2021, which are aligned with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan (2020-2025). A summary of work against these new Equality Objectives is as follows:

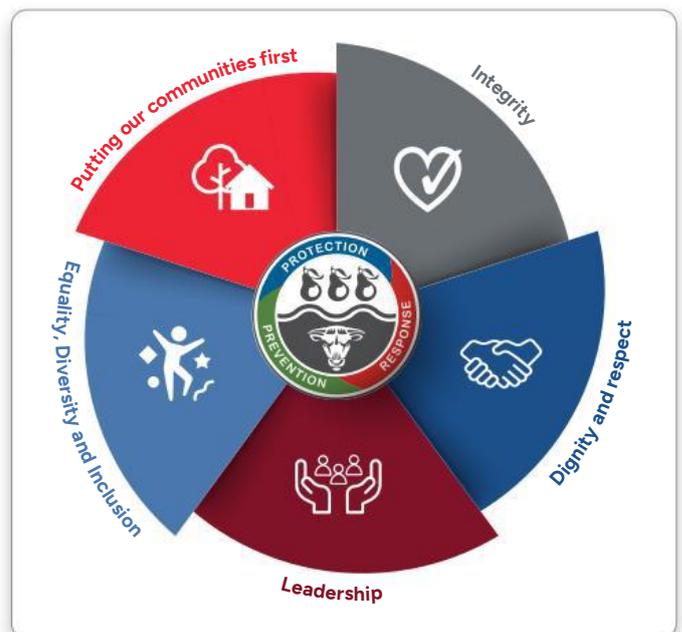
Our Organisation

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

Our leaders will provide visible leadership to ensure our people, our partners and our communities see the personal commitment to inclusion. We will maximise the transparency of our organisation so our activities can be scrutinised and we can be held accountable.

- Our Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) continued to meet their own **equality objectives** to demonstrate their personal commitment to mainstreaming diversity and inclusion practices across the organisation. SLB members have shared numerous articles over the past year raising awareness and championing inclusive topics, events and celebrations, such as Ramadan, Pride and Neurodiversity. SLB members have also represented the organisation at national conferences facilitated by the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA), along with a cross section of staff.
- Work to further embed the use of **people (equality) impact assessments (PIAs)** across the Service has continued with training, accessible guidance for staff and a quality assurance process to ensure the consistency and quality of each assessment. This supports us to ensure that our policies, procedures or services do not have an adverse impact on different groups of people.

- An **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy** has been published to set out how we demonstrate due regard to the aims and requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. It also demonstrates how we are fully committed to developing and supporting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion in our workforce and in the planning, design and delivery of our prevention, protection and emergency response services.
- We have adopted the **National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) Core Code of Ethics**, which replaces the Service values, and outlines ethical principles of expected inclusive behaviour. Extensive work has been completed to embed these throughout the organisation, overseen by the Culture & Ethics Steering Group, which is a cross functional team with representatives from across HWFRS.



- A comprehensive independent **cultural audit** commenced in early 2023, in line with our equality, diversity and inclusion workstreams. The outcome directly informs the Service wide Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Training programme, as well as recommendations being incorporated into our wider plans and strategies.
- A new **speaking up service** has been launched, to provide staff with an additional mechanism to report workplace issues or concerns, which is external, independent and confidential.



- Appointment of an Inclusion & Organisational Development Manager, which is a new role to promote and increase diversity within HWFRS and embed a culture of inclusion and cohesion across the organisation.



Our Communities

Understand, engage and build good relationships

We will better understand our communities by ensuring we put in place systems that enable the collection, collation and analysis of community data and information. We will enhance our engagement with our communities to foster good relationships and understand the community priorities.



PREVENTION

- The NFCC have published **Equality of Access** documents which draw together research, statistics and information to support fire services to engage with community groups who may not normally engage with our sector for a variety of reasons. Our Prevention team focus on specific themes based on the documents each quarter, working with crews to find ways of improving access to our services to all sections of the community.
- Our Prevention team have linked with local partners to promote **accessible services** to communities. The new Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) leaflet has been produced in a variety of formats including large print and multiple languages reflective our communities.
- We have continued to support community events, such as our local **Pride** celebrations. These events have provided great opportunities to demonstrate our commitment to inclusivity and engage with our communities, to provide safety advice, advertise HFSVs and promote working or volunteering for the service.

Our Equality Objectives

Key highlights 2022/23 (continued)

- Each fire station has an **NFCC Campaign Calendar**, which also includes notable EDI events and key religious and cultural festivals, such as Chinese New Year, Diwali, etc. so that key fire safety messages can be promoted at appropriate times for all sections of our community.
- Our **Fire Cadets**, a uniformed youth organisation, was formally launched during this year, welcoming young people aged 13-17 years. Over a quarter of the cadets are girls (28%). The cadets take part in a structured training programme where they learn a variety of skills and practical exercises that focus on Fire Service activities, prevention activities and social responsibility.



YOUR
IMPACT

Better young drivers.
Safer passengers.
Confident choices.

- The **Your Impact** initiative is a multi-agency scheme aimed at reducing death and serious injury amongst young road users in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The aim is to provide students with the education, tools and confidence to make the right choices using the road to first become better passengers. The initiative involves using virtual reality headsets to show scene reconstructions, as a way of delivering key messages. The event is delivered to mainstream schools as well as schools supporting students with particular needs. Alternative media options will also be available so that as many young people as possible can access the programme, making it very inclusive.
- Other young engagement activities include **Crucial Crew** and **Young Citizens Challenge**, aimed at raising awareness and targeting young people by educating them on water, fire and road safety as well as arson and hoax calls.
- We have regularly engaged with our communities via our **social media platforms**, to promote topical safety messages, promote working or volunteering for us, as well as highlighting key Service events or activities.

Our People

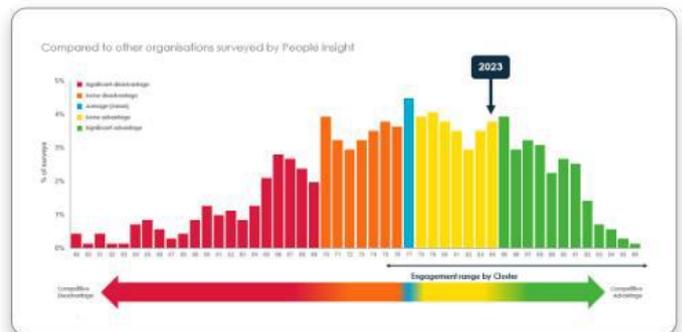
Develop, engage and understand

We will develop our people to better understand diversity and inclusion. We will better understand our workforce composition through our workforce data. We will create an inclusive culture where our people feel able to be themselves.

We will put in place effective strategies to enable engagement with our staff and networks to continue to develop an inclusive culture.

- A Service-wide **EDI Training Programme** was tendered and awarded to an external specialist provider. This comprehensive training programme will enhance the workforce's understanding of the importance of EDI in the workplace and their responsibility in supporting HWFRS in being an employer of choice with a truly inclusive workplace.
- A revised annual **Appraisal** process was launched, which is aligned to the Core Code of Ethics and assesses staff performance against the ethical principle of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

- A **Staff Engagement Survey** was carried out in early 2023, with an excellent participation rate (65%) and an exceptional overall employee engagement score (84%). The results demonstrated that HWFRS is considered a good place to work, creating a positive employee experience, with staff who are highly committed and proud to work for us. The majority of staff feel that they belong at HWFRS, including employees from under represented staff groups.



- A **wealth of EDI information** is available for staff to access including community profile data, supplemented by regular awareness campaigns with opportunities to attend learning and development sessions, such as a Race Equality Week webinar facilitated by West Mercia Police.
- Highly successful **Menopause Awareness** workshops were facilitated for female members of staff, to develop knowledge and understanding in a safe, supportive environment.
- A communication campaign was launched with videos and presentations to ensure all staff had an in-depth understanding of our inclusive recruitment approach and **positive action** initiatives being utilised for this year's Wholetime Firefighter recruitment process.

Our Equality Objectives

Key highlights 2022/23 (continued)

- A **Critical Conversation** workshop was facilitated for female members of staff who wanted support to develop confidence and practical skills in dealing with difficult conversations.
- **Dyslexia Awareness training** has increased awareness across the organisation which has led to a growing number of individuals seeking assessments and support.
- We have maintained corporate membership of [AFSA](#), which is nationally recognised in our sector as a respected source of knowledge as well as a major champion of inclusion.
- We continue to be corporate members of [Women in the Fire Service UK](#) to demonstrate our commitment to support gender equality in the Fire and Rescue Service.



Our Partners

Working together

We will work with external partners to develop strategies that enable effective service provision to our communities. We will collaborate across our own business functions and staff networks to better build equality and inclusion into our policies, processes and practices to ensure inclusion and our values are at the heart of everything we do.



- The **Neurodiverse Staff Network** was launched, which aims to raise awareness and support staff who are neurodiverse. The network is ever growing in members, and is proving to be a real asset. Members have attended the national Dyslexia Show, provided input to new recruits and given feedback on proposed initiatives.
- Members from our **women's network**, Women@HWFire attended a Leadership and Networking Army Away Day with colleagues from West Mercia Police and other Fire and Rescue Services, to network and build leadership and teamworking skills.



Practical Firefighter taster session February 2023

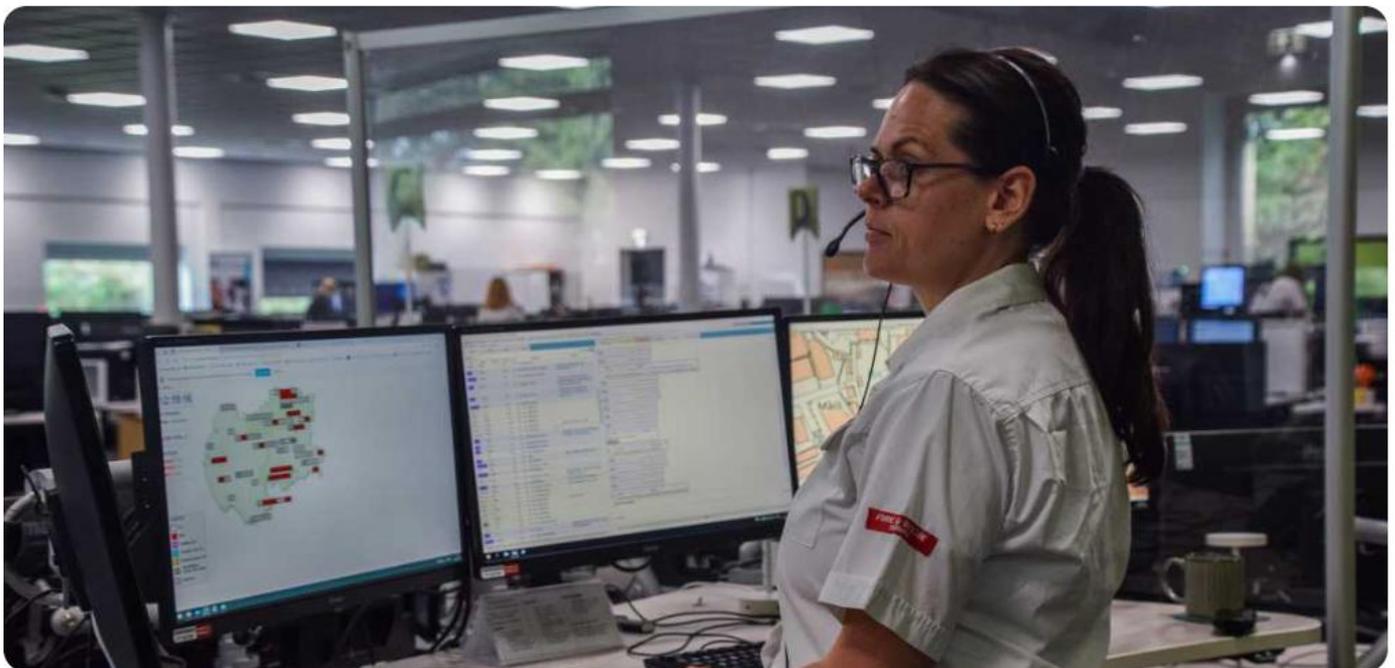
- Women@HWFire also collaborated with colleagues from West Mercia Police's women's network, to celebrate **International Women's Day**. The groups met at the commemorative flower garden at Hindlip Hall, where one flower has been planted for every female employee of both organisations.
- Representatives from Women@HWFire also attended the first regional women's network meeting, along with our partners from Shropshire, Staffordshire, West Midlands and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Services.
- A number of staff have volunteered to be **EDI Allies** and champion EDI within HWFRS. Members have been offered opportunities to attend learning events, with representatives attending the AFSA Summer Conference.
- **Inclusive recruitment** practices were further embedded, to ensure processes attract a more diverse talent pool. A Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment campaign was launched with targeted marketing, informative and practical taster sessions, and a female fitness programme, with many aspects supported by our staff networks.
- We continue to be part of **Hate Incident Partnership** forums in both Herefordshire and Worcestershire, which helps us to understand issues and support initiatives where possible.

Our Workforce Profile

Our workforce stands at 764 (as at 31 March 2023) – this figure is the number of total posts occupied. In analysing our workforce data, secondary contracts are included and this is done in order to reflect the workforce data submitted to the Home Office as part of our annual Fire Statistics return. Otherwise, the data would disregard secondary contracts which make up a portion of our establishment and also helps us to identify any potential trends in particular workforce groups. This also helps us to give a more accurate view of how the diversity of our employees reflects that of the communities we serve.

Our Service is made up of four main workforce groups and for the purposes of this report are defined as follows, in line with Home Office definitions:

- 31%** Wholetime Firefighters  **Wholetime:** A full-time Firefighter, regardless of rank.
- 47%** On-Call Firefighters  **On-Call:** A Firefighter responding when required during their “on-call” hours, regardless of rank.
- 4%** Fire Control  **Fire Control:** A Uniformed member of staff working in our Control Centre to answer emergency calls and deal with mobilising, communications and related activities, regardless of rank.
- 18%** Support Staff  **Support:** A member of staff who provides a specialist professional, technical or administrative support service. It includes, for example, administrative roles, analytical support, finance, vehicle maintenance, etc.



Our Workforce Profile

Our workforce at a glance

29%

of employees are aged 36-45 years
– the largest proportion
of the workforce
(the same age group as last year)

2%

of the workforce
declared a disability

5%

of employees belong to an ethnic
minority (incl White minority groups)

↓
2021/22: 6%

19%

of the workforce
are female

↑
2021/22: 18%

9%

of operational staff
are female

↑
2021/22: 8%

36%

of the workforce are Christian
– the largest religious grouping
in the workforce

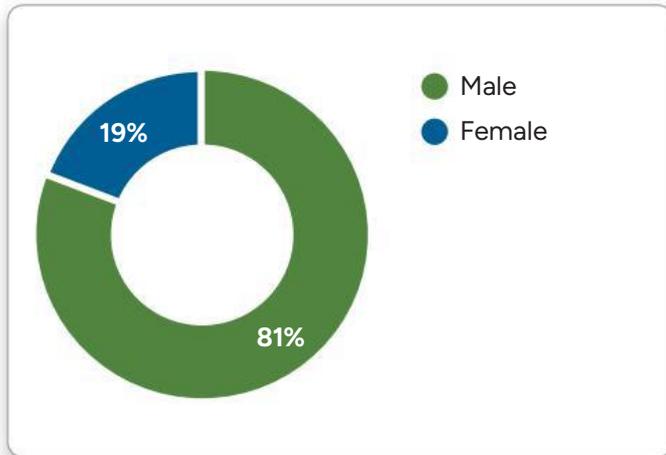
3%

of employees declared their sexual
orientation as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual

↔
2021/22: no change

Our Workforce Profile

Profile of employees by sex

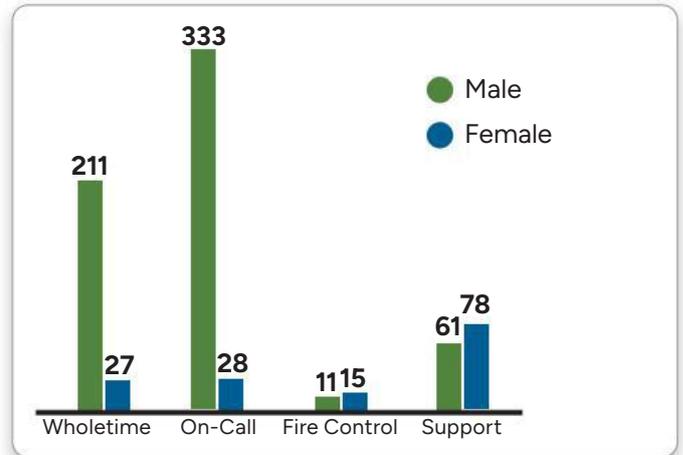


Male employees make up the majority of our workforce – the total distribution of female employees across our Service is 19%, an improvement from last year (18%).

The percentage of women in our Wholetime workforce group has also seen a slight increase from last year’s figure (10%) and now stands at 11%, which is higher than the national 9% average for Fire and Rescue Services.

The percentage of women in our On-Call workforce group has increased over the last 2 years, up from 6% in March 2021 to 8% in March 2023. Our Support workforce group continues to be fairly balanced, with women making up 56% of this group.

The Service’s workforce is not currently reflective of the local population of Herefordshire and Worcestershire which stands at 51% female and 49% male across all ages². Of the local population, 59% of males and 58% of females are aged between 18 and the current pensionable age (66). This under-representation is a trend across the fire sector as a whole.



We continue to work to address this imbalance, specifically the representation of women in operational roles. This year’s Wholetime Firefighter Campaign presented an opportunity to attract more women at entry level. Taster sessions and a fitness programme were some of the positive action activities implemented, resulting in 16% of applications from women. The Service also embarked on an On-Call Recruitment and Marketing project whose activities may have contributed to the increase in the proportion of female applicants to the On-Call Firefighter role.

We recognise that monitoring numbers of transgender employees is highly sensitive and for data protection reasons we do not currently publish this data.

² [Census – Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Our Workforce Profile

Profile of employees by ethnicity

	White						
	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Mixed or Multiple ethnicities	Other ethnic groups	White British Irish	Other white ethnic groups	Prefer not to say
Wholetime	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	95.4%	1.3%	2.1%
On-Call	0.3%	0.3%	2.5%	0.0%	90.0%	3%	3.9%
Fire Control	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	96.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Support	0.0%	0.7%	1.4%	0.7%	91.4%	1.4%	4.3%
Total	0.3%	0.3%	1.8%	0.1%	92.1%	2.1%	3.3%

This year, we have improved the quality of our data collection and aligned to the 2021 Census ethnicity classifications. We have combined and presented this data via the five high-level ethnic groups, which provides more insights into our workforce ethnic profile than in prior years. We have provided further details in the White ethnic category, to identify the minority groups within this ethnicity³.

The profile of employees identifying as belonging to an ethnic minority group (including White minority groups) is 5% which is a slight decrease from last year (6%). The latest community data from the 2021 Census shows that our local communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire have become more ethnically diverse. 10% of the population identified as belonging to an ethnic minority group (including White minority groups)⁴, an increase from 7% in the 2011 census.

When considering ethnicity via the high-level ethnic groups, 2.49% of our employees identified as belonging to an Asian, Black, Mixed or 'Other' ethnic group combined. When comparing our data to the latest census information, 5.43% of our local communities reflect this ethnic profile.

The changing local demographics has impacted on how reflective we are of our communities. There are positive indications that our ethnicity profile will improve, as 10% of applicants this year were from an ethnic minority background and 8% of new appointments identified as being from an ethnic minority group. We will strive to increase the diversity of our workforce by continuing our work to engage with communities and attract people from all ethnic groups when we are recruiting.

Our employee declaration rate for ethnicity remains high with 96% of staff recording their ethnic background. In comparison, 93% of Fire Services employees nationally declared their ethnicity⁵.

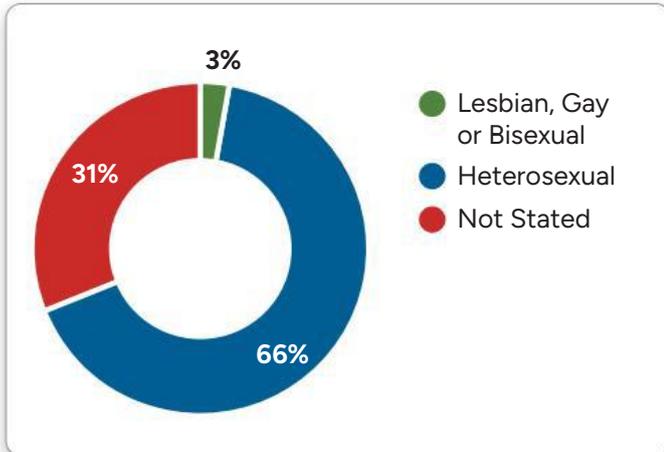
³ White minority ethnic groups can include groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.

⁴ Office of National Statistics (2021) Census

⁵ Home Office (2023) [Fire statistics data tables – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-data-tables)

Our Workforce Profile

Profile of employees by sexual orientation



The proportion of staff across the workforce who identify as Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) has remained at 3%.

For data protection reasons we have combined the categories of staff and provided them as a percentage only. Recent census data relating to sexual orientation

indicates that 2% of our local communities identify as LGB⁶. Home Office data indicates that 4.2% of all staff employed by Fire and Rescue Authorities across England identify as LGB⁷.

The declaration rate for sexual orientation in our Service has seen a continual increase over the last few years, up from 65% in 2021 to 70% this year. National FRS data shows that 68% of all FRS staff in England recorded their sexual orientation, so our declaration rate is slightly above the national figure⁷.

The Service continues to support local Pride events, taking the opportunity to promote working or volunteering for our organisation, and home fire safety visits. Attendance at these events show our communities, and our employees that we are committed to inclusion.

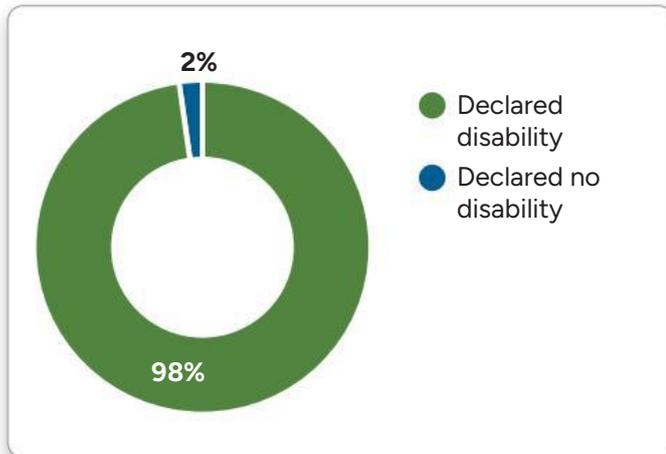


⁶ Office of National Statistics (2021) Census

⁷ Home Office (2023) [Fire statistics data tables – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-data-tables)

Our Workforce Profile

Profile of employees by disability



The disability profile across the workforce is 2%, which has remained unchanged for the last 3 years. For data protection reasons we have combined these categories and provided them as a percentage only.

Although conditions such as dyslexia may meet the definition of disability in the Equality Act 2010, individuals with dyslexia and other types of neurodiversity do not necessarily consider it a disability.

As at 31 March 2023, 5% of our workforce were recorded as having dyslexia, increasing from 4% last year. The British Dyslexia Association estimates that 10% of the population is dyslexic, so we could reasonably estimate that we have a greater proportion of our workforce with a disability⁸.

Awareness and support for staff with all types of neurodiversity continues to build and develop. 2022 saw the launch of our Neurodiverse Staff Network which to date, has 30 members from all areas of the Service. The Network's senior sponsor is the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, who actively supports and encourages the work of the group. The network's activities are centred around promoting a workplace where everyone can reach their full potential. This has had a positive effect, with members of staff commenting that they once felt progression was out of reach for them, but they are now striving to move forward in their careers.

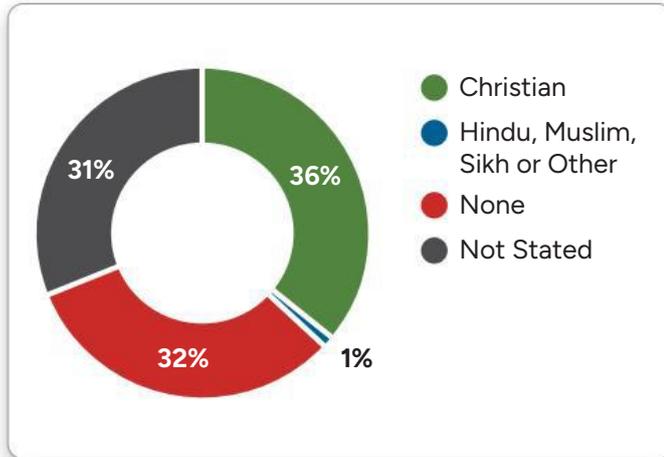
We continue to strive to improve our understanding of neurodiversity, reduce stigma and better support neurodivergent staff in the workplace. Further awareness training for managers is being planned which aligns to the Service's ethos in having a workplace where everyone can thrive.

Our processes in identifying reasonable adjustments that could be implemented to provide appropriate support for any individuals who need them, are now well embedded.

⁸ British Dyslexia Association (2019) Dyslexia

Our Workforce Profile

Profile of employees by religion or belief



Christianity is the largest religious grouping within our Service at 36% (an increase from 34% last year) and this is followed by 32% of staff with no religion or belief at all (a rise from 31%). The proportion of other faiths when combined account for 1% of the workforce.

When comparing our communities, Christianity is the largest religious grouping at 53%, with 38% having no religion or belief. 3% of the local population are recorded as following five main religions: Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh plus a further 'Other' category for other religions⁹.

The percentage of staff who declare their religion or belief (or as having no religion or belief) has continually increased over the last 3 years. This year, the figure has risen by 2 percentage points.

We continue to offer a Chaplaincy service that works across faith and belief boundaries and offers support to everyone by supplementing our existing staff wellbeing services.

Our Workforce Profile

Profile of employees by pregnancy, maternity and marital status

We collect and monitor data relating to other protected characteristics such as pregnancy, maternity and marital status. 2% of women employed by the Service were on maternity leave during 2022/23.

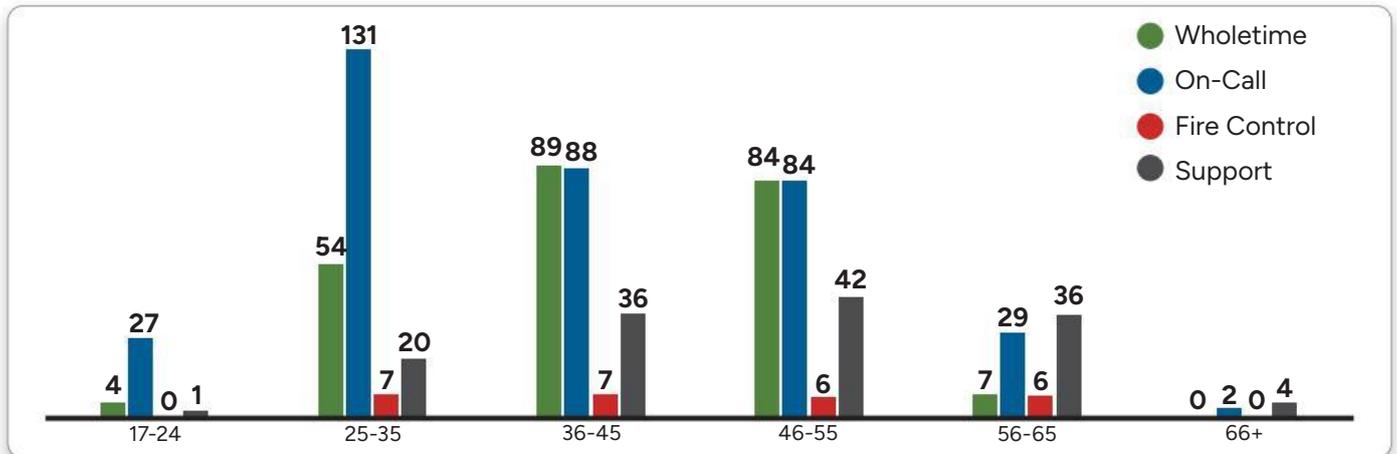
No staff opted to take shared parental leave and nationally, there continues to be a low take-up rate of this type of family friendly leave¹⁰. At the end of March 2023, 34% of our employees were in a marriage or civil partnership.

⁹ Office of National Statistics (2021) Census

¹⁰ [UK Parliament \(2021\) Paternity Leave – Questions and Answers](#)

Our Workforce Profile

Profile of employees by age



The largest proportion of our workforce is aged between 36 and 45 years (29% of the entire workforce). This is the same age group as last year. The average age of our workforce continues to be 43 years.

The largest proportion of Wholetime staff are aged between 36 and 45 years. This is a change after 5 years of the 46-55 age bracket being predominant for this work group.

The majority of On-Call staff are aged between 25 and 35 years, which is on a par with last year's data.

In Fire Control, the age of staff is fairly evenly spread across the groups, from 25 to 65. Similarly, the majority of support staff are

also spread across these age groups, with the highest proportion in the 46-55 group (30%).

The UK population is growing larger and getting older. When broken down by age, there are three important groupings; children and young people aged 0-15 years, people of a working age between 16 and 65 years, and people of a pensionable age (aged 66 years and over). The national trend shows that the proportion of those of a working age is continuing to shrink, whilst those of a pensionable age is increasing.

Applications for Employment and Promotion

At a glance

946

total number of applications received

10%

of all applicants are from an ethnic minority background (incl White minority groups)



2021/22: no change

24%

of external applicants for Wholetime promotion were women



2021/22: 13%

23%

of internal applicants for Wholetime promotion were women



2021/22: 9%

11%

of applicants for On-Call Firefighter vacancies are from an ethnic minority (incl White minority groups)



2021/22: 5%

22%

of applicants for On-Call Firefighter vacancies are female



2021/22: 15%

Applications for Employment and Promotion

Our vacancies are advertised through our [website](#), our social media channels, our internal staff Bulletin and a regional public sector specific jobs board – [WM Jobs](#).

We also advertise positions through the [National Fire Chiefs Council](#) website, [AFSA](#) and [Women in the Fire Service UK](#). We may also use specialist recruitment channels for identified “hard-to-fill” vacancies.

Applicants are asked to complete a diversity monitoring form and submit this with their job application securely and confidentially through our online recruitment portal. This information is not disclosed to recruiting managers, so shortlisting and selection decisions are based on vacancy-related information demonstrated by the applicant.

We do not set specific recruitment targets in relation to protected groups and appointments are made solely on merit.

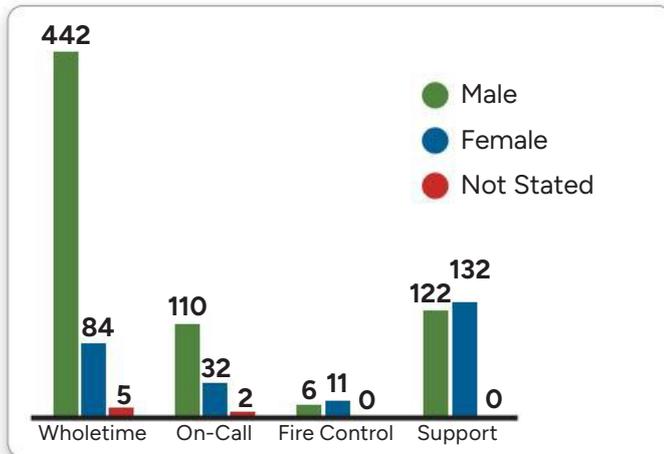
Our recruitment and selection processes are closely monitored to ensure all applicants are treated fairly and consistently in line with all legal, statutory and good practice requirements.

For the purposes of this report, a promotion is considered a change in role to a higher grade, achieved through a promotion process. Substantive promotion processes are open to both external and internal applicants, therefore the figures below include internal and external applications. This is so we can produce holistic, meaningful data and better monitor the conversion rates of applications to appointments for all candidates by protected group.



Applications for Employment and Promotion

By sex



During the year, a variety of support staff roles were advertised, our ongoing recruitment model for On-Call Firefighter vacancies continued, and a Wholetime Firefighter Campaign was launched.

For support staff applications, there was a fairly even gender balance with 52% of females and 48% of males attracted to apply.

In respect of Fire Control positions, the majority of applications received were from women (65%).

For all operational roles (Wholetime roles and On-Call Firefighter applications), women accounted for 17% of the overall applications, which is a significant rise from last year's figure of 11%. Analysing this further, 16% of applications for Wholetime roles were from women – up from 9% last year.

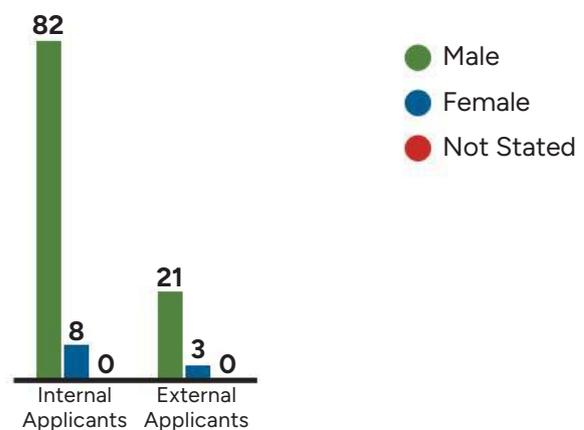
This rise could be attributed to the work done in the lead up to our Wholetime Firefighter Campaign. Women were specifically targeted to consider applying for the role of firefighter. As well as taster sessions (open to everyone), women were offered to join a fitness programme, designed to help them prepare for the physical elements of the selection process.

There has been a significant rise in the number of females applying for On-Call Firefighter vacancies. This year, more than double the number of women applied, up from 14 last year to 32. Therefore, the proportion of female applicants was 22% overall, up from last year's figure of 15%.

A proportion of applicants for operational roles did not wish to declare their gender. Overall, 1% (7) of applicants declined to record this. This is an increase from last year's data where only 2 applicants for support staff roles chose not to declare.

Recruitment/promotion processes for operational roles by sex

Promotions occur, in a large proportion, mainly within operational areas of the Service. These range from the role of Crew Commander up to Chief Fire Officer. This year, 23% of internal applications were from women – a significant increase from 9% last year. Of the external candidates applying to work for us, the proportion of women has also seen a notable increase. This year, 24% of applicants were female, compared to 13% the previous year.



Applications for Employment and Promotion

By ethnicity

	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Mixed or Multiple ethnicities	Other ethnic groups	White		Prefer not to say
					White British Irish	Other white ethnic groups	
Wholetime	3	7	13	2	487	11	7
On-Call	0	2	4	0	125	10	3
Fire Control	0	0	1	0	16	0	0
Support	18	8	6	1	207	12	2
Total	21	17	24	3	835	33	12

We have aligned our data collection to the 2021 Census ethnicity classifications, so that we can compare our data to the most up to date community demographics.

10% of applicants overall, were from an ethnic minority background (including White ethnic minority groups), which is on a par with last year's figure.

The number of applicants from ethnic minority groups for On-Call roles has significantly increased. The percentage of applicants is more than double from last year, up from 5% to 11%. This increase may be attributed to the work of the On-Call Marketing Project, whose aim is to attract more applicants from different community groups.

The figure for Wholetime roles has also seen an increase, with 7% of ethnic minority applicants this year, compared to 2% last year.

The number of applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds attracted to Fire Control vacancies has increased to 6% from 3% last year.

The number of applicants for Support staff roles, from an ethnic minority background has continued to stay at 18% – unchanged from last year.

When considering ethnicity via the high-level ethnic groups, 7% of all applicants identified as belonging to the an Asian, Black, Mixed or

'Other' ethnic group combined (all ethnicities excluding White ethnic groups).

5% of Wholetime applicants are recorded within these categories, 4% of On-Call applicants and 13% of Support applicants.



Applications for Employment and Promotion

By ethnicity (continued)

Comparing our data with our local communities

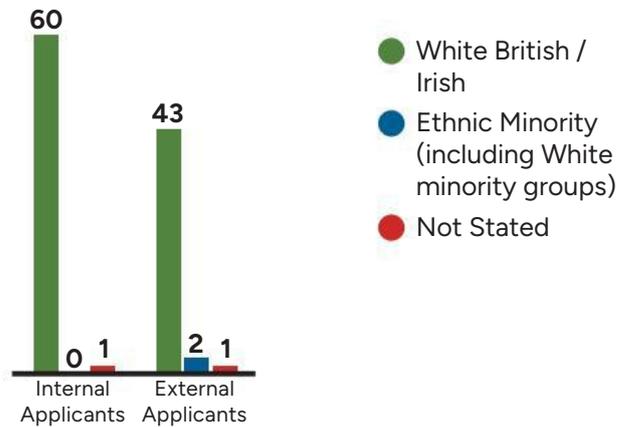
The proportion of our local communities who are from an ethnic minority background (including White minority groups) is 10%. 5% of local communities are from an Asian, Black, Mixed or 'Other' ethnic group combined (all ethnicities excluding all White ethnic groups).

Therefore, in the last year, we have successfully attracted a diverse range of applicants who are reflective of the communities we serve as an organisation.



Promotion processes for operational roles

As our recruitment processes for wholetime operational managers attracts internal candidates seeking promotion and external applicants attracted to work for us, we have examined the ethnicity of both sets of candidates. Two external applicants for operational roles, representing 4%, were from an ethnic minority background. This is an increase from last year, when all external candidates were from a White British background.



New Appointments 2022/23

At a glance

We define new appointments as those successful in securing a new role with HWFRS following a selection process. This may include current employees who have secured an internal promotion or a different role, as well as external candidates joining our Service.

95

total number of appointments

18%

of new appointments in operational roles were women



2021/22: 9%

3%

of new appointments declared a disability



2021/22: 1%

6%

of new appointments declared their sexual orientation as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual



2021/22: 9%

8%

of new appointments identified as belonging to an ethnic minority (incl White minority groups)

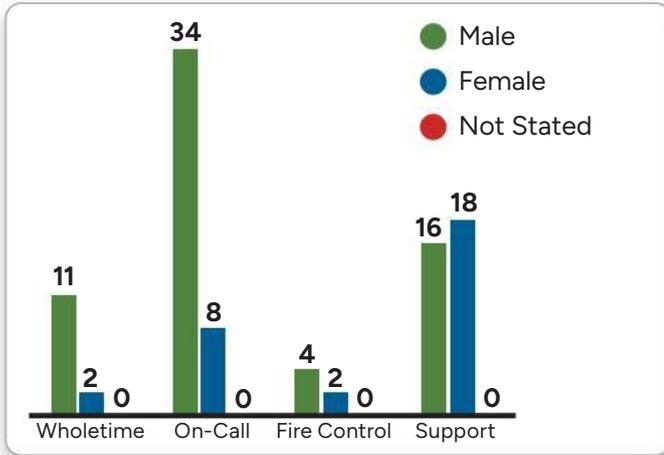


2021/22: 10%

New Appointments 2022/23

Sex and ethnicity

Sex

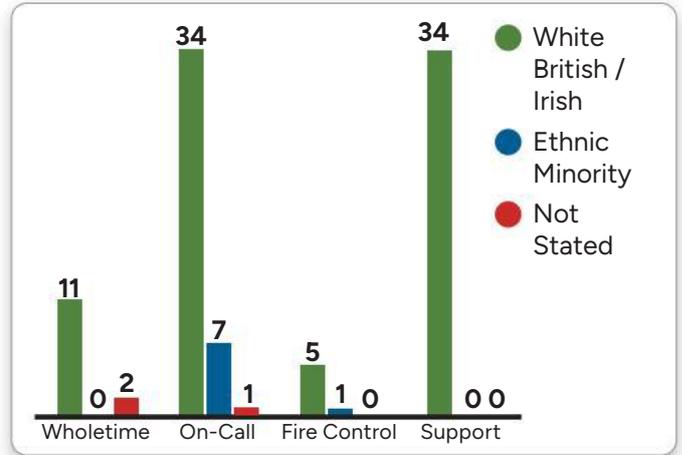


Women represented 32% of all new appointments.

The percentage of women appointed into operational roles at all ranks is 18% which is twice as many as last year (9%). Reasons for this difference are that this year saw a lower number of operational appointments overall, with an increase in the number of females appointed into On-Call Firefighter roles. Last year saw 4 female On-Call Firefighters being appointed, whereas this year, the figure has doubled to 8. This may be reflective of the work being done by the On-Call Marketing Project, as well as the practical support provided locally to female On-Call applicants in their preparation for the physical job-related tests. Historically, our statistics show that women are more likely than men to be unsuccessful at this stage of the selection process. Therefore, this increase in appointments is very pleasing to see.

Appointments for Support vacancies were evenly balanced with regards to sex profile.

Ethnicity



The percentage of new appointments from an ethnic minority background (including White minority groups) is 8% – a slight decrease from 10% in 2021-2022.

The proportion of new appointments from an ethnic minority background in operational roles is 13%, with all being appointed into On-Call Firefighter roles. This is an increase from 9% for this staff group.

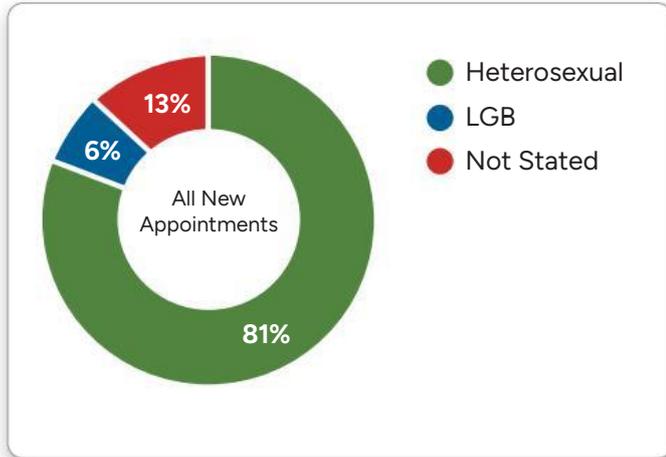
For support staff roles, all those appointed were from a White British/Irish background.

The number of new starters in Fire Control is very small, however statistically, 17% were from an ethnic minority background.

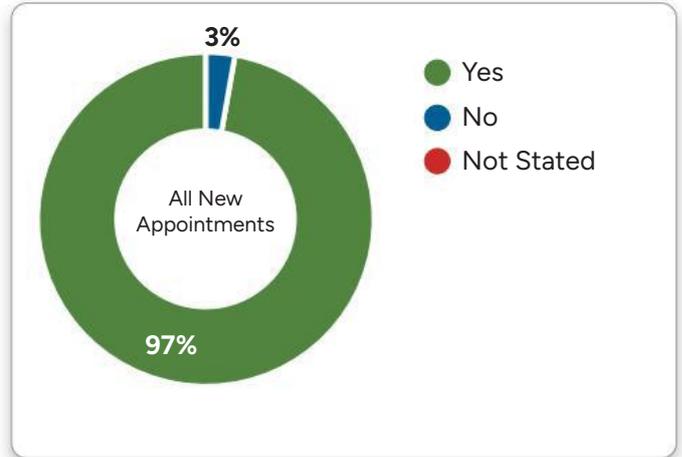
New Appointments 2022/23

Sexual orientation, disability, religion and belief, and age

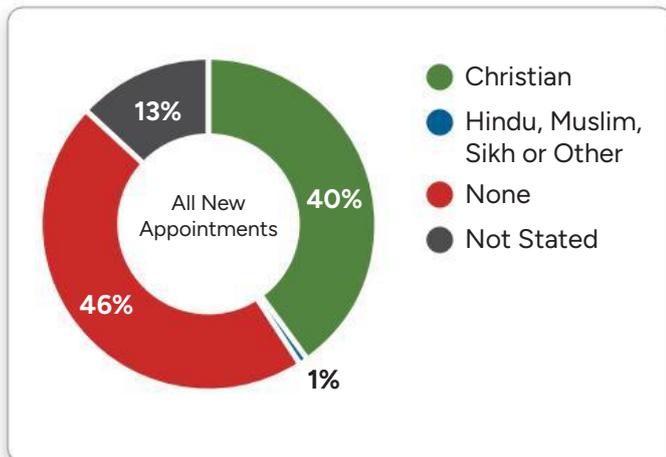
Sexual Orientation



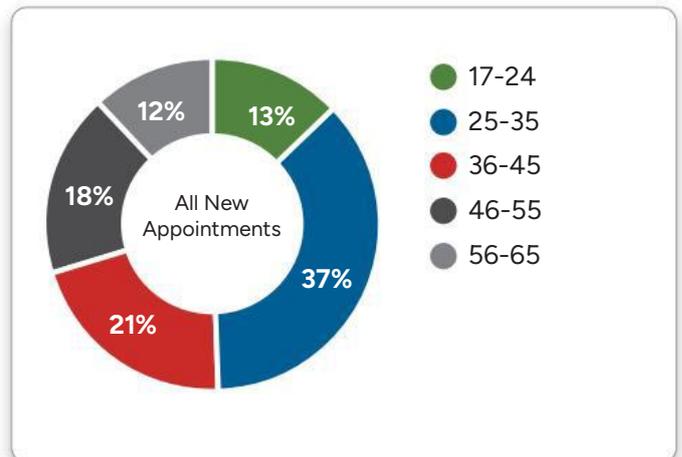
Disability



Religion and Belief



Age



6% of new appointments identified as being Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual, which is higher than 2 years ago (3%), but a decrease from last year's figure of 9%. It is pleasing to see that this statistic has generally increased during the last few years, indicating that new employees that identify as LGB feel confident to declare this protected characteristic for confidential monitoring purposes.

1% declared a religion other than Christian and the highest proportion of appointees were aged 25-35 years, in line with last year's figure. It is notable that new appointees in the 56-65 age bracket (12%) is 3 times higher than last year's figure of 4%. The number of appointees declaring a disability has increased to 3% – a rise of 2% from last year's figure.

Retention

At a glance

In 2022-2023, 93 employees left the Service. 75 of those were operational staff (52 On-Call; 23 Wholetime), 3 Fire Control staff and 15 Support staff¹¹. The highest number of leavers continues to be from the On-Call work group, which has been an area of focus for the Service, and indeed the sector as a whole. It is notable however, that the rate of turnover for On-Call staff has slowed from the previous year and it may be that the continued work of the On-Call Marketing Project will impact positively on this further.

30%

of leavers were aged 36–45
– the highest proportion
of leavers

2021/22: highest proportion
of leavers were aged 25-35

1%

of leavers declared a disability



2021/22: 4%

9%

of leavers belong to
an ethnic minority



2021/22: 13%

17%

of leavers were women (8% of
operational leavers were women)



2021/22: 20%

35%

of leavers had no religion or
belief (35% of leavers did not
disclose their religion or belief)

4.3%

of leavers declared their
sexual orientation as Lesbian,
Gay or Bisexual

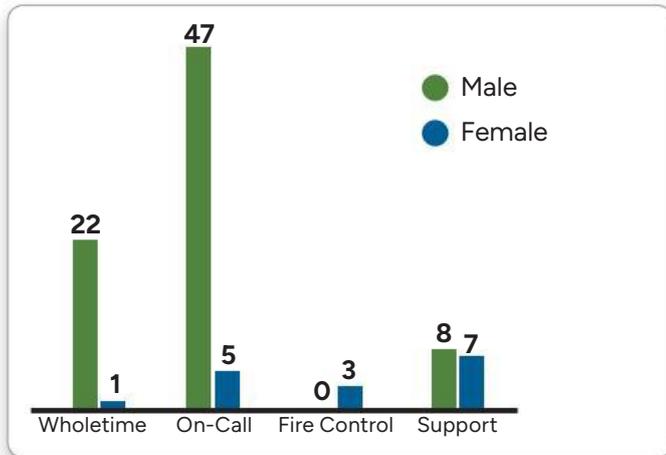


2021/22: no change

¹¹ Individuals that ended one of their dual contracts but remained in employment with the Service in another role have been included.

Retention (continued)

Leavers by sex

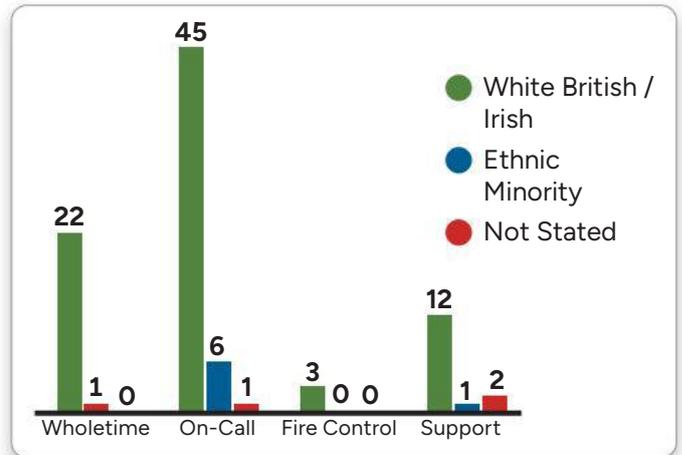


In the year ending 31 March 2023, the proportion of women who left the Service is 17%, which is a decrease from 20% last year. The small number of leavers from Fire Control were all female; however, this is the predominant gender within this workforce group, which has become more gender balanced this year. There was an increase in the number of females leaving the on-call workforce group (up to 5 from last year's figure of 1). Only 1 female left the wholetime workgroup within this year, a reduction from last year's figure (6).

Of operational leavers, 8% were women, which is a decrease from 9% last year.

Of the women who left the Service, 69% resigned, 25% retired and 6% (1) reached the end of a fixed term contract. The proportion of females joining the Service (32%) is considerably higher than the proportion of women leaving (17%). Similarly, with operational roles, the proportion of women appointed (18%) is again considerably higher than the proportion of operational females leaving the Service (8%).

Leavers by ethnicity



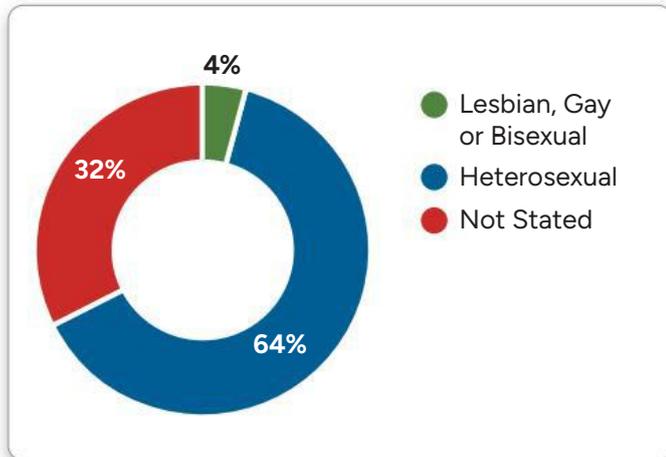
88% of leavers were White British/Irish, which has increased from last year's figure of 81%. Employees from an ethnic minority background accounted for 9% (8) of all leavers, which is a reduction from last year's figure of 13%.

For this year, the proportion of staff from an ethnic minority leaving the Service (9%) is only slightly higher than the proportion appointed to roles (8%).

Only 3 of the 93 employees (3%) leaving the Service did not record their ethnicity, in comparison to last year's figure of 7%.

Retention (continued)

Leavers by sexual orientation



The statistics in relation to the sexual orientation of leavers, is relatively similar to last year. The proportion of staff leaving the Service who identify as LGB is 4.3% (last year 4%). However, the proportion of new staff who have declared their sexual orientation as LGB is higher – 6%.

Those leavers not disclosing their sexual orientation is 32% (last year 33%).

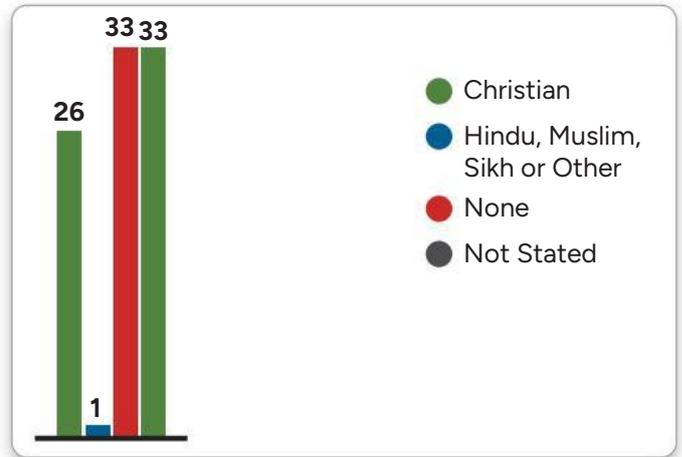
Leavers by disability

1% of staff who left the Service in 2022/23 declared a disability. This is lower than last year’s figure of 4%.

The number of new starters who declared a disability is 3%, which is higher than the number of leavers who recorded this.

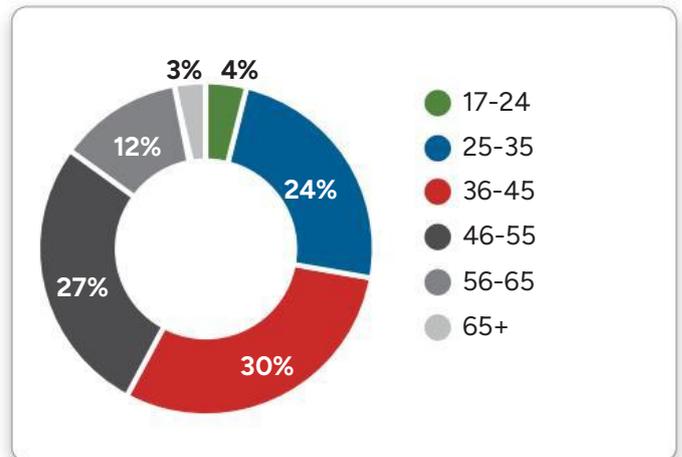
There were no employees leaving the Service who had not declared their disability status.

Leavers by religion or belief



Employees with no religion or belief accounted for 35% of leavers. Those of the Christian faith accounted for 28% of leavers. 35% did not disclose their religion or belief.

Leavers by age



The largest proportion of leavers were in the age group of 36-45 years, which is higher than last year (25-35). The number of leavers in this age group increased by 10% from last year. The highest proportion within this age group were from our On-Call workforce.

Retention (continued)

Turnover¹² and reasons for leaving

Staff turnover has decreased for every work group other than On-Call. The rate of turnover for On-Call has slightly increased, up by 1 percentage point from last year. The highest number of leavers were from this group and of those who resigned, 38% did not formally declare a reason and 27% cited primary work commitments or personal circumstances as their reason for leaving.

The number of retirements in this year (27) was higher than last year (23) and the majority of these were from the Wholetime work group. Of the support staff who resigned during this year, 6 did not record a reason for leaving.

17% of all leavers left within one year of employment, which is a slight increase from last year (16%).

Turnover rates



Disciplinary and grievances, bullying and harassment

There were 9 formal disciplinary cases during this year and all involved operational staff. 89% of cases involved male staff and 11% involved female members of staff. As the numbers are low, we cannot report these cases by any further protected characteristics for data protection reasons, however no concerns have been identified relating to protected groups.

There were 4 formal grievances raised during the year, with 50% being raised by male staff and 50% by female staff.

Bullying and Harassment

There were no formal cases of bullying and harassment reported.

¹² Staff turnover refers to the percentage of employees who leave an organisation and are replaced by new employees.

Gender Pay Gap as at 31 March 2023

As an employer with 250 or more employees, we have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 to publish gender pay gap information relating to our employees. We must publish this information on our external website and a dedicated Government website: gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk.

The gender pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between men and women in a workforce. There are six calculations as follows:

- 1. Mean gender pay in hourly pay** – the percentage difference between the mean average hourly rates of men and women’s pay.
- 2. Median gender pay gap in hourly pay** – the percentage difference between the midpoints in the ranges of men and women’s pay.
- 3. Mean bonus gender pay gap¹³**
- 4. Median bonus gender pay gap¹³**
- 5. Proportion of men and women receiving a bonus payment¹³**
- 6. Proportion of men and women in each pay quartile** – calculated by dividing employees into four even groups according to their pay. The upper quartile with the highest level of pay and the lower quartile with the lowest levels of pay.

All staff who were deemed to be full pay relevant employees at 31 March 2023 are included. The figures are based on established contracted posts within the Service and include Wholetime / On-Call Firefighter dual roles and secondary employment contracts.

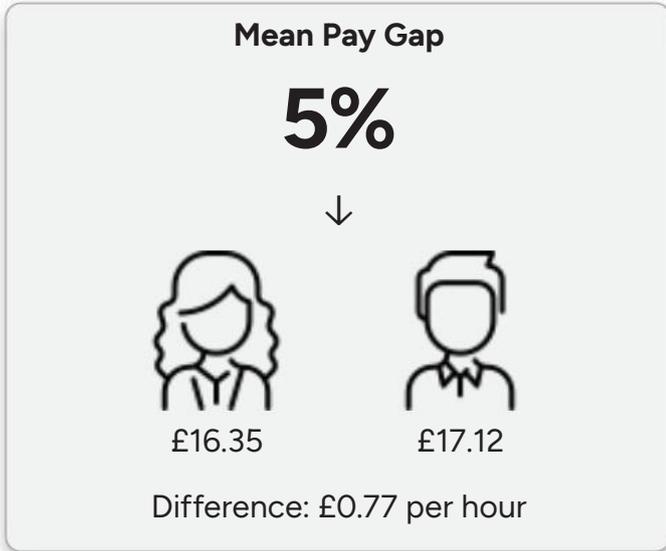
The salaries of all operational staff (Wholetime, On-Call and Fire Control) are established within the “Grey Book” (terms and conditions) and are standard throughout the UK Fire and Rescue Service. Support staff salary levels are based upon a job description formally evaluated for the role. Annual Pay awards are negotiated nationally.

For our On-Call employees, the average weekly working hours can vary significantly across this workforce group and drastically distort the calculations and so the nationally agreed basic fixed hourly rate of pay is used. It should also be noted that other Fire and Rescue Services may choose to calculate the hourly rate of On-Call and other employees differently and this should be taken into consideration if making direct comparisons.

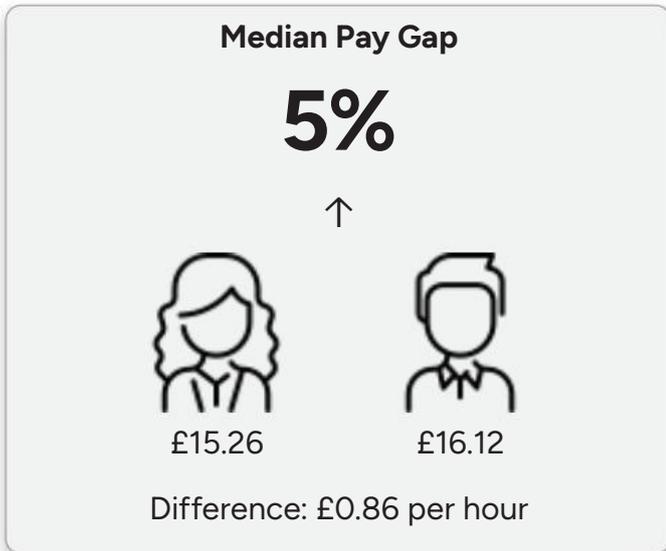
¹³ We do not pay bonuses to staff and therefore do not provide calculations relating to points 3, 4 and 5 above.

Our Pay Gap Figures

The **mean pay gap** has reduced since last year. Women on average earn 5% less than men in our organisation (7% in 2021/22).



The **median pay gap** shows the midpoint in the range of women’s pay is 5% less than the midpoint in the range of pay for men (an increase from 3% in 2021/22).



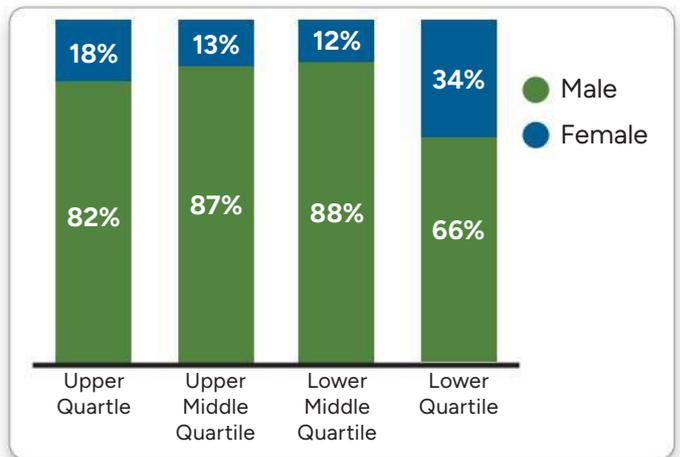
We believe **the gender pay gap does not arise from paying men and women differently for the same work** but is as a result of the roles in which they work and the salaries these roles attract.

Men and women in our organisation undertaking the same role are paid the same.

However, there are more men than women in our workforce and essentially more men occupying higher level positions within the Service.

Men and Women by Pay Quartiles

Our **pay quartile** data reflects our organisation’s current workforce profile – there are a high proportion of men compared to women.



This year, it is notable that there is an increase in the proportion of females within the upper and upper middle quartiles. In both quartiles, the proportion of females has increased by 2% from last year. This could be linked to an increase in the number of female staff appointed to higher paid roles and the decrease in the number of women leaving the Service.

We recognise a lack of representation of women in the Fire sector as a whole and continue to drive change through the implementation of our equality objectives and through activities guided by our Positive Action Statement of Intent.

Contributory Factors

There are some factors which may contribute to our gender pay gap:

- An imbalance in the number of men and women throughout the organisation, particularly women in senior management positions in operational roles, although we have seen this number increasing. This is particularly evident with the 2% increase of women in the upper pay quartiles this year.
- An under-representation of women in operational roles in the Fire sector as a whole.
- Within Support roles, more women than men tend to occupy posts within the lower pay scales such as administration, whereas specialist support roles which attract higher rates of pay, such as ICT, tend to be predominately male.
- Women are also more likely to take time out of the labour market to raise children and/or care for dependents which may delay career progression, contributing to a lack of representation of women at higher levels in the organisation.

Closing the Gap and Our Future Equality Work

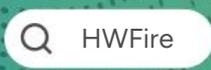
Our ambitions to create a more inclusive organisation are set out in our [People Strategy](#) and the work we do to meet our equality objectives. We have also produced a Positive Action Statement of Intent, which we use as a guide to implementing activities to increase diversity.

Over the next year we will focus on:

- Continuing on our organisational cultural journey, by producing a Cultural Statement of Intent.
- Further embedding the Core Code of Ethics so that our staff understand the importance and value of these, through the introduction of interactive workshops, led by managers.
- Positive action to empower more operational women to reach their potential and apply for promotion
- Continuing to seek opportunities for engagement with minority groups in our communities, to promote working or volunteering for our organisation, as well as accessing our services.
- Promote, support and grow our staff networks so that members can continue to inspire and develop each other



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



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Report of Director for Response

Update on the Activities of the Women@HWFire Group

Purpose of report

1. To update the Audit & Standards Committee on the work of Women@HWFire.
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Audit and Standards Committee note the activities of the group Women@HWFire.

Introduction

2. Women@HWFire was originally launched to enable Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) management, at all levels, to truly explore and understand the experiences and challenges of being an operational woman as a minority group within the fire service both locally and nationally.
3. The group set out to improve these experiences and work with various Service departments to overcome any identified barriers, resulting in a number of positive outcomes. The aim has always been to contribute towards the Service's equality, diversity, and inclusion agenda.
4. The group consists of men and women from across the Service who are involved in discussions about shared topics affecting female staff from all areas, e.g. department staff as well as operational female members of staff.
5. Following on from the significant achievements delivered between 2020 – 2022 reported to the Audit & Standards Committee on 18 January 2023, Women@HWFire has been involved in the following activities:
 - Reviewed the Service's Menopause Guidance and actively supported the menopause workshops run for women in the Service. The workshops were very well attended with over 50 women involved in the sessions.
 - Supported a menopause masterclass focusing on menopause in the fire sector led by the FireFit Chair and NFCC Chief Operating Officer.
 - Reviewed the flexible working arrangements on offer for female operational staff.
 - Actively supported the inclusive recruitment initiatives for the 2023 Wholetime recruitment process by contributing to an informational video for staff, supporting the firefighter taster sessions and contacting female taster

session attendees to answer any questions about the role and encourage applications.

- Actively supported the ongoing inclusive recruitment initiatives for On-Call firefighters.
- Attended Wholetime and On-Call induction sessions to deliver awareness sessions around Women@HWFire and EDI to every course.
- Provided coaching and mentoring to employees and also to members of the public to encourage them to apply for the role of Wholetime and On-Call firefighter.
- Supported the people impact assessments conducted as part of the review of firefighter job-related physical tests and ensured a female instructor, or representative from Women@HWFire, is present at all firefighter selection tests.
- Contributed to the review of maternity wear in HWFRS which has helped shape the tender and procurement requirements for the provision of new workwear.
- Led an online positive action event 'An Introduction to the Fire and Rescue Service' as part of the Women in the Fire Service (WFS) Futures Programme.
- Participated in International Women's Day on 8 March 2023.
- Led a national positive action event through WFS on interview techniques and applications. This has now been incorporated into the Service's internal awareness sessions for the Wholetime firefighter recruitment process.
- Joined West Mercia Police colleagues at an Army Away Day designed to provide networking opportunities and improve listening and leadership skills.
- Attended the AFSA Women in Leadership conference and winter conference in March 2023.
- Attended the WFS national development weekend at the Fire Service College where one member of Women@HWFire delivered a 'Drive a Fire Engine' workshop.
- Took part in an episode of BBC Countryfile on wildfires.
- Arranged Difficult Conversation training for members.
- Supported the National Women in the Fire Service event to climb Snowdon in support of The Fire Fighters Charity.
- Delivered a 'Lift as you Climb' workshop for approximately 50 delegates from HWFRS and West Mercia Police. The event attracted the following guest speakers and was a remarkable success:
 - Sarah-Jayne Bray from Thames Valley Police who is a gender equality champion.
 - Georgina Gilbert who is a member of the Antarctic Fire Angels team.

6. The ongoing work delivered by Women@HWFire supports and delivers against targets laid out in our People Strategy by:

- i) Driving positive action to improve our workforce diversity.
- ii) Providing ongoing professional development opportunities for enhancing managerial leadership.

- iii) Supporting our culture and values and builds upon the NFCC Core Code of Ethics.

Awards/Accolades

- 7. The group also received several accolades during 2023, the most notable being the Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award presented by Women in the Fire Service UK. This award was won by the Chair of Women@HWFire, Group Commander Deborah Davies. In addition, the Chair Deborah Davies and ED&I Officer Kathryn Berry both received a Chairman’s Certificate of Commendation for the work being delivered across the organisation by Women@HWFire.
- 8. This work has been primarily driven by the group, and again I would like to place on the record my thanks to all involved for improving the equality and diversity of our Service in building a more inclusive environment for all staff, present and future.

Conclusion

- 9. The work delivered by Women@HWFire demonstrates our organisational commitment to supporting under-represented groups within HWFRS. It has added significant value to multiple areas of work, and continues to influence the changing profile in operational and support staffing managerial roles across the Service. The group remains committed to driving diversity within HWFRS as an organisational priority.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Small budgetary support for conferences, etc
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	Delivers and supports objectives set out in the People strategy
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	N/A
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Representative Body engagement is carried out when necessary
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	Not required – update paper

Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	N/A
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Report of Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Health and Safety Committee Update: April to Sept 2023 (Quarters 1 & 2)

Purpose of Report

1. To provide a Health and Safety update on activities and items of significance.
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that the following issues, in particular, be noted:

- (i) The involvement of the Service in Health and Safety initiatives;*
- (ii) Health and Safety performance information recorded during April to Sept 2023 (Quarters 1 & 2)*
- (iii) Workforce Health & Wellbeing performance (Quarters 1 & 2)*

Introduction and Background

2. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) aims to ensure the safety and well-being of its employees and reduce and prevent accidents and injuries at work, as outlined in the People Strategy 2022-2025.
3. The Health and Safety Committee is established to provide effective arrangements for the liaison and review of matters of common interest concerning Health and Safety (H&S). The Committee provides the opportunity for the Service to discuss general H&S issues and consult with the workforce via employee representatives. The Committee is chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer and met on 21st June, 20th September and 13th December 2023.
4. The Committee has the facility to task work to the H&S Working Group, which sits beneath it and is chaired by the Group Commander responsible for Health and Safety. The group meets as and when required.

Health & Safety Initiatives Update

5. National Activities

- The PPE Working Group's (WG) report will be available within six months. The WG were looking at Water Rescue PPE and protection base layers.
- ISO696 has been approved and issued as the new standard on responding and dealing with Menopause.
- The Contamination WG lead has met with Carol Downes (HSE) to discuss this issue. The WG will also update the position statement shortly.
- All Chief Fire Officers (CFO) will be contacted shortly by West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) CFO Wayne Brown about the work being carried out on contaminants.
- Previously the HSE had informed the National committee that they would visit ten Fire Services across the whole country to look only at contaminants. They would look at how these Services are managing this issue and for them to identify best practice in order to set up appropriate standards. Tyne and Wear, Scotland FRS and one other have already been identified but others will be contacted shortly. Key areas that HSE will be looking at are Risk Assessment and Training.

6. Regional Activities

7. The regional group met on the 9th May and 4th Sept 2023 at Shropshire FRS.

- Findings from the peer review audit of Shropshire FRS were submitted to their CFO and shared with all FRSs in the West Midlands Region.
- WMFS agreed to take over as lead for the Region for the next two years, and this commenced in September 2023.
- Regional statistics were updated and shared amongst the Region and handed over to an appointed analyst to continue the recording and correlation.
- Dr Julie Gandolfi delivered a presentation and provided a demonstration on Driver Metrics to Regional Committee in December 2023.
- All members of the West Midlands Regional Committee have been asked to carry out a gap analysis on contaminants for their FRS and submit results to National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

- The Region are identifying best practise and have agreed to share this with regional partners.

8. HWFRS Local Activities

9. HWFRSs H&S Advisor has carried out an internal audit following the peer review of Shropshire using the same question sets to benchmark performance. The findings are scheduled to be delivered to the H&S Committee in March 2024.
10. Four Health and Safety based training courses were provided for staff in Q1 & Q2 to maintain high standards of training and legal compliance.
11. A Specialist Investigation Officer (SIO) meeting took place on the 20th June to discuss the SI (Specialist Investigation) process, continued professional development events and actions for improvement.
12. HWFRS have undertaken a gap analysis to ensure current best practice is maintained. The report is broken down into the sections listed below.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Minimising Contamination at Fire Incidents
 - Returning from a Fire Incident
 - BA Workshops Contamination Control
 - Training Centre Contamination Control
 - Vehicle Contamination
 - Health Screening
 - Training and Awareness
13. HWFRS Contamination Working Group is now into its 2nd Quarter of the Action Plan. A progress report is scheduled to be delivered to the H&S Committee in March 2024.
14. A 3-day H&S Peer Review Audit of HWFRS took place in November 2023, led by WMFS Topics audited were Breathing Apparatus (BA) and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which incorporated carcinogen contamination. The closing presentation indicated that there were no significant areas of concern and proactive measures had already been put in place to address a number of areas highlighted for improvement. Findings from the audit will be reported to the H&S Committee in March 2024, including an action plan to address any recommendations.

15. Dr John Kingston will be visiting Service Headquarters in the near future to look at our Safety Investigation process to offer expert advice and guidance.
16. HWFRS' new cloud based Electronic H&S system (EHS) was launched in December 2023. This is a significant step forward for the Service in helping to streamline H&S reporting and analysis.
17. There are 25 Health & Safety Policies, all of which have been reviewed in line with agreed review dates.
18. The risk assessment database (Figure 1) is owned and maintained by local managers and reviewed by the H&S Advisor. Each risk assessment has a review period, and managers are prompted to carry out reviews. Where risk assessments are no longer applicable, they are archived from the database. During Quarters 1 and 2 673 risk assessments were reviewed, and 86 new risk assessments were created.

Figure 1 – Risk Assessment Database

	Quarter 3 (22/23)		Quarter 4 (22/23)		Quarter 1 (23/24)		Quarter 2 (23/24)	
Location	Reviewed	Created	Reviewed	Created	Reviewed	Created	Reviewed	Created
North District	102	16	105	5	94	10	89	10
South District	53	13	97	14	103	12	85	15
West District	93	16	78	15	113	15	78	12
Training Centre	44	1	47	1	39	2	45	0
Others	9	4	31	4	5	3	22	7
Total	301	50	358	39	354	42	319	44

19. Quarter 1 / 2 Performance Report
20. Appendix 1 provides details relating to all safety events reported and investigated during Quarter 1 / 2 of the 2023-24 reporting year (April to Sept).
21. The total number of safety events reported in Q1 / 2 (85) has increased by seventeen compared to the previous quarters Q3 / 4 (68). The most significant increase was an additional 10 Near Hit reports (i.e. something with the potential to cause harm), which indicates a positive step forward for safety reporting. The number of vehicle collisions has decreased by five.
22. Seven events have been reported to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). Local investigations determined none of these events were significant H&S issues.

23. Nine basic specialist investigations occurred. Five in the personal injury category, three in property/equipment and one in vehicle.

Workforce Health & Wellbeing Update Quarters 1 & 2 2023-24

National Sickness Data 2023-2024

24. Information is unavailable at the time of writing as the Cleveland Report reporting timeframes do not consistently align with the Health and Safety Committee meeting schedule. This information will be considered when available.

HWFRS Sickness Data and Activity Quarters 1 and 2 2023-24

25. Appendix 2 and 3 (Performance Overview) provides data relating to all sickness absence by workforce group and main causes of sickness absence in Quarters 1 and 2.
26. In comparison to Quarter 1, there has been a slight decrease in the total days/shifts lost to sickness absence for all staff (Q1 at 2.31 versus Q2 at 2.29), with 848 day/shifts lost overall. The Service continues to monitor and review attendance levels in line with the updated Attendance Management Policy and supports managers in the timely resolution of absence cases.
27. There were 3 main causes of sickness absence; Mental Health (44%) Muscular-Skeletal (MSK) (30%), and Respiratory (11%).

Muscular-Skeletal

28. Sickness absence for MSK in Quarters 1 and 2 was 658.61 days/shifts lost which is consistent with previous reporting. Long-term sickness absence cases have been supported to return to work via workstation modifications, home working options, and phased return to work plans. Some of the absences were due to surgical interventions to remedy existing injuries or injuries that had been acquired from recreational sports activities. Of the 7 long term sickness cases in Quarter 2, 6 of the individuals have now returned to work.
29. Individuals are encouraged to seek early support via The Fire Fighter's Charity or Occupational Health (OH) Physiotherapy for any Muscular-Skeletal issues they may be experiencing. Further prevention work is being promoted to minimise short term Muscular-Skeletal absences due to muscle strain or lacerations, such as promoting warmup exercises and safe handling of equipment.

Mental Health

30. There were 960.88 days/shifts lost due to Mental Health in Quarters 1 and 2, across all categories (Stress, Anxiety, Depression and Other), featuring a combination of perceived work-related factors and personal factors. Personal factors included bereavement and family issues. The work-related factors included management/workplace issues such as managing performance, workplace disputes, and workload. In Quarter 2 there were 7 long term sickness cases within this category (4 within the Wholetime workgroup, 2 within the Support workgroup and 1 within Fire Control) and 5 of the cases cited work related factors. Four of the individuals have now returned to work.

Respiratory

31. There were 248.50 days/shifts lost for Respiratory related absences, with the majority of days/shifts lost due to Cold/Cough/Influenza. Some of the absences may be due to COVID-19 infections although testing is no longer a mandatory requirement. The Service regularly reminds employees to maintain infection control measures in the workplace to minimise Respiratory infections. The Service is also due to promote flu vaccinations in an attempt to further reduce respiratory related absences, and promote a healthy immune system.
32. There were also 238 days/shifts lost due to Cancer, which were within the Support workgroup across 2 long term sickness cases.

Health Management Data and Activity

33. Appendix 1 and 2 (Health Management) provides data relating to management referrals to OH in Quarters 1 and 2. There were 30 new management referrals in Quarter 2, compared to 32 in Quarter 1. One of the referrals was work-related, and 9 of the referrals related to employees who were able to remain at work.
34. The top reasons for referrals to OH related to MSK disorders (30 referrals) and Mental Health (16 referrals).
35. Of the 16 referrals for Mental Health, 10 employees cited work-related factors. N.B. mental health is not included in work-related reporting figures. Referrals for long term sickness absence cases may be reflected within the previous quarter, however, review appointments are carried out throughout the absence.

Mental Health at Work Commitment

36. Good progress continues on the Mental Health at Work Commitment action plan. Completed actions for Quarters 1 and 2 including appointing new Wellbeing Champions, with the first 'Meet and Greet/Induction session' for these individuals taking place on Friday 24th November 2023. The session also included light

touch Mental Health First Aid Training and listening skills. The Service continues to develop the content for the “Back Up Buddy” App and promote health and wellbeing campaigns via our SharePoint page. The Firefighter’s Charity Wellness Workshops have been promoted across the Service and a number of sessions have been booked by staff, such as the MSK Injuries-Injury Prevention workshop with Worcester Green Watch.

Routine Medical Assessment Compliance and Outcomes

- 37. Appendix 1 and 2 (Routine Medical Assessment) provides medical and fitness data from the Operational Assurance Report for Quarters 1 and 2 2023-2024.
- 38. The medical compliance rate of operational staff has increased for 3-yearly medical assessments in Quarter 2 to 98%, compared to 96% in Quarter 1. The compliance rate for annual medical assessments has slightly decreased in Quarter 2 to 80%, compared to Quarter 1 at 88%.

Routine Fitness Assessment Compliance and Outcomes

- 39. The fitness compliance rate of operational employees has remained the same in Quarter 2 compared to Quarter 1. 93% of employees who are required to have an annual fitness test were in date in Quarter 2.
- 40. 11% of currently tested staff are in the “Amber zone” – a slight decrease from Quarter 1. 83% of currently tested staff are in the “Green zone”. 7% of currently tested staff are in the “Red zone” (8 individuals) which is a marginal increase from Quarter 1 (1%). Of these, 3 individuals have been re-tested and now sit within the “Amber or Green zones”. A small number of individuals did not complete a planned fitness assessment due to a high blood pressure reading prior to the test and are included in the Red category figures. Individuals are directed to their GP and/or OH for support and monitoring, and re-tested when medically cleared. HR are closely monitoring these staff and providing support where needed.

Corporate Considerations

<p>Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)</p>	<p>Contained within H&S budgets and departmental capacity.</p>
<p>Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)</p>	<p>Corporate Strategy: ensuring firefighter safety. In addition, Develop and Train in the People Strategy; and Community first and Leadership of the CCoE.</p>

Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	Reduces the overall impact for H&S management in the areas identified and safeguards the Services legal requirements.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Representative bodies attend H&S Committee and are fully consulted on H&S matters.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	All personal data has been removed from the reports contained within Appendices.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Quarter 1 & 2 (April – Sept 2023) Event Reporting and Summary

Appendix 2: Quarter 1 (April 23 – June 2023) Human resources Data Reporting

Appendix 3: Quarter 2 (July – September 2023) Human Resources Data Reporting

**Health and Safety Quarterly Report
Quarter 1 & 2 (April 2023 – September 2023) Event Reporting and Summary**

1. Overview

In the period of April 2023 to September 2023 a total of 85 Health and Safety (H&S) events were reported. They fall into the categories of:

- 28 Personal Injury
- 23 Vehicle Collisions
- 10 Property or Equipment
- 22 Near Hits or Causes for Concern
- 1 Exposure or Contamination
- 1 Violence or Aggression

Individual detailed summaries of reporting, in the key areas above, are outlined in Appendix A.

2. Breakdown of Events

By Activity

Table 1 shows that during Q1 & Q2, **Personal injury** were the most frequently reported incidents. The majority occurring during training.

	Total	Training	Operational Activities	Routine Activities	Other
Total H&S Events	85	20	34	19	12
Personal Injury	28	13	9	3	3
Vehicle Collision	23	1	13	9	0
Property or Equipment Failure	10	2	2	3	3
Near Hit or Cause for Concern	22	4	8	4	6
Exposure or Contamination	1	0	1	0	0
Violence or Aggression	1	0	1	0	0

Table 1: Safety Event Breakdown Q1 & Q2 2023-2024

By Injury Type

Table 2 identifies the areas to be the main causes as Other and Manual Handling.

Total Personal Injuries	28
Manual Handling	6
Slips, Trips & Falls	5
Hit by Moving Object	2
Hit Stationary Object	3
Burns – Operational	1
Burns – Training	2
Other	9

Table 2: Personal Injury Breakdown Q1 & Q2 2023-2024

By Vehicle Type

Table 3 highlights that vehicle collisions during these quarters have mostly involved appliances on blue lights.

Vehicle Collisions	Fire Engines		Cars and Vans		Non-Service related
	On blue lights	Off blue lights	On blue lights	Off blue lights	
Total Collisions	11	9	0	2	1

Table 3: Vehicle Breakdown Q1 & Q2 2023-2024

Vehicle Mileage Statistics

Vehicle mileage statistics for the year 2022-2023 were provided by the Operational Logistics Fleet Department and have been used to predict vehicle mileage for 2023-24. These are summarised in Table 3A below. It can be seen that there were two white fleet safety events out of approximately 375,982 miles driven, which equates to one event for every 187,991 miles driven.

The twenty safety events involving red fleet vehicles were out of approximately 143,450 miles driven, which equates to one event for every 7,173 miles driven.

Fleet	Total Mileage 2022-2023	Predicted Mileage per quarter 2023-2024
White Fleet	751,964	187,991
Red Fleet	286,900	71,725
	Totalling 1,038,864 miles	Totalling 259,716 miles

Table 3A: Vehicle Mileage Statistics Q1 & Q2 2023-2024



3. Events Requiring Investigation during Quarter 1 & 2 (April 2023 – September 2023)

Tier One Investigations

A Tier One standard investigation is required for all safety events and is usually conducted by the on-duty / line manager present at the time of the event. Events that are minor in nature usually remain at this tier.

Tier Two Basic Specialist Investigations

In addition to the standard investigation required for Tier One, a Basic Specialist Investigation (SI) is required for:

- Rare, unusual or unlikely events resulting in either serious injuries or losses, or with the potential to incur such injuries or losses.
- Events involving Breathing Apparatus (BA).
- Near Hits resulting from unusual conditions or with the potential to cause serious injury or loss that are rare or unlikely to reoccur.

Nine events reported during Q1 & Q2 required a Tier Two Basic Specialist Investigation:

1634	-	SRT Mud Lance Hose failure during training.
1638	-	SRT Ankle injury
1639	-	BA Wearer Distress
1640	-	Vehicle Collision
1643	-	BA Burns
1649	-	FF fainted after CFBT Training
1651	-	BA Set Malfunction
PI1698	-	Shoulder injury
NHCC1689	-	BA mask damage

Tier Two Full Specialist Investigations

A full SI may be assigned immediately or following a Basic SI and is required for:

- Possible or likely events resulting in serious injuries or losses.
- All significant events involving Breathing Apparatus (BA).
- Near Hits resulting from unusual conditions or with the potential to cause serious injury or loss that are possible or likely to reoccur.

No safety events were reported during Q1 & Q2 that required a full Specialist Investigation.

Tier Three MERP Specialist Investigations

A Tier Three Specialist Investigation is conducted as required by the Major Event Response Protocol (MERP) SPI. These are for the most serious events such as death or potentially life-threatening injury to a member of HWFRS whilst on duty, or a third party either occurring on Service property or as a result of an act or omission by HWFRS.

No safety events during Q1 & Q2 required a Tier Three Specialist Investigation.

RIDDOR Events for Quarter 1 & 2 (April 2023 – September 2023)

During Q1 & Q2, seven RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) reports were submitted to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as a dangerous occurrence/over a seven-day injury.

1638	-	FF Twisted knee climbing over the fence
1643	-	FF received minor burn during training
1651	-	BA set Malfunction
1656	-	FF twisted knee at incident
1665	-	FF received minor injury during Water Rescue Training
1671	-	SC injured shoulder attending an incident.
PI1685	-	Burn to right arm

4. Comparison between Quarters and Trend Analysis

Comparison of Events Reported Showing Differences Q1 & Q2 2022-23 & Q1 & Q2 2023-24

Event Type	Q1 & Q2 2022-23	Q1 & Q2 2023-24	Increase/Decrease
Personal Injuries	35	28	-7
Vehicle Collisions	24	23	-1
Property or equipment	2	10	+8
Violence & Aggression	2	1	-1
Near Hits	18	22	+4
Exposure / contamination	1	1	-
Overall	82	85	+3

Table 4: Quarterly Events Reported Q1 & Q2 2022-23 and Q1 & Q2 2023-24

Trend Analysis

Table 4 above compares the number of events reported for the different categories. For events over the last 16 months, two of the categories experienced an increase, and three reported a decrease.

Overall, event reporting as a whole increased by three. The increase was driven by property/equipment.

All events that occurred during the quarter were investigated at a minimum of Tier One local level investigation to identify preventative control measures and help to reduce the likelihood of similar occurrences.

12 Month Trend Analysis

Table 5 below breaks down the latest four quarters by reported accident type. Q2 figures show a decrease in the number of events reported this quarter which are generally in line with previous quarters.

	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 & Q4 22-23	Q1 & Q2 23/24
Total H&S Events	42	26	45	40	68	85
Personal Injury	18	7	12	16	25	28
Vehicle Collision	16	7	14	9	23	23
Property or Equipment Failure	2	5	5	5	7	10
Near Hit or Cause for Concern	6	3	13	9	9	22
Exposure or contamination	0	3	0	1	3	1
Violence or Aggression	0	1	1	0	1	1

Table 5: 12 Month Trend Analysis Q3 2022 – 2023 to Q2 2023 – 2024

Brief Description of all Safety Events

A1. Personal Injury

Of the **85** H&S events reported, **28** relate to the category of Personal Injury. These are described in Table A1 below:

Sub-Categories	Break-down of Injuries in Each Sub-Category
13 events were during operational training	PI1692 - Relates to a blister forming overnight for a FF who attended CFBT training.
	PI1686 - Relates to FF injuring their nose whilst putting the ladder back on the gantry as the ladder jammed.
	PI1689 - Relates to a previous injury being exasperated by using heavy USAR breaking and breaching equipment.
	PI1694 - Relates to back injury caused by underrunning the ladder with poor manual handling techniques
	PI1697 - Relates to a strained right ham string whilst preparing to lift a casualty.
	PI1698 - Relates to a shoulder injury although waiting on clarification if this was an existing injury. BASIC SI.
	1638- FF Twisted knee climbing over the fence. BASIC SI. RIDDOR.
	1639- BA wearer distress. BASIC SI.
	1643- FF received blistering in live fire training. BASIC SI. RIDDOR.
	1649 - FF fainted following BA wear at Peterchurch STF. BASIC SI.
	1665- FF injured shoulder when collided with submerged rock during WFH training. RIDDOR.
	1666 - FF injured Knee when collided with submerged rock during WFH training
	1682 - Relates to FF overheating whilst in fire compartment.
9 events were during operational work	PI1690 - Relates to plasterboard and debris falling from ceiling and hitting FF on the top of back / neck.
	PI1683 - Relates to FF injury to back whilst twisting and trying to connect a hose to the pump.
	PI1685 - Relates to injury to a CC whilst fighting a fire in the open. He slipped on the embankment and cut and burnt his right arm. RIDDOR.
	PI1680 - Relates to injury to FF following breaking a window and lacerating finger
	PI1684 - Relates to an injury to a CC following stepping on a charged hose and twisting his ankle.
	1668 - Relates to personal injury where WC hurt his back whilst bending down to place a door wedge
	1671 - Injured shoulder whilst putting on PPE. RIDDOR.
	1674 - Relates to a property house fire where 3 firefighters had heat exhaustion symptoms. BASIC SI.
	PI1693 - Relates to lower back injury to FF whilst helping elderly male get out of bath.
3 events were during routine work	PI687 - Relates to a crew member slipping off the step due to the appliance's height being altered.
	PI1691 - Relates to a slip off a kerb whilst exiting the parked car
	1656 - Relates to FF hurting his knee after coming off a kerb. RIDDOR.
3 events were classed as 'other'	PI1695 - Relates to a young girl having skin reddening on her left arm after spilling hot chocolate during an open day.
	PI1696 - Cleaner burned her finger on the socket in Bedroom 1 after hoovering.
	1642 - U18 received injury to head on station visit. BASIC SI.
	Totalling 28 personal injuries
	93 Calendar Days / 44 Working days lost.

Table A1: Personal Injuries Reported during Q1 & Q2 2023 – 2024

A2. Vehicle Collisions

Of the **85** H&S events, **23** relate to the category of Vehicle Collisions, which are further described in Table A2 below. Events highlighted in grey are attributed to the FRS driver. If these collisions occurred whilst responding to an operational incident the category of response has been provided in bold. Driver training have sent out a Bulletin item for crews to familiarise themselves with the 'Banks person' CTR technical

knowledge package and requesting that when contact is made with tree branches, crews should contact the local highways team to get the hazard removed.

Sub-Categories	Breakdown of Vehicle Collisions in Each Sub-Category
1 event was during operational training	VA1691 - Relates to damage to a fire appliance and gateway of a property.
9 events were during routine work	VA1686 - Relates to vehicle damage caused by truck wallowing in narrow lane and hitting a low branch
	VA1687 - Relates to vehicle accident in Workshop yard as driver was manoeuvring and reversing one appliance, he hit another.
	1636 - Relates to hydrant van being damaged by an unknown vehicle when driver was carrying out hydrant inspections.
	1637-Vehicle accident that occurred while driving today in Lower Strensham while going around a sharp bend.
	1640 - Vehicle collision involving 282 at Station 28. BASIC SI.
	1670 - Relates to vehicle damage by unknown person, date unknown
	1675 - Relates to damage to appliance from another car whilst parked in a car park
	1680 - Relates to a vehicle accident where it hit Station 49 bay doors.
13 events were during operational activities	1681 - Relates to damage caused to appliance whilst moving it around Station 46
	VA1688 - Relates to damage caused to two properties after appliance couldn't manoeuvre in drive due to fences, overhanging shrubs, cars and being dark.
	VA1682 - Relates to damage caused to appliance whilst pulling over for another vehicle on a narrow lane. Damage caused by hidden branch in hedge to mirror.
	VA1684 - Relates to vehicle damage caused by hitting a branch whilst travelling down a narrow lane on route to an incident.
	VA1690 - Relates to vehicle accident whilst on route to an incident. Didn't know they had hit another car until they returned to the station after the incident
	VA1683 - Relates to damage caused to vehicle and garden wall whilst responding to an incident. EMERGENCY PROMPT RESPONSE
	VA1689 - Relates to damage caused to Appliance 262 rear nearside door after driving out the bay door with the door open. Locker sensor alarm was actuating but it was silenced as there is a known fault with the sensor. EMERGENCY PROMPT RESPONSE
	1652 - Relates to vehicle accident on the way to an incident. EMERGENCY RESPONSE.
	1655 - Vehicle accident whilst responding to incident (other party fault). EMERGENCY RESPONSE.
	1657 - Relates to damage caused to a parked car whilst appliance passed by on the way to a house fire. EMERGENCY RESPONSE.
	1669 - Relates to vehicle damage caused on the way to an incident. EMERGENCY RESPONSE.
	1672 - Relates to Volvo accident whilst SC was responding to an incident. EMERGENCY RESPONSE.
	1677 - Relates to damage caused by tractor and trailer which didn't stop
1679 - Relates to vehicle accident whilst responding to an incident. EMERGENCY RESPONSE.	
	Totalling 23 vehicle collisions

Table A2: Vehicle Collisions Reported during Q1 & Q2 2023 – 2024

A3. Property or Equipment Damage

Of the **85** H&S events, **10** relate to the category of Damage to Property or Equipment. These are further described in Table A3 below.

Sub-Categories	Breakdown of Property or Equipment Damage in Each Sub-Category
2 events were during Operational Training	1634 - SRT Mud Lance Hose failure during training. BASIC SI.
	1651 - Relates to a set malfunction during live training as LDV fell out of mask. BASIC SI.
2 events were during Operational activities	PE1654 - Relates to Holmatro cutters being damaged having been used on a metal chain to access a building fire with persons reported.

	PE1655 - Relates to the boat hull being damaged whilst rescuing people beached on a barge.
3 events were during Routine work	PE1652 - Relates to damage caused to an office door. After investigation, it was a Police officer who got locked out of the room and no-one was on station. 1633 - Relates to weather damage to brickwork on station wall. 1673 - Relates to fob access post damaged due to LGV driver reversing. BASIC SI.
3 events were classed as Other	PE1653 - Relates to wall at Fire Station being knocked over by member of the public and them driving off. PE1656 - Relates to damage caused to fascia board by contractor who was reversing down the side of Station 47. 1647 - Appliance could not mobilise due to technical fault
	Totalling 10 property or equipment damage

Table A3: Property or equipment damage during Q1 & Q2 2023 – 2024

A4. Near Hits or Causes for Concern

Of the **85** H&S events, **22** relate to the category of Near Hits or Causes for Concern - these are further described in Table A4 below.

Sub-Categories	Breakdown of Near Hits or Causes for Concern in Each Sub-Category
4 events were during Operational Training	1641 - FF removes BA mask STF training (Due to hay fever / medication) 1635- Relates to FF received minor injury to knee when suction coupling failed during quarterly test. NHCC1680 - Relates to BA set malfunction found during check following use at Defford. NHCC1689 - Relates to a faulty BA mask. BASIC SI.
8 events were during Operational Activities	1648 - Appliance turned out for incident from station, motorist ignored Wig Wag lights potential collision between appliance and motorist. 1650 - Relates to a near hit due to other driver ignoring flashing wigwags outside station 1653 - Relates to a near hit due to other driver ignoring flashing wigwags outside station 1654 - Relates to a near hit due to other driver ignoring flashing wigwags outside station 1664 - Relates to a near hit with a SC responding to an incident 1678 - Relates to over border appliance not being competent to attend house fire NHCC1682 - Relates to Holmatro cutters being damaged having been used on a metal chain to access a building fire with persons reported. NHCC1679 - Relates to airbag deploying from vehicle whilst spreaders were being used.
4 events were during Routine Work	1667 - Relates to a near hit whilst appliance was leaving Station 26 due to driver approaching from right and ignoring wigwags. 1676 - Relates to a used needle being found in the hydrant pit. 1655 - relates to near hit whilst exiting Station 26 as a van driver ignored the wigwags NHCC1687 - Relates to faulty appliance bay doors.
6 events were classed as other	1645 - No showering facilities available after possible exposure 1646 - No showering facilities available after possible exposure NHCC1683 - An external company had left a ladder up against Station 32 without safety guards on. NHCC1684 - Relates to damage caused to tunic after being left in the back of a Land Rover for around 8 months, possible rodent damage NHCC1685 - Relates to Control operators having issues with taking calls. NHCC1686 - Relates to FF losing her ID card whilst transferring stations. Current investigations at Station 21 due to some items going astray.
	Totalling 22 near hits or causes for concern

Table A4: Near Hits or Causes for Concern Reported during Q2 2023 – 2024

A5. Violence or Aggression

Of the **85** H&S events, **1** relates to the category of Violence or Aggression.



Sub-Categories	Breakdown of Violence or Aggression in Each Sub-Category
1 event was during Operational Activities	1644- FF subjected to verbal abuse by motorist.

A6. Exposure or Contamination

Of the **85** H&S events, **1** relates to the category of Exposure or Contamination.

Sub-Categories	Breakdown of Violence or Aggression in Each Sub-Category
1 event was during Operational Activities	SE02 – Relates to illness from contamination during a water rescue.

An exposure event will be investigated where a harmful substance has entered the body through a route e.g., by inhalation, ingestion, absorption, by injection or when the body is irradiated. Where there is uncertainty as to whether any exposure has taken place, or this is negligible, then this would be recorded as a potential exposure and an investigation would not normally be instigated, unless related symptoms develop.

A contamination event occurs where a substance has adhered to or is deposited on people, equipment or the environment, creating a risk of exposure and possible injury or harm.

There were ten reports of skin reddening during Q1 & Q2. Skin reddening is recorded following training or incidents where, immediately following exposure to high temperatures, there is some skin discolouration which may be a result of this exposure. These occurrences are recorded and if they continue past 24 hours these are reported as a Personal Injury Safety Event.

45 potential exposure/contamination events/incidents were recorded during Q1 & Q2, involving firefighters. Potential exposure/contaminations are where personnel have been exposed (during training or incidents) to hazardous environments but where appropriate control measures were implemented. For example, when entering open water during training.

Health and Safety Quarterly Report Quarter 1 (April 23– June 23) Data Reporting

1. Performance Overview

All sickness absences Q1 2023-24

- Due to the on-call nature of the Retained Duty System, On-Call absence is not reflected in the below figures.

Table 1: All sickness absence by Workforce Group Q1 23-24

Days/Shifts lost due to sickness (per person)¹			
	Short	Long	Total
All Staff	1.51	2.76	4.27
WT	1.60	2.23	3.83
FC	2.13	7.23	9.36
Support Staff	1.21	2.93	4.13

Table 2: Main causes of sickness absence

Category	Days/Shifts Lost
Mental Health	777.68
MSK	330.89
Cancers & Tumours	136
Respiratory	132.94
Hospital/Post-Operative	88

Table 3: Causes of sickness absence Q1 2023-24 WT

Long Term Sickness		
Category	Days/Shifts Lost	Occurrences
Mental Health Other	200	2
Mental Health Stress	133	1
Musculo-Skeletal Lower	98	2
Musculo-Skeletal Shoulder	39	1
Hospital/Post Operative	50	1
Total	520	7
Short Term Sickness		
Category	Days/Shifts Lost	Occurrences
Gastro – Intestinal	33	10
MSK Lower Limb	103	8
MSK Back	12	3
MSK Upper Limb	16	1
MSK Other	13	1
MSK Shoulder	5	1
Mental Health Stress	48	4

¹ Figures provided by P&I

Respiratory Cold/Cough/Influenza	23	5
Respiratory Chest Infection	16	3
Respiratory Infection	17	3
Hospital/Post-Operative	38	3
Ear/Nose/Throat	40	3
Skin Condition	19	2
Eye/Vision	1.6	2
Headache/Migraine/Neurological	3	1
Gynaecological/Reproductive	2	1
Total	389.60	51

Table 4: Causes of sickness absence Q1 2023-24 FC

Long Term Sickness		
Category	Days/Shifts Lost	Occurrences
Mental Health Stress	169	1
Total	169	1
Short Term Sickness		
Category	Days/Shifts Lost	Occurrences
Pregnancy Related Disorder	17	1
Gastro – Intestinal	11	4
Headache/Migraine/Neurological	9.75	1
Respiratory Cold/Cough/Influenza	8	1
Eye Problems	4	1
Total	49.75	8

Table 5: Causes of sickness absence Q1 2023-24 Support Staff

Long Term Sickness		
Category	Days/Shifts Lost	Occurrences
Mental Health Stress	119.17	2
Mental Health Anxiety	66	1
Musculo-Skeletal – Back	32	1
Cancers and Tumours	136	2
Total	353.17	6
Short Term Sickness		
Category	Days/Shifts Lost	Occurrences
Respiratory Cold/Cough/Influenza	35.49	10
Respiratory Infection	33.45	6
Mental Health Stress	23.51	1
Mental Health Anxiety	19	3
MSK	12.89	3
Headache/Migraine/Neurological	10	4
Gastro-Intestinal	5.86	5
Gynaecological/Reproductive	5.35	3
Total	145.55	35

2. Health Management

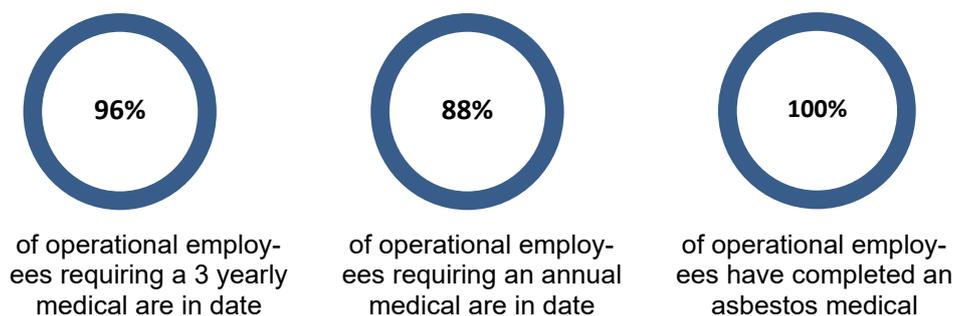
New management referrals Q1 2023-24

Category	Number of referrals
MSK	17
Mental Health	8
Skin Condition	2
Hospital/Post Operative	1
Cancers and Tumours	1
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory	1
Other (linked to fitness assessment)	1
Other (linked to return from maternity leave)	1
Total	32

- Of these referrals, 6 were not related to sickness absence as the employee remained in work. There were no referrals relating to work-related sickness, however, 5 of the 8 Mental Health referrals cited work related stress. **Please note that mental health is not counted towards work-related figures.**

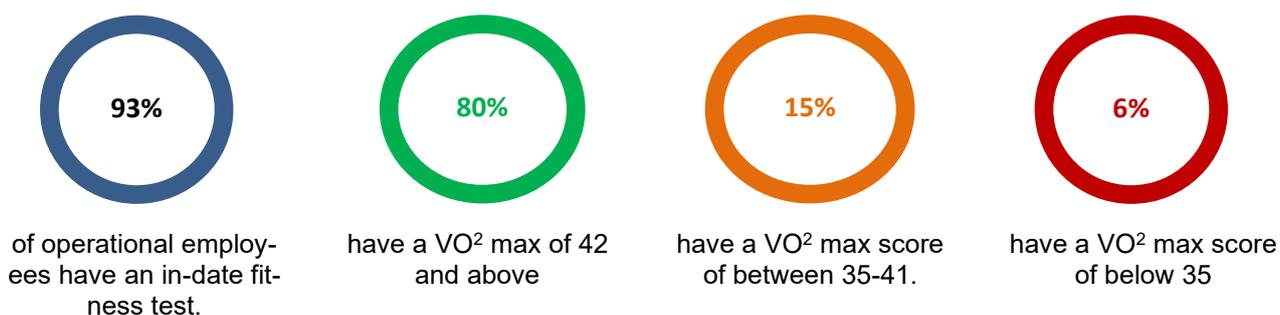
3. Routine Medical Assessment Compliance and Outcomes

- The medical data below shows information from the Operational Assurance Report at the end of Quarter 1 2023-2024:



4. Routine Fitness Assessment Compliance and Outcomes

- The fitness data below shows information from the Operational Assurance Report at the end of Quarter 1 2023-2024 and is supplemented by management information provided by the Fitness Advisor at the University of Worcester:



Health and Safety Quarterly Report Quarter 2 (July 23– Sept 23) HR Data Reporting

1. Performance Overview

All sickness absences Q2 2023-24

- Due to the on-call nature of the Retained Duty System, On-Call absence is not reflected in the below figures.

Table 1: All sickness absence by Workforce Group Q2 23-24

Days/Shifts lost due to sickness (per person) ¹			
	Short	Long	Total
All Staff	0.64	1.65	2.29
WT	0.65	1.34	1.99
FC	0.91	2.29	3.21
Support Staff	0.56	2.13	2.70

Table 2: Main causes of sickness absence

Category	Days/Shifts Lost
MSK	327.72
Mental Health	183.42
Respiratory	115.56
Cancers	102

2. Health Management

New management referrals Q2 2023-24

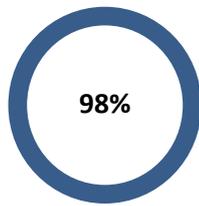
Category	Number of referrals
MSK	13
Mental Health	8
Headache/Migraine/Neurological	2
Other (linked to fitness assessment)	2
Skin Condition	1
Hospital/Post-Operative	1
Cancers	1
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory	1
Other (linked to reasonable adjustments)	1
Total	30

- Of these referrals, 9 were not related to sickness absence as the employee remained in work. There was 1 referral due to work-related sickness, however, 5 of the 8 Mental Health referrals cited work related stress. **Please note that mental health is not counted towards work related figures.**

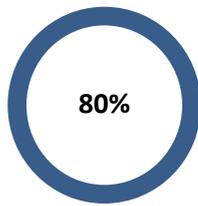
¹ Figures provided by P&I

3. Routine Medical Assessment Compliance and Outcomes

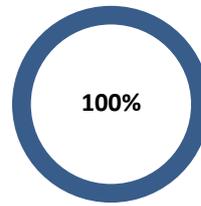
- The medical data below shows information from the Operational Assurance Report at the end of Quarter 2 2023-2024:



of operational employees requiring a 3 yearly medical are in date



of operational employees requiring an annual medical are in date



of operational employees have completed an asbestos medical

4. Routine Fitness Assessment Compliance and Outcomes

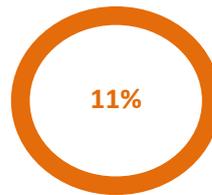
- The fitness data below shows information from the Operational Assurance Report at the end of Quarter 2 2023-2024 and is supplemented by management information provided by the Fitness Advisor at the University of Worcester:



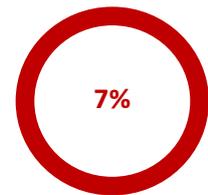
of operational employees have an in-date fitness test.



have a VO² max of 42 and above



have a VO² max score of between 35-41.



have a VO² max score of below 35