

## 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.

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#### 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><b>Our Organisation: Leadership and Corporate Commitment</b></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><b>Our Communities: Understand, engage and build good relationships</b></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;"><b>Our People: Develop, engage and understand</b></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;"><b>Our Partners: Working together</b></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>

- 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

- 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

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

### Ethnicity

- 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)<sup>1</sup>, 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%<sup>2</sup>).

### **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**<sup>3</sup>
  - iv) Median bonus gender pay gap**<sup>3</sup>
  - v) Proportion of men and women receiving a bonus payment**<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Office of National Statistics (2021) Census

<sup>2</sup> Home Office (2023) Fire statistics data tables - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>3</sup> 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><b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no resource implications arising from publishing the report.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Policy Links &amp; Core Code of Ethics</b> (Identify how proposals link with current priorities &amp; policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRMP</li> <li>• Core organisational strategies</li> <li>• People Strategy</li> <li>• Core Code of Ethics ad Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Positive Action Statement of Intent</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to EDI may damage our reputation as an employer of choice and attract public, media and political scrutiny.</li> <li>• Publishing equality information on at least an annual basis is a requirement of the PSED.</li> <li>• Publishing our gender pay gap calculations is a requirement of the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing engagement with staff networks and Representative Bodies continues to take place.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b> (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)</p>	<p>N/A</p>

## Supporting Information