

Safest People, Safest Places

## **Local Government Act 1972**

**A Meeting of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington Human Resources Committee will be held in the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on Tuesday 20 February 2024 at 10.00 am to consider the following business:-**

### **PART A**

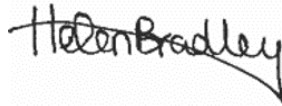
1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the previous meeting - 21 November 2023 (Pages 3 - 4)
3. Sickness Absence Performance Quarter Three 1 April 2023 - 31 December 2023 - Report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (Pages 5 - 12)
4. Health and Safety Performance Quarter Three 1 October 2023 - 31 December 2023 - Report of Health and Safety Manager (Pages 13 - 22)
5. Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services Spotlight Report Action Plan Update - Report of Director of People and Organisational Development (Pages 23 - 40)
6. Equality Reporting 2023 - Report of Director of People and Organisational Development (Pages 41 - 98)
7. NFCC Equality Diversity and Inclusivity Maturity Model - Report of Group Manager (Pages 99 - 108)
8. Additional Health Care Benefit - Report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (Pages 109 - 112)
9. Staff Survey Outcomes - Report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (Pages 113 - 118)
10. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration
11. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of exempt information

## **PART B**

**Items during which it is considered the meeting will not be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information)**

12. Employee Relations Update - Report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (Pages 119 - 124)
13. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

**PURSUANT** to the provisions of the above named Act, **I HEREBY SUMMON YOU** to attend the said meeting



Helen Bradley  
Clerk to the Combined Fire Authority  
for County Durham and Darlington

County Hall  
Durham  
DH1 5UL

**TO: The Members of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington Human Resources Committee**

**Durham County Councillors:**

Councillors C Marshall, A Batey, J Cairns, J Quinn and C Martin

**Darlington Borough Councillors:**

Councillors D Ray

### County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

Minutes of a meeting of the **Human Resources Committee** held at Fire HQ on **Tuesday 21 November 2023** at **1000 hours**.

**Present:** Cllr C Martin in the Chair

**Durham County Council:** Cllr J Cairns

**Darlington Borough Council:** D Ray

**Officers:** K Metcalfe

#### Part A

##### 1 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs A Batey, C Marshall and J Quinn.

##### 2 **Minutes of previous meeting – 5 September 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

##### 3 **Sickness Absence Performance Quarter Two 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023**

K Metcalfe introduced the report which provided an update on sickness performance for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.

Members commented on the rise in covid related absence noting that it was expected at this time of year.

The Committee **noted** the report.

##### 4 **Health and Safety Report Quarter Two 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023**

K Metcalfe introduced the report which provided Members with a summary of the Service's health and safety performance for the end of the second quarter of the 2023/24 reporting period.

Cllr D Ray highlighted the BA set failure near miss and queried the checks process. K Metcalfe confirmed that testing takes place at the beginning of every shift. The near miss was reported from a training exercise where the sets are older and used more frequently. K Metcalfe also noted that the wash facility was a fairly new process and procedures have been reviewed with Draeger.

The Committee **noted** the report.

## **5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

K Metcalfe introduced the report which updated members on the work carried out by the Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group.

Cllr D Ray commented that Fire Service attendance at Darlington pride had been noticed and appreciated.

The Committee **noted** the report.

## **Part B**

## **6 Employee Relations Update**

K Metcalfe introduced the report which provided details of informal and formal complaints received by the Service from its workforce as well as the instigation of any disciplinary action for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.

Discussion took place around the introduction of the report to assist with the Service's transparency and governance around misconduct.

Members commented on how useful the report would be going forward.

The Committee **noted** the report.

County Durham and Darlington  
**Fire and Rescue Authority**



**Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Human Resources Committee**

**20 February 2024**

**Sickness Absence Performance Quarter Three  
1 April 2023 – 31 December 2023**

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### **Report of Director of People and Organisational Development**

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#### **Purpose of the report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on sickness absence performance for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023.

#### **Background**

2. The effective management of absence is a key performance issue for any organisation. This is particularly important when operating in a climate of reduced financial and human resources.
3. The Service places significant emphasis on the effective management and reporting of sickness absence and Members have an important role to play in providing an overview of the arrangements that are in place and the performance that is achieved.

#### **Summary of Sickness Statistics**

4. The sickness statistics for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023 are calculated as average shifts/days lost per person.
5. The Service compares sickness levels to the targets that have been set for the year and to previous year's performance to provide a rounded view of sickness performance, and to help to identify any trends in particular areas.
6. For the purposes of the performance indicators, all covid-19 related absence is included.
7. Table 1 sets out the sickness statistics against three key performance indicators. These indicators were measures previously used to measure performance within the best value framework and the Service continues to use these measures to enable national comparisons to be undertaken at year end.

**Table 1 Key Sickness Statistics by Best Value Indicators**

Performance Indicator	Apr 23 to Dec 23	Apr 23 To Dec 23 Target	Variance	Apr 22 to Dec 22 (PYR)	Direction of Travel
Working shifts / days lost for <b>all staff</b> .	7.04	5.25	+1.79	7.06	Down
Working shifts / days lost due to sickness for all <b>Wholetime, Control and Non- Uniformed</b>	6.55	5.25	+1.3	6.51	Up
Working shifts / days lost due to sickness for all <b>Wholetime and Control</b>	7.41	5.25	+2.16	6.68	Up

8. All KPIs for sickness are above target at this point in the year however performance has improved in comparison with last year for all staff. Compared to the same reporting quarter last year, sickness shifts lost overall has decreased by 0.02%. MSK and Mental Health concerns are a large contributor to absence levels with 35.98% and 33.87% respectively. MSK has overtaken Mental Health as the main reason for absence this quarter and increases are seen over all categories.
9. WT Riders, and FDO/DD, have seen an increase since this quarter last year with Corporate seeing a decrease and remaining well under target for this point in the year. Control significantly increased in quarter 2 and remained high in quarter 3 but should drop in the last quarter as two of those off long term will be returning to work. Almost 77% of all absence is due to long term sickness which is slightly down on last quarter, and all staff groups demonstrate that in their figures.
10. Table 2 below shows a further breakdown over the specific staff groups that are employed by the Service.

**Table 2 Sickness by Staff Group**

Performance Indicator	Apr 23 to Dec 23	Apr 23 To Dec 23 Target	Variance	Apr 22 to Dec 22 (PYR)	Direction of Travel
WT Riders	6.66	5.25	+1.41	6.53	Up
FDO / DD	11.26	3.375	+7.89	7.1	Up
Control	7.66	6	+1.66	7.7	Down
RDS	8.64	6.75	+1.89	8.94	Down
Non-uniformed	3.95	5.25	-1.3	5.92	Down

## Wholetime Station Based Firefighters (Riders)

11. The detailed sickness information relating to WT riders is summarised below.

Description	Days/cost	%/£ change from Q3 2022-23
Total shifts lost to 31/12/2023	2143	+26.24%
Long term sickness	1611 (75%)	+43.32%
Short term sickness	532 (25%)	-7.16%
Approximate cost of sickness	£405,027	+35.12%

11. The WT rider category has seen a 26% increase in shifts lost when compared with the same reporting period in 2022/23. Shifts lost in Quarter 3 have been the highest so far this year predominantly due to long- term absence with 14 cases spanning across this quarter and 8 currently still absent which is higher than normal for this time of year.

12. Mental Health currently accounts for over 28% of total absence which has reduced since last quarter from 37%. This type of absence includes anxiety, low mood, work related stress, bereavement and family related stress. Work-related stress accounts for 5% of all mental health absence in this category. Those concerned continue to receive support via the POD Team, line managers, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and occupational health. Mental Health has overtaken MSK as the reason for sickness this year so far.

13. MSK accounts for over 48% of all absence so far this year which is an increase compared to last quarter. The absences cover the spectrum of MSK issues however lower limb accounts for over 45% of all MSK absences with 4 long term cases spanning across the quarter accounting for most of this. There is no specific trend / reason identified to investigate further at this moment in time as all 4 of these long-term cases have returned to work in early January. The Service continue to promote the physiotherapy provision and support individuals back to work at the earliest opportunity. Those waiting for operations, however, are likely to have lengthy absences unless an intervention from Benenden Health is appropriate.

14. An increase in short term absence can be noted in October however, these reduced back to normal levels over November and December. The main reasons for short term absence are predominantly Gastroenteritis and cold/flu equating to 31% and 23% respectively.

15. This category is currently over target at this point in the reporting year.

## Flexible Duty Officers and Day Duty

16. The detailed sickness information relating to FDO and DD staff is summarised below.

### FDO

Description	Days/cost	%/£ change from Q3 2022-23
Total shifts lost to 31/12/2023	228	+52%
Long term sickness	199	+66%
Short term sickness	29	-3%
Approximate cost of sickness	£61,302	+74%

## Day Duty

Description	Days/cost	%/£ change from Q3 2022-23
Total shifts lost to 31/12/2023	290	+96%
Long term sickness	262	+232%
Short term sickness	28	-59%
Approximate cost of sickness	£67,964	+110%

17. The FDO category and the DD category have both seen high levels of absence again this quarter predominantly linked to long term absence. The main reasons are MSK and mental health. Short term absence in both categories is low which is positive. Most of these cases have been resolved and individuals have returned to work however, two in the FDO category will continue into the next reporting quarter.

18. This category is over target at this point in the reporting year.

## Control

19. The detailed sickness information relating to Control staff is summarised below.

Description	Days/cost	%/£ change from Q3 2022-23
Total shifts lost to 31/12/2023	140	-20%
Long term sickness	92	+12%
Short term sickness	48	-48%
Approximate cost of sickness	£25,149	-14%

20. The Control category of staff has lost 140 shifts so far this year, most of which have happened in this reporting quarter relating to mental health. Whilst 2 cases have been resolved in early January, one remains and is likely to span across quarter 4. Only 4 shifts were lost to short term absence over quarter 3. In comparison with last year's figures, there has still improvement within this category.

21. This category is over target at this point in the reporting year,

## Non- Uniformed

22. The detailed sickness information relating to non-uniformed staff is summarised below.

Description	Days/cost	%/£ change from Q3 2022-23
Total shifts lost to 31/12/2023	400.72	-30%
Long term sickness	264 (66%)	-23%
Short term sickness	136.72 (34%)	-41%
Approximate cost of sickness	£38,168	-30%

23. This category has seen a decrease of 30% in shifts lost when compared with the same reporting period in 2022/23. There have been 2 cases of long-term sickness for various reasons spanning across the whole quarter however only 1 is currently still absent. Overall, sickness shifts have improved in this area and should continue to going forward. The main reason for short term absence were predominantly for cold / flu related.

24. This category is currently under target at this point in the reporting year.



## Retained Duty System

25. The detailed sickness information relating to RDS staff is summarised below.

Description	Days/cost	%/£ change from Q3 2022-23
Total shifts lost to 30/09/2023	1086.86	-2%
Long term sickness	969.88 (89%)	+13%
Short term sickness	116.98 (11%)	-52%
Approximate cost of sickness	£102,708	+5%

26. The RDS category has seen a small decrease on shifts lost when compared with the same reporting period in 2022/23. Like WT, a rise in long term absence has been seen however the majority have now returned to work. There is one case which is being progressed for ill health retirement. Short term sickness on a positive note has decreased by 52%, like WT most of this has been due to colds / flu.

27. This category is over target for the reporting year.

### Action Taken

28. Sickness levels will continue to be monitored closely with regular analysis for any trends and patterns and instigation of the attendance management triggers where appropriate. Monthly meetings have been put in place to discuss case management with the People and Organisational Development (POD) Business Partners and the Director of POD to ensure action can be taken quickly where appropriate and identify any longer-term risks. This allows a closer scrutiny of our case management.

29. A piece of work has been undertaken by the POD team to further investigate the 'other' category of sickness and ensure that those logged in the system had been appropriately. The team are also chasing any absences where no reason is entered into the system. As part of this piece of work some additional categories have been added to the system for reasons such as bereavement, post operative, migraine and viral infection which were the most common reasons for absence under this category.

30. The Service have implemented an 18-month trial of an additional health care benefit. In the first two weeks the services of Benenden have been accessed by 10 members of staff which is a positive start to the trial. This included access the 24/7 GO, diagnostics, physiotherapy and one surgery has been arranged. The HRC will be kept up to date with the usage figures during the trial.

31. The Services Trauma Support Team has recruited 5 new members who will be trained in partnership with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service in February 2024. This will strengthen the Services offer around mental health and peer support.

### National Fire Service Data Comparison

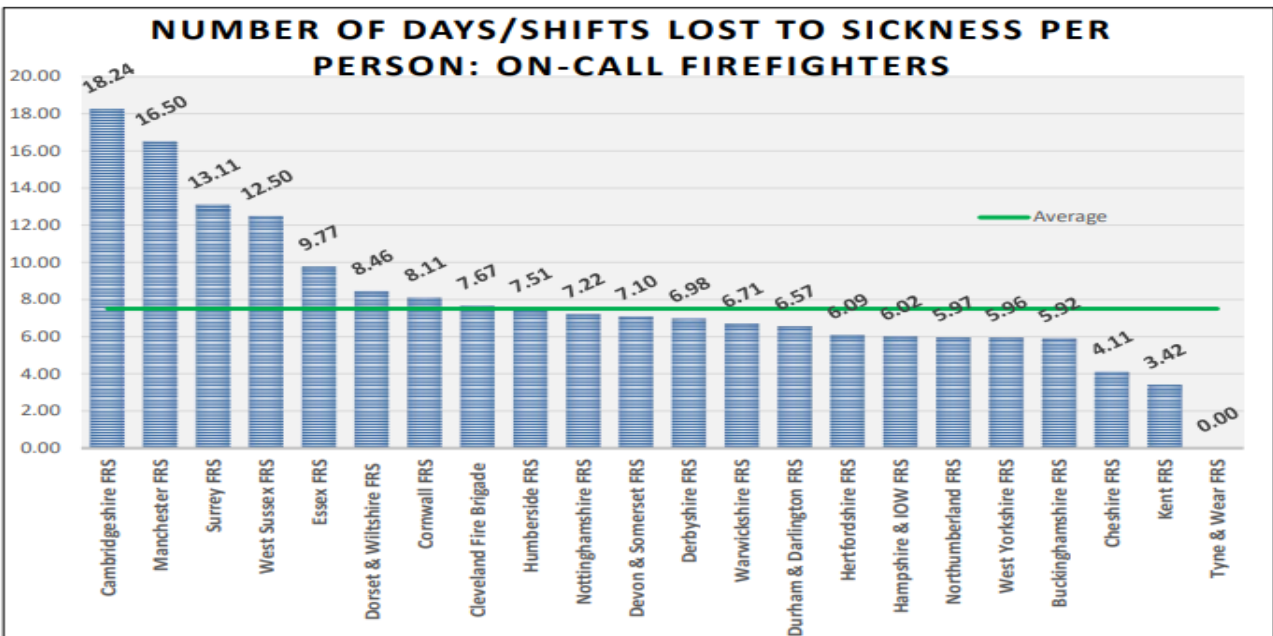
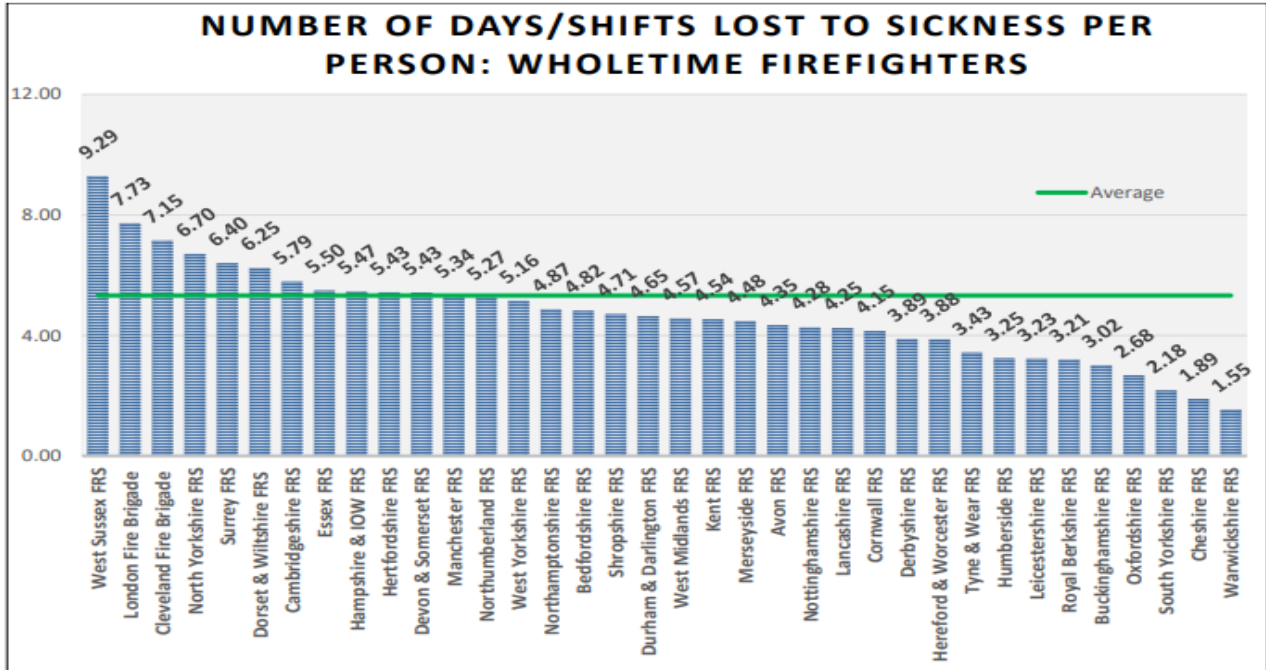
32. This data is supplied via the National OH Performance Report which is compiled by Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB). All fire and rescue services (FRS) are asked to supply data for the main categories of employees; WT, Control, RDS and Non-uniformed.

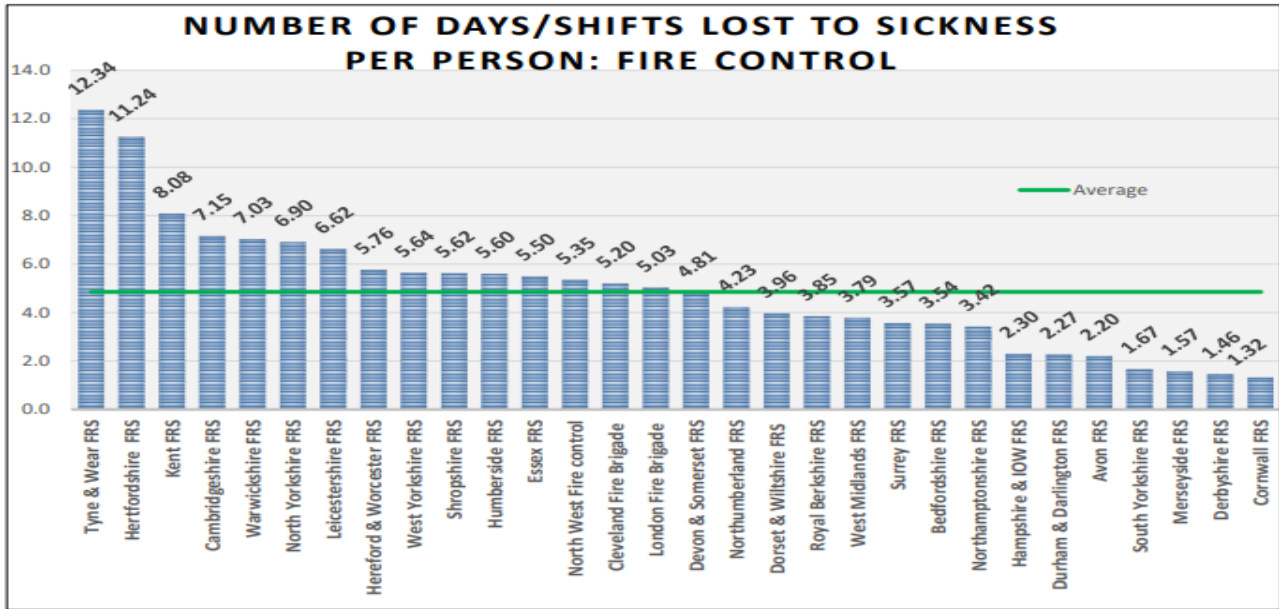
33. There is a set calculation which all FRS supplying information must adhere to, to ensure the data can be used to give an accurate comparison, however this varies to our own reporting. The data helps our Service benchmark against other FRS in terms of sickness absence rates. The data range is for April to September 2023 (Quarter 2).

34. It should be noted that due to recording mechanisms and sickness absence policies within the various FRS' Covid 19 Sickness for some FRS' has not been included. This must therefore be borne in mind when comparing sickness levels.
35. Performance across indicators (Appendix A) is below the national average which is positive in comparison with other FRS's.
36. Thirty-five FRS' submitted data for the period April – September 2023. During this period, from the 37 Fire Services who submitted data, there has been 189,633 shifts lost to sickness absence arising from 19,479 separate occurrences for all staff groups equating to 5.47 shifts per member of staff. Musculo-Skeletal (62,985 shifts) accounting for 33% of all sickness absence followed by Mental Health (50,089 shifts) which accounts for 26% of sickness absence. The third main cause of sickness absence during Quarter Two 2023/24 was Gastro-Intestinal reasons with 11,628 shifts lost, accounting for 6% of all sickness absence. This was closely followed by Respiratory reasons with 10,365 shifts lost (5% of sickness absence). Historically, Respiratory reasons has been the third highest cause of sickness absence.

### **Recommendation**

37. Members are asked to note and comment on the contents of this report.





County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



## Human Resources Committee

20 February 2024

### Health and Safety Performance Quarter Three

1 October 2023 – 31 December 2023

## Report of Health and Safety Manager

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present a summary of the Service’s health and safety performance to the end of the third quarter of the 2023/24 reporting period.

### 2. Background

- 2.1. The Health and Safety Team are positioned and work in Emergency Response and are responsible for coordinating health and safety within County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS). The Health and Safety Team’s performance is measured through four performance indicators (PI) which are outlined below:

- PI69 number of accidents to personnel
- PI71 number of vehicle accidents classified as CDDFRS driver's fault
- PI73 number of local health and safety investigations incomplete after 28 days
- PI74 number of health and safety investigation actions overdue their specified completion date.

- 2.2 A summary of performance for indicators PI69 and PI71 for quarter three for the previous five years is outlined below. PI73 and PI74 are monthly indicators introduced in 20/21 and are not designed to be comparable year by year.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
PI69 Number of Accidents to Personnel	14	6	11	8	3

PI71 Number of Vehicle Accidents (CDDFRS Fault)	16	11	11	20	16
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Table. 1 Health and safety performance for the previous 5 years

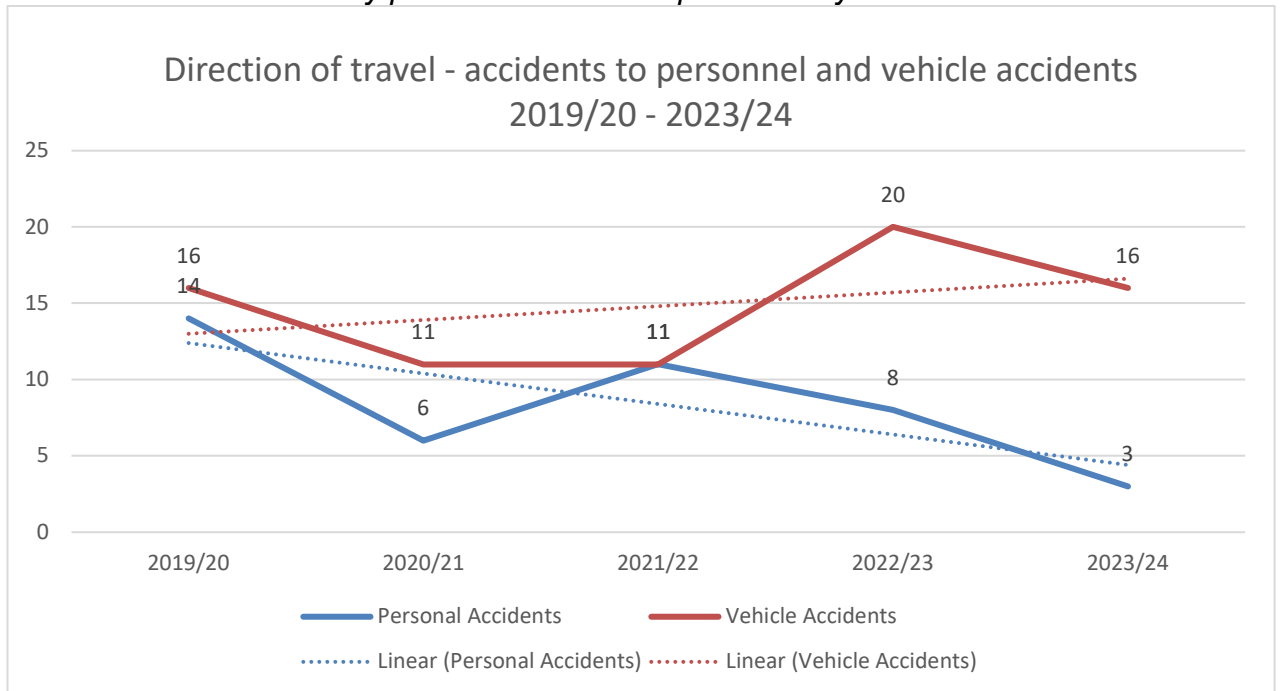


Figure. 1 Direction of travel for accidents to personnel and vehicle accidents 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter totals 2019/20 – 2023/24.

### 3. Current Performance

3.1. The current performance year to date (YTD) is as follows:

2023/24	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
PI69 Number of Accidents to Personnel	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	-
PI71 Number of Vehicle Accidents (CDDFRS Driver's Fault)	0	4	2	0	3	3	1	1	2	-	-	-	-
PI73 Number of local Health and Safety Investigations Incomplete after 28 days	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	-	-	-	-
PI74 Number of Health and Safety Actions	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	-

Overdue Their Specified Date																				
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Table. 2. Year to date performance (\*note PI73 and PI74 are not cumulative indicators)

### PI69 Number of accidents to personnel

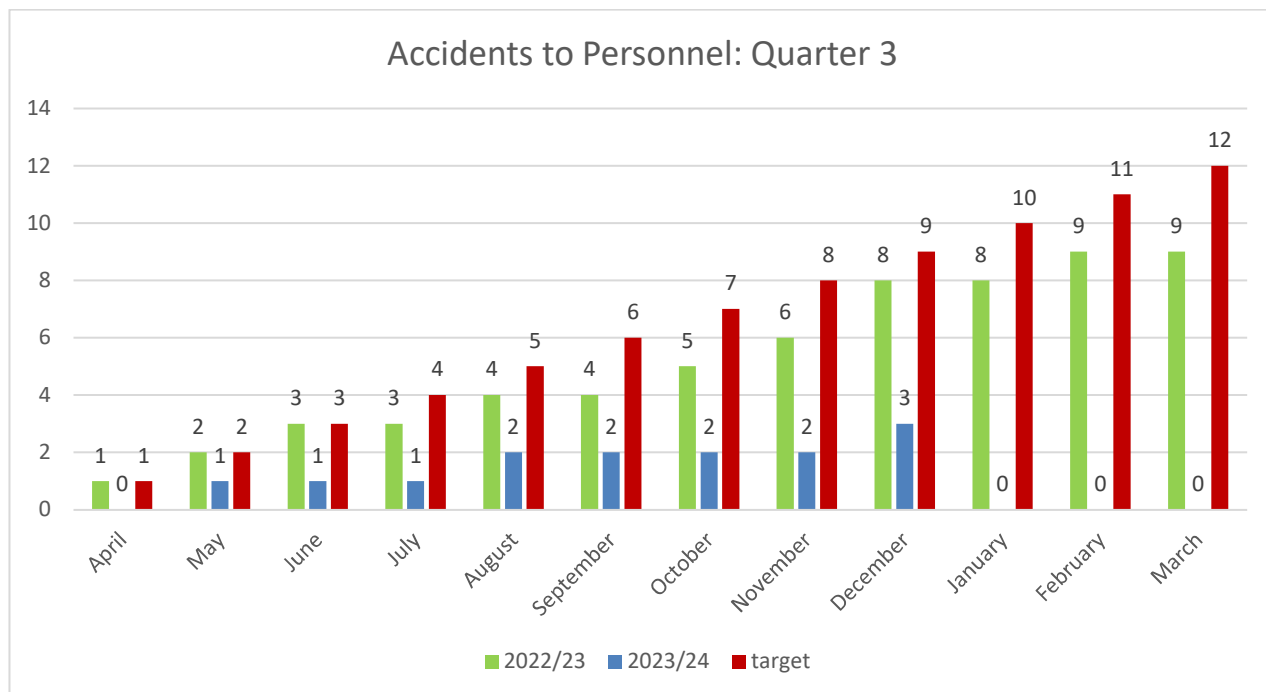


Figure. 2 Number of accidents to personnel (running total) for the current year (blue) and the target (red) previous year (green)

3.2. One accident to personnel has been reported during the quarter three reporting period. This is aligned to the set Service target for accidents to personnel and at this stage of reporting performance is below last year’s figures.

3.3. This incident was recorded as:

- a) On leaving Consett Fire Station with kit for detachment a firefighter struck their head on a magnetic lock recently fitted to the door recess, causing a minor cut – no time off work.

The door in question was immediately taken out of use until the contractor can return to relocate the magnet to a safe location (ongoing, awaiting modification to door header). Temporary measures to cover the offending item with protective foam and hazard warning tape also implemented.

## PI71 Number of vehicle accidents (CDDFRS Driver Fault)

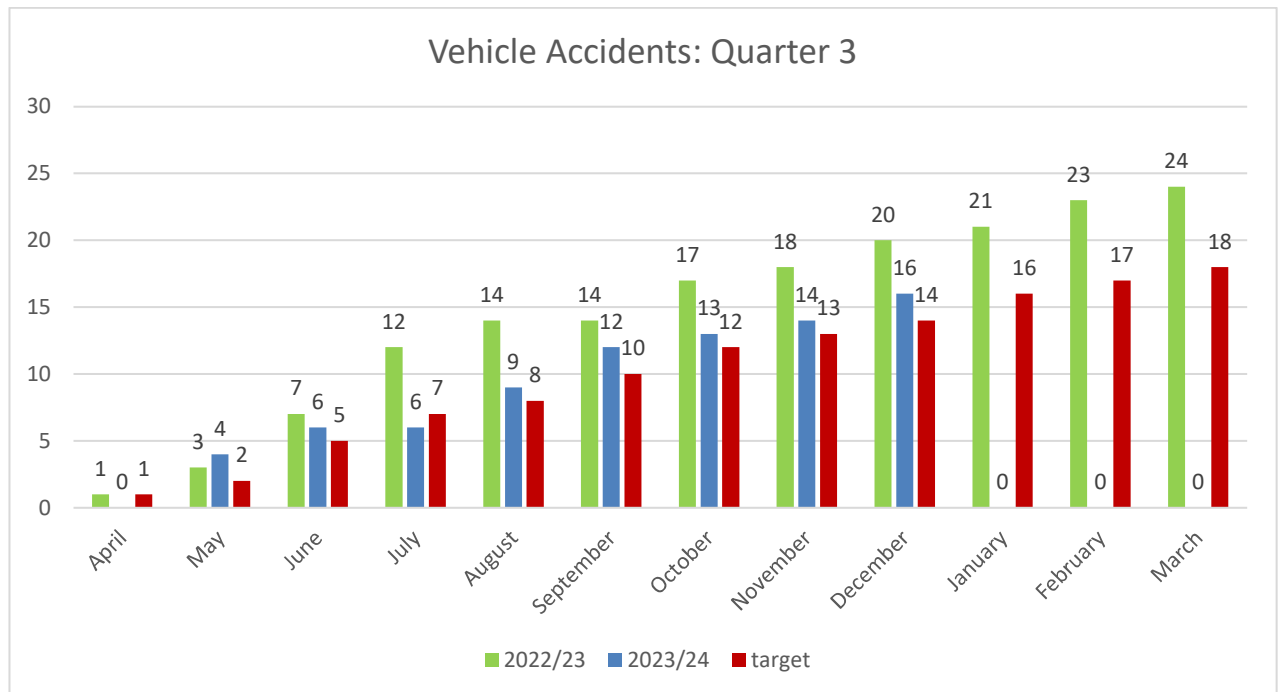


Figure. 3 Number of vehicle accidents (running total) for the current year (blue) and the target (red) previous year (green).

3.4. Four potentially at fault vehicle accidents have been reported during the quarter three reporting period. This is below the set target of five and below last year's total for quarter three. There continues to be ongoing proactive joint working between Health and Safety and Driver Training sections to review and learn from any such occurrences.

3.5. These incidents were recorded as:

- a) On returning from a school visit the wing mirror of an appliance made contact with an approaching / passing LGV whilst slowing down on a narrow road, causing minor damage to both vehicle mirrors.
- b) Having completed home fire safety visits an appliance made unknown contact with a member of the public's vehicle that was following on a roundabout. Currently being investigated to determine if any fault of the service driver or the following vehicle was too close.
- c) Whilst stationary at the scene of a reported vehicle fire in a layby off the A19 a passing HGV struck the wing mirror of an appliance, causing damage to such. On investigation due to the position of the incident vehicle the appliance had struggled to fit entirely into the layby and even though blue lights were illuminated poor light and weather conditions likely contributed to the incident.
- d) On pulling up at a fire within an industrial compound one of the two open steel gates blew closed due to high winds, causing minor damage to the plastic wing mirror cover of an appliance.



3.6. The Health and Safety Team take vehicle accidents seriously and together with the Driver Training Team and FBU Health and Safety Representative continue to assess and identify any solutions to the evidenced trend that the majority of vehicle incidents are slow speed manoeuvring. Current working streams include:

- a) Reintroduction of Driving Standard Panels.
- b) Incident management groups.
- c) Learn Pro reminders for vehicle manoeuvring.

**PI73 investigations incomplete after 28 days**

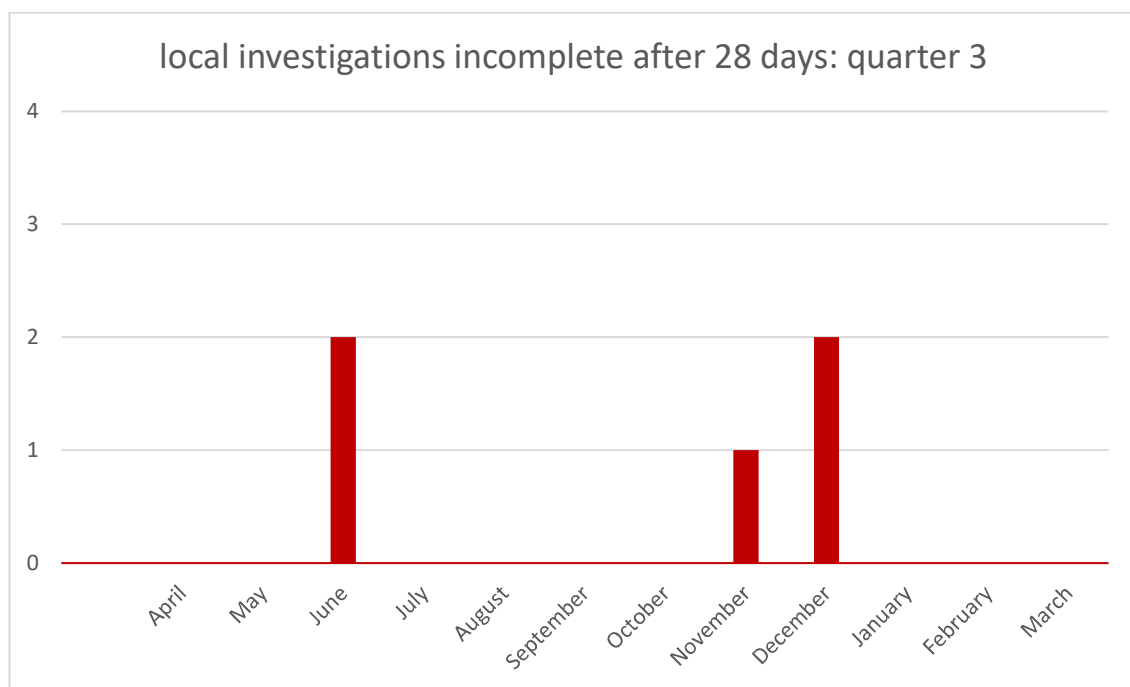


Figure. 4 Number of investigations incomplete after 28 days.

3.7. A total of 38 investigations have been carried out during this reporting year to date. 13 investigations have been conducted in this quarter.

- Q1 - 10
- Q2 - 15
- Q3 - 13

3.8. The Health and Safety Team support officers in completion of local investigations within the 28 days and continued to do so for the three investigations that failed to be completed within the target timescale for the quarter three period. Two of these related to investigations into reported Breathing Apparatus (BA) set failures, the investigation of which was delayed due to awaiting inspection reports from the manufacturers Draeger, that can take up to 72 days. The third related to an extended vehicle accident investigation, due to delays in availability of appliance CCTV and other workload of the investigator involved.

**PI74 Number of health and safety actions overdue their specific date**

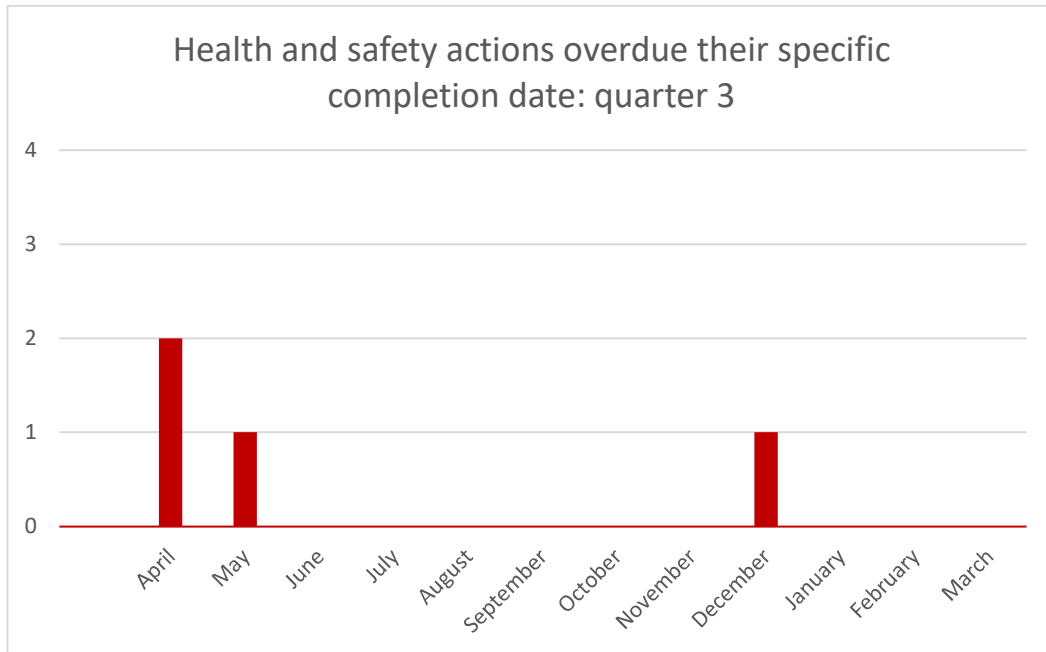
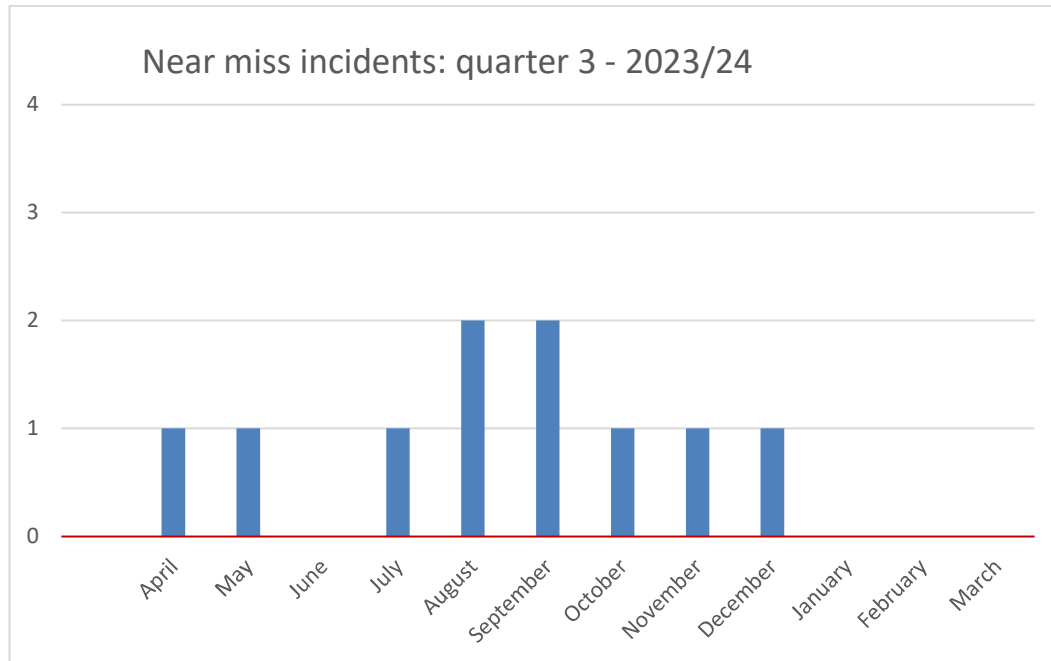


Figure. 5 Health and Safety actions overdue their specific completion date.

- 3.9. The outstanding action at the end of the quarter three reporting period is related to a cause for concern raised regarding poor lighting of the drill yard and tower at Sedgefield Fire Station, highlighted during dark night RDS evening training sessions. The Estates Section are awaiting a reply from the Council Planning Dept over the possibility of installing additional lighting without causing nuisance to neighbouring properties. Temporary measures using portable lighting are in place to improve the situation in the short term.

## Near Misses



*Figure. 6 Reported near misses in each month.*

3.10. A total of ten near miss incidents have been reported in this period to date. We had three near miss incidents in quarter three.

- Q1 - 2
- Q2 - 5
- Q3 - 3

- a) Two near miss incidents related to Breathing Apparatus (BA) set failures in live training exercises. Investigations of the sets in question by the manufacturer Draeger were inconclusive and could not replicate the reported faults, but they have suggested that our set washing and drying procedures be reviewed. A site meeting with a specialist from Draeger to investigate this further is planned.
- b) On returning from an incident having felt steering vibration the driver pulled over to find that some wheel nuts on the appliance had become loose. This type of incident was previously reported and fully investigated earlier in the year; the appliance in question had not had the planned improvements carried out but was scheduled for such in the very near future. These have now been completed for all appliances.

## Cause for Concern Incidents

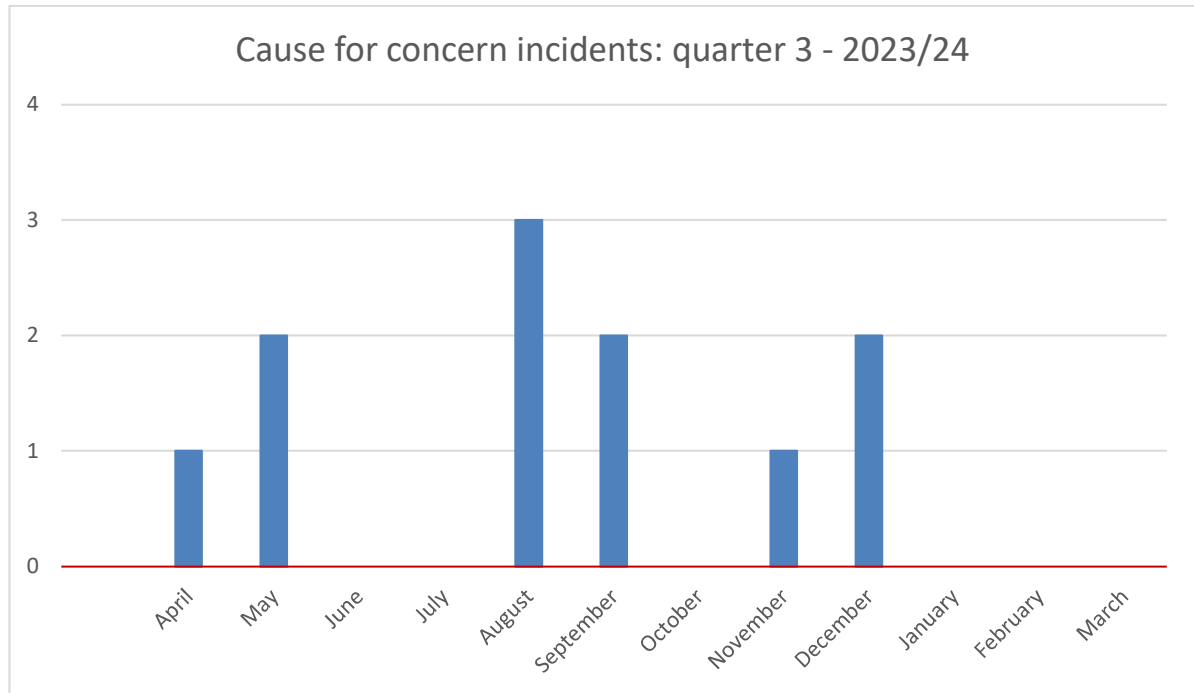


Figure. 7 Reported cause for concerns in each month

3.11 A total of eleven cause for concern incidents have been reported in this year to date. There have been three cause for concerns reported in quarter three:

- Q1 - 3
  - Q2 - 5
  - Q3 - 3
- a) Submission regarding poor lighting of the drill yard and tower at Sedgefield Fire Station, highlighted during dark night RDS evening training sessions. Temporary measures using portable lighting are in place to improve the situation in the short term, whilst Estates Section await a reply from the Council Planning Dept over the possibility of installing additional lighting without causing nuisance to neighbouring properties.
  - b) Submission by an officer in Control Room regarding a reduced number of competent operators being on shift over a particular nightshift. Ongoing actions in place to train additional staff and provide resilience in control.
  - c) Submission regarding damage sustained to a service van operated from the Training Centre, in relation to the collection and transportation of pallets used as combustible material during live fire training. Investigation ongoing to determine the cause of the damage and why not reported in a timely manner.

#### **4. Summary**

- 4.1. The culture within the Service and overall performance comparable to the sector is of a good standard and following completion of our ongoing annual proactive visits the general health and safety within CDDFRS will continue to evolve and continuously improve.
- 4.2. Performance in some areas is still not where we would like it to be, however new ways of internal team working should assist with monitoring and identifying performance and areas where support is required earlier, to prevent underperformance in areas of the team's influence.
- 4.3. The annual health and safety visits are key to employee engagement and raising health and safety awareness. The reporting process for adverse events including near misses and cause for concerns demonstrate the proactive attitude our staff have.

#### **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1. Members are asked to **note** and **comment** on the contents of this report.

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**Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Human Resources Committee**

**20 February 2024**

### **Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services Spotlight Report Action Plan Update**

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#### **Report of Director of People and Organisational Development**

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##### **Purpose of report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Human Resources Committee (HRC) as to the progress made towards completion of the Action Plan relating to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Values and Culture Report and the recommendations made.

##### **Background**

2. On the 30 March 2023, the HMICFRS released its spotlight report "Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services" which was commissioned by The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire.
3. A paper was delivered to members of the HRC at the May 2023 meeting outlining the contents of the report and advising of the current position of CDDFRS as of April 2023. Updates on progress against the action plan outlined in appendix A.

##### **Progress since the previous update**

4. The recent changes Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exemptions) Order 1975 and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) eligibility has brought about changes to working practices relating to safeguarding. The Service have agreed a procedure for DBS checking and written to all staff to outline the change. Re-checks will commence in February 2024 ranging from enhanced with barring list checks to standard level depending upon the role in the organisation. This change is being managed through the project management framework.
5. The SLT development and 360 feedback process is complete. A follow up session has been planned for May 2024. A change to procedure now broadens out the 180-degree feedback process to ensure all line managers in the Service receive at least 2 peer assessments as part of the annual review.

6. Our processes around Employee relations have been reviewed and we are confident we have sufficient support in place. Further improvements made include the paper to the HRC regarding ongoing employee relations processes to ensure transparency of the process and ensure the committee members are sighted on the issues the service is dealing with. Our procedures for Dignity at Work are currently being reviewed in line with recent organisational learning.
7. A staff survey has been undertaken over September / October where we sought the views of our staff on what it is like to work at CDDFRS and how they believe we could improve. The results of which were positive and fed back to the workforce through our leadership forums in November. The service is currently engaging with staff across the service on the results and creating an action plan. A focus group was facilitated with the SLT in January 2024 to agree key areas of work which include Wellbeing, Leadership, and Autonomy.
8. Work on the Leadership Fire standards is progressing and is being monitored through the Project Board. The Project Assurance Manager is working closely with NFCC implementation leads to ensure progress is being made. The Fire Standards Board released updated standards on the 8 February 2024 for Leading the Service, Leading and Developing People and Safeguarding. All of which include amendments outlined in the recommendations. They have confirmed no new standards will be created specifically for handling misconduct and grievances.

### **Recommendations**

9. Members are requested to:
  - (a) **note** and **comment** on the content of the report.

Katherine Metcalfe, Director of People and Organisational Development, Ext.5665



### HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	Progress
	<b>Raising Concerns</b>				
1	By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their services provide a confidential way for staff to raise concerns and that staff are aware of whistleblowing processes.	CDDFRS	1 Oct 23	Complete	April 23 Independent complaints service available via DCC (Whistleblowing). Staff can report incidents anonymously with no fear of the repercussions. Independent reporting Service through Safecall Raising a Concern at Work procedure in place
2	By 1 October 2023, National Employers, the Local Government Association and the National Fire Chiefs Council should review any current independent arrangements whereby staff can raise concerns outside their FRS. They should then ensure that all FRS staff have access to an independent reporting line that can be used as a confidential way to raise concerns outside their own FRS.	National Employers, LGA, NFCC	1 Jun 23	Not owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
3	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review the support available for those who have raised concerns and take any action needed to make sure these provisions are suitable.	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	April 23 Robust Dignity at Work and Fairness at Work Policy and Procedure in place (which are utilised) and allow for staff to move locality or perpetrators to be suspended. Dignity at Work Advisors in place (posters and online) Suicide prevention officers in place (posters and online) Mental Health First Aiders in place (posters and online)

					<p>Welfare officers appointed to both parties as support (details included in correspondence). Access to Employee Assistance is advised through correspondence.</p> <p>Option for external investigation where required. Union support made available for members. Code of Ethics implemented and integrated. EDI training for managers via e-learning and face to face learning included in Leadership Programmes.</p> <p>September 23 CFO satisfied that provisions are suitable</p>
4	<p>By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should assure themselves that updates on how concerns are being handled are shared with those who have raised them. The updates should be given in an accessible way that encourages trust and confidence in the service response. Consideration should be given to creating professional standards function to handle conduct concerns in service (or from an external service) to have oversight of cases, to make sure they are conducted in a fair and transparent way and to act as a point of contact for all staff involved.</p>	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	<p>April 23</p> <p>Independent reporting Service through Safecall offers an online platform where concerns are shared, and updates are given both ways. Welfare officers appointed to both parties as support (details included in correspondence). They can be used to gain updates. Both parties are advised who is the IO and so can contact they for updates Dignity at work advisors is available to support either party. External investigations can be undertaken. ER register kept outlining the concern raised and any outcomes / appeal. Professional Standards department not deemed as feasible due to ongoing budgetary pressures. Could be re-evaluated if a high number of complaints are made.</p> <p>September 23 CFO satisfied that provisions are suitable.</p>

5	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure they provide accessible information for all staff and members of the public on how they can raise concerns and access confidential support (including through external agencies). Chief fire officers should also make sure accessible information is provided on how concerns and allegations will be investigated in a way that ensures confidentiality and is independent of the alleged perpetrator.	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	<p>April 23</p> <p>External complaints (from public)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear procedure in place (AD/2/11).</li> <li>• Complaints can be made by a range of different methods (social media, online, in writing, telephone).</li> <li>• There is an accessible leaflet available advising how complaints will be treated.</li> <li>• Complaints are all recorded on the web form and the data is stored securely with only designated people having access.</li> <li>• Generally, complains are handled internally however, there are route to externally investigate should the need arise.</li> <li>• There have been no complaints or concerns raised with the professionalism of our staff when undertaking HFSC's.</li> </ul> <p>Internal complaints (from Staff)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear procedures for Fairness at Work and Dignity at Work are in place.</li> <li>• Dignity at Work Advisors in place (posters and online)</li> <li>• Suicide prevention officers in place (posters and online)</li> <li>• Mental Health First Aiders in place (posters and online)</li> <li>• Welfare officers appointed to both parties as support (details included in correspondence).</li> </ul>
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Employee Assistance is advised through correspondence.</li> <li>• Option for external investigation where required.</li> </ul> <p>September 23 CFO satisfied that provisions are suitable.</p>
	<b>Background Checks</b>				
6	By 1 January 2024, the Home Office, working with the Ministry of Justice, should make sure that the Government incorporates fire and rescue authority employees within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 so that they are eligible for the appropriate DBS checks.	Home Office	1 May 24	Not Owned by CDDFRS - Complete	<p>CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation.</p> <p>September 23 Changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exemptions) Order 1975 has enabled Fire and Rescue Services employees to be checked through the DBS at a standard or enhanced level. These were agreed in July 2023 however, this does only allow for standard checks for Firefighters.</p> <p>Procedure for checking has been agreed and published. All staff will be subject to a rechecking process. Staff were advised of this via a written letter. Checking will commence in February 2024.</p>
7	By 1 May 2024, the Home Office, working with the fire and rescue sector, should make sure that the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations 2002, or a similar appropriate legislatively enabled solution, makes detailed provisions for fire and rescue services.	Home Office	1 May 24	Not Owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation

8	<p>By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and underpinning guidance. It should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clearly state the requirements for background checks undertaken by services.</li> <li>clarify the minimum requirements (including levels of DBS checks) for all roles, particularly roles where staff have access to vulnerable members of the public.</li> <li>define the standards required to embed a culture across fire and rescue services that empowers all members of staff and local communities to report concerns; and</li> <li>be subject to review following any legislative change.</li> </ul>	Fire Standards Board	1 Dec 23 - Complete	Not Owned by CDDFRS	<p>CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation.</p> <p>November 2023 The NFCC published guidance around DBS checking and the expectation on all FRSs to recheck the current workforce including a process for rechecking every 3 years.</p> <p>February 2024 The FSB have reviewed the standards around safeguarding, leading the service and leading and developing people which the service is currently working towards. These were published on 8 February 2024. No new standards are to be created.</p>
9	<p>By 1 January 2024, chief fire officers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>immediately review their current background checks arrangements, and make sure that suitable and sufficient background checks are in place to safeguard their staff and communities they serve; and</li> <li>make sure that appropriate DBS check requests have been submitted for all existing, new staff, and volunteers, according to their roles as identified by the Fire Standards Board</li> </ul>	CDDFRS	1 Jan 24	Complete	<p>April 23 Baseline personal security checks are undertaken on all prospective employees to safeguard the Service and the communities it serves. The checks that are undertaken prior to employment with the Service are Identity, Qualification, references (minimum 2 years), medical, DBS (where appropriate), right to work in the United Kingdom. We undertake a basic DBS check on all prospective staff at the point of entry regardless of role. We undertake enhanced DBS checks for those working in Community safety teams and with our cadets.</p>

					<p>September 23 Awaiting guidance from FSB to understand if a change of approach is required. Standard checks were implemented as soon as the legislation was passed.</p> <p>December 23 Guidance received which outlines the expectation of all FRSs to check the current workforce through a DBS check. The Service have agreed a procedure and checking will commence in February 24. This is managed through the project governance framework.</p>
10	By 1 September 2023, chief constables should make sure they are appropriately using their Common Law Police Disclosure powers in circumstances involving employees of fire and rescue services.	Police	1 Sep 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS	<p>CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation.</p> <p>The service has examples where this has happened, and information have been received from the police regarding members of staff.</p>
11	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle staff disclosures, complaints and grievances.	Fire Standards Board	1 Dec 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS – Complete	<p>CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation.</p> <p>February 2024 The FSB have reviewed the standards around safeguarding, leading the service and leading and developing people which the service is currently working towards. These were published on 8 February 2024. There will be no new standards created.</p>
12	By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have	CDDFRS	1 Mar 24	Ongoing	<p>April 23 Awaiting Standard to be released</p>

	implemented the standard on staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling.				<p>Current process for fire standard implementation sits with the Project Board and Project Assurance Manager. Once available, the process for FS implementation will be actioned. All completed standards are agreed by SLT.</p> <p>September 23 Awaiting Fire Standard to be issued.</p> <p>December 23 Whilst the standard has not been issued a number of additional measures have been implemented to assure the HMICFRS we have adequate provision for dealing with complaints. We are awaiting the outcomes of the thematic review although CDDFRS was not one of the 10 services who were chosen to take part.</p> <p>February 2024 The FSB have reviewed the standards around safeguarding, leading the service and leading and developing people which the service is currently working towards. These were published on 8 February 2024. There will be no new standards created and the service will continue to work towards these three. The huddle has been updated with our latest progress and a discussion around sign off will be had with the SLO on the 12 February.</p>
13	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how	Fire Standards Board	1 Dec 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS	<p>CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation.</p> <p>December 23</p>

	<p>services should handle misconduct and safeguarding-related allegations and outcomes. These should include requirements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conduct and complete investigations, whether or not the staff member under investigation leaves.</li> <li>• consider whether the incident requires immediate dismissal.</li> <li>• provide training for staff who are carrying out investigations; and</li> </ul> <p>ensure the diversity/neutrality of the investigation panel/person.</p>			- Complete	<p>Whilst the standard has not been issues a number of additional measures have been implemented to assurance the HMICFRS we have adequate provision for dealing with misconduct. We are awaiting the outcomes of the thematic review.</p> <p>February 2024 The FSB have reviewed the standards around safeguarding, leading the service and leading and developing people which the service is currently working towards. These were published on 8 February 2024.</p>
14	<p>By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on misconduct allegations and outcomes handling.</p>	CDDFRS	1 Mar 24	Ongoing	<p>April 23 Awaiting standard to be released. Current process for fire standard implementation sits with the Project Board and Project Assurance Manager. Once available, the process for FS implementation will be actioned. All completed standards are agreed by SLT.</p> <p>September 23 Awaiting Fire Standard to be issued.</p> <p>December 23 Whilst the standard has not been issues a number of additional measures have been implemented to assurance the HMICFRS we have adequate provision for dealing with misconduct We are awaiting the outcomes of the thematic review.</p> <p>February 2024 The FSB have reviewed the standards around safeguarding, leading the service and leading</p>



					and developing people which the service is currently working towards. These were published on 8 February 2024. No new standards will be produced. The huddle has been updated with our latest progress and a discussion around sign off will be had with the SLO on the 12 February.
15	By 1 October 2023, the Home Office should work with the National Fire Chiefs Council and fire and rescue service employers to make sure there is a process to handle misconduct allegations against chief fire officers. The Home Office should immediately notify HMICFRS of any allegations and outcomes that it is aware of.	Home Office	1 Oct 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation.  December 23 Awaiting further guidance to be issued
16	By 1 October 2023, the National Fire Chiefs Council should develop and manage a national barred list that holds details of staff who have been dismissed for gross misconduct (including staff who have already left services). It should ensure that this list is referred to in all appointment processes to prevent those who are barred from re-joining another service. After the College of Fire and Rescue has been established (see recommendation 25), it should take responsibility for managing the list	NFCC	1 Oct 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation.  December 23 Awaiting further guidance to be issued
17	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>involve allegations of a criminal nature that have the potential to affect public confidence in FRSs.</li> </ul>	CDDFRS	Immediate	Complete	We will comply with this requirement with immediate effect in providing disclosures in line with the non-identifiable case histories provided previously to HMICFRS. We are seeking clarification from HMICFRS on any more detailed reporting it requires, to enable us to ensure that we are also compliant with our GDPR obligations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are of a serious nature; or relate to assistant chief fire officers or those at equivalent or higher grades</li> </ul>				
18	By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that all parties are supported in relation to ongoing investigations	CDDFRS	1 Aug 23	Complete	April 23 As outlined in recommendation 5. September 23 CFO satisfied that provisions are suitable.
19	By 1 July 2023, the Home Office should examine whether any appeal processes for fire and rescue misconduct cases are appropriate.	Home Office	1 Jul 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation.  December 23 Awaiting further guidance to be issued
	Leadership				
20	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should have plans in place to ensure they meet the Fire Standards Board's leading the service standard and its leading and developing people standard.	CDDFRS	1 Jul 23	Complete	April 23 Current process for fire standard implementation sits with the Project Board and Project Assurance Manager. The Director of POD has been designated as the SPOC for both standards. All completed standards are agreed by SLT. September 23 A paper was delivered to SLT on the implementation of the Leadership Fire Standards. Work is currently underway. December 23 Work is still ongoing, but progress is being made against this standard.
21	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all senior leaders and managers (assistant chief fire officer equivalent and above) in service.	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	April 23 A 360 process is part of the current appraisal process for all staff including PO's. As part of wider SLT development / team building plans, a further 360 feedback process

					<p>will be undertaken utilising the Johari Window tool and linked to i3 and supportive leadership.</p> <p>September 23 360 has been undertaken with all of the senior team. Coaching and feedback to commence in September.</p> <p>December 23 360 feedback process is complete. Follow up day planned for May 24. The 180- feedback has been broadened to all line managers and included in EOY appraisal cycle.</p>
22	By 1 September 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all other leaders and managers in service. The process should include gathering feedback from a wide range of sources including colleagues and direct reports.	CDDFRS	1 Sep 23	Complete	<p>April 23 A 360 process is part of the current appraisal process for all staff including PO's. Procedure includes the requirement for peer feedback.</p> <p>December 23 We are considering ways to offer the 360 processes to all staff however, a 180 process is being used currently.</p>
23	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should seek regular feedback from staff about values, culture, fairness and diversity, with due regard to the leading and developing people standard. They should show how they act on this feedback.	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	<p>April 23 The Service undertake a staff survey which focusses on values, culture, and behaviours. Call it out survey. HMICFRS staff survey Station visits / Manager 121's Station audits / Debriefs. Staff networks Safe Call data Exit interview data.</p> <p>December 23</p>

					Staff survey undertaken in September / October 23 with results fed back to staff in November. An action plan is being developed.
24	By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should put plans in place to monitor, including through the gathering and analysis of staff feedback, watch and team cultures and provide prompt remedial action for any issues they identify.	CDDFRS	1 Oct 23	Complete	<p>April 23 Station visits / Manager 121's Staff Surveys (include locality and line manager/colleague related questions) Watch focus groups. SLT action plans (improvement &amp; strategy) – monitored via CFA.</p> <p>September 23 Staff survey to take place over September and October with results being feedback to staff early November.</p>
	Management & leadership training and development				
25	By 1 January 2025, the Government should establish a College of Fire and Rescue, as proposed by the White Paper Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service. There should be no further delay to its implementation.	Government	1 Jan 25	Not Owned by CDFRS	<p>CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation.</p> <p>December 23 Qwe is awaiting further guidance on this. The white paper supported the CoF implementation.</p>
26	By 1 October 2023, as a precursor to the development of the College of Fire and Rescue, chief fire officers and the National Fire Chiefs Council should work with the Home Office to consider how they can improve the training and support they offer to staff in management and leadership development. This should include authority members in respect of their assurance leadership roles and should ensure that	NFCC	1 Oct 23	Not Owned by CDFRS	<p>CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation.</p> <p>December 23 We are awaiting further guidance on this. The service is engaged in the NFCC leadership development pathways and already have a robust structure of qualifications in place.</p>

	opportunities are offered fairly across all staff groups.				
27	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their equality impact assessments are fit for purpose and, as a minimum, meet the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality impact assessment toolkit.	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	April 23 A review of CDDFRS process was undertaken in 2022 and aligned to the NFCC toolkit. EqIA's are complete and actions are monitored through the ED&I working group. EqIA's have been complete for all Service premises to ensure inclusivity.
28	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review how they gather and use equality and diversity data to improve their understanding of their staff demographics, including applying and meeting the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality, diversity and inclusion data toolkit.	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	April 23 Public sector equality duty Gender pays gap. Home office annual returns HMICFRS PowerBi reports Recruitment monitoring September 23 CFO satisfied that provisions are suitable.  December 23 The CFO now chairs the EDI working group. Work has been ongoing to complete the maturity model in this area and drive forward work in a new action plan.
29	By 1 December 2023, the Home Office should publish greater detail on the protected characteristic data it collects about FRS staff, including joiners and leavers, by rank and role.	Home Office	1 Dec 23	Not owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
30	By 30 December 2024, the Home Office should align the data it collects on protected characteristics with the Office for National Statistics harmonised standard and publish this data.	Home Office	30 Dec 24	Not owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation

31	By 1 December 2024, the Home Office should collect and publish experimental statistics on public complaints and conduct matters in relation to FRS staff, similar to that which it currently publishes on police forces in England and Wales.	Home Office	1 Dec 24	Not owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
Improving Diversity					
32	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should, as a priority, specify in succession plans how they intend to improve diversity across all levels of the service. This should include offering increased direct-entry opportunities.	CDDFRS	1 June 23	Complete	<p>April 23 This is addressed through the People Strategy, ED&amp;I Strategy, Strategic Workforce Plan &amp; Talent Management Strategy. Succession planning arrangements are in place which include Team plans. Direct entry opportunities will be considered at SM level once the current programme provides ROI information and deliverables. Direct entry at CFO level has been facilitated.</p> <p>September 23 Updates to the Talent Management Strategy / SWFP have been made. Positive action initiatives being reviewed. Women's development programme initiative started.</p> <p>December 23 7 WT females have been enrolled onto the female development programme. A WT recruitment campaign is planned for April 24 with a positive action plan to support recruitment of under representative groups.</p>
33	By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should develop plans to promote progression paths for existing staff in non-operational roles and put plans in place to reduce any inequalities of opportunity.	CDDFRS	1 Aug 23	Complete	<p>April 23 Development plans are available and in place to align green book / non-operational colleagues the same training opportunities as uniformed staff which is relevant to their role</p>
Core Code of Ethics					

34	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should review their implementation of the Core Code of Ethics and make sure it is being applied across their services.	CDDFRS	Immediate	Complete	April 23 Implemented through project. Fire Standard outcomes met.
	The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England				
35	By the end of this Parliament, the Government should consider the findings and recommendations in this report when refreshing the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.	Government	End of this parliament	Not owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation.  December 23 Awaiting further guidance and the revised framework

### Dashboard of Recommendations

Total Number of Recommendations	35
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### Owner Breakdown

CDDFRS	19
Fire Standards Board	3
Government	2
Home Office	7
National Employers, LGA, NFCC	1
Police	1
NFCC	2

### CDDFRS Progress

Complete	17
Ongoing	2
Not Started	0

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County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



**Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Human Resources Committee**

**20 February 2024**

### **Equality Reporting 2023**

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## **Report of Director of People and Organisational Development**

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### **Purpose of report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Human Resources Committee (HRC) on the annual reports published by the Service for Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Gender Pay Gap (GPG).

### **Background**

2. The PSED requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. To ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities, to publish:
  - a) equality objectives, at least every four years.
  - b) information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty.
3. As a public authority, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) is subject to the PSED. The published report shows how CDDFRS complies with the PSED in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to its diversity and inclusion, as an employer and in the community.
4. Gender pay gap reporting legislation requires employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations each year. It identifies the difference between the average (mean and median) earnings of male and female employees, comparing hourly rates of pay and any bonuses staff may receive. The aim of the report is to identify any imbalance in pay between genders and encourages organisations to consider positive steps to address any identified gaps.
5. It is important to note that gender pay gap reporting is different to equal pay auditing. An equal pay audit involves comparing the pay of males and females doing equal work within an organisation.

## Public Sector Equality Duty

6. As a public authority, CDDFRS is subject to the PSED. The published report shows how CDDFRS complies with the PSED in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to its diversity and inclusion, as an employer and in the community. The report covers the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 (see appendix A) and the key findings are outlined below.
7. The number of people employed by CDDFRS between January 2023 and December 2023 was 615. There has been an increase of 12 employees in 2023 which is explained below in Table 1.

**Table 1 - Number of employees in post 2021 – 2023 (31 December 2023)**

Year	Wholetime	On Call	Control	Corporate	Total
<b>2021</b>	307	185	23	109	624
<b>2022</b>	297	179	25	102	603
<b>2023</b>	288	195	22	110	615
<b>Change 22/23</b>	-9	16	-3	8	12
<b>% Change 22/23</b>	-3%	8.9%	-8%	7.8%	2.0%

8. Key areas of the report highlighted the following with regards to changes in our Workforce statistics:
  - a) The number of staff employed by CDDFRS has increased by 2.0% over the last 12 months predominantly in On-call and corporate roles.
  - b) The age profile of the workforce shows most staff are now aged between 36 and 45 at 28% with 27.6% aged between 46 and 55, in 2022, the highest percentage of staff were in the 46-55 age category.
  - c) The disability profile of the workplace has remained the same since 2022. This represents 2.3% of the total workforce declaring themselves as having a disability.
  - d) Almost 79.5% of employees within our organisation are male and 20.5% are female (increase of females overall of 1.8% from 2022).
  - e) As of 31 March 2023; 8.7% (2,985) of all firefighters employed by Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA's) in the UK were women [source: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)]. Therefore, CDDFRS lies above the national average for female operational firefighters at 10.4%.
  - f) Three people who took maternity leave in 2022 have returned to their original roles in 2023 and one is expected to return in 2024.
  - g) The percentage of staff who identify as being from an ethnic minority group has risen to 2.28% this year from 2.15% last year. According to the 2021 Census, just over 3% of the population of County Durham identify as people from ethnic minority backgrounds.
  - h) The religion or belief profile of the workforce remains largely unchanged when compared to 2022; those with no religion has increased by 2.8% and those claiming other has decreased by 2.2%.
  - i) 66% (408) of the Service's 615 employees have declared their sexual orientation which is a slight increase on last year.

- j) 1.79% of the total number of employees have described themselves as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual, an increase of 0.63% since 2022.

9. The report highlighted the following with regards to our processes during 2023:

- a) There were eight grievances raised and recorded.
- b) Thirteen informal grievances were raised and resolved with satisfactory outcomes.
- c) There were 11 disciplinary investigations undertaken resulting in various outcomes.
- d) There were 4 flexible working requests received and all were approved.
- e) A variety of internal and external recruitment and promotional processes were undertaken throughout 2023 including apprentice and on-call firefighter recruitment as well as various corporate roles.
- f) The total number of applications received for all recruitment processes was 1027. The data tell us:
  - i. Applicants were predominantly Male (48%), and 15% Female which is the same as 2022.
  - ii. 3.2% of applications received regarded themselves as disabled which is an increase of 0.95% since 2022.
  - iii. The percentage of applications received where ethnicity was stated as 'White' was 83% which is a considerable increase compared with last year (70%).
  - iv. LGBTQ+ accounted for 3.8% of all applications.
- g) 60 employees left CDDFRS across all areas of the Service. 17 of those employees were wholetime operational members of staff.

10. The report highlighted the following with regards to our Service Users during 2023:

- a) The Service carried out 18,038 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) which was a decrease of 1,316 since 2022. Most visits were to those under 65, and there was a decrease of 1,130 visits to over 65 in 2023 compared to 2022.
- b) The percentage of people receiving HFSV that have declared themselves to have a disability is 8.59% which is 0.37% more than the figure reported last year.
- c) The figures suggest that most people receiving HFSV remain predominantly White British, however there is also a wide range of other ethnicities that have received a visit.
- d) From the victims where the Service was able to establish ethnicity, 72.64% of people involved in incidents were 'White British,' which is comparable, though slightly down, in 2022 figures.
- e) In 2023, the age group of 80–84-year-olds more frequently required the support and assistance from the Service (4.62%) in comparison with 2022.

## **Gender Pay Gap**

- 11. CDDFRS is required to publish pay information for all employees using a sample of data taken on 31 March 2023 (see appendix B). The calculations take into consideration the various terms and conditions of employment, which includes Grey Book (which relates to operational employees), Green Book (which relates to predominantly corporate employees or non-operational employees) and Gold Book (which relates to Strategic Managers).
- 12. There are 6 calculations that must be considered however CDDFRS only report on points a, b and f as bonus payments are not paid in our organisation:
  - a) The mean (average) gender pay gap.
  - b) The median (middle) gender pay gap.
  - c) The mean bonus pay gap.

- d) The median bonus pay gap.
- e) The proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment.
- f) The proportion of males and females in quartile pay bands.

13. The report highlighted the following with regards to our workforce related statistics (see table 1):

- a) As at the 31 March 2023, CDDFRS employed 589 employees which is a decrease of 17 employees since the previous report.
- b) 477 employees are male, this figure equates to 81% of the workforce which is slight drop on the percentage of males in the workforce reported last year.
- c) 112 employees are female which equates to 19% of the workforce, which has increased during the year, by 8.
- d) Since the previous report, there have been 43 new employees, 32.6% (14) of new employees were female.

**Table 2 - CDDFRS employee break down by gender as 31 March 2023**

	Female	Male	Total	Variance since 2023 report
<b>Wholetime (including Control)</b>	54	274	328	+3
<b>On-call (Operational staff)</b>	11	167	178	+2
<b>Corporate</b>	47	45	92	-13
<b>Total</b>	112	486	598	-8

14. The **mean** gender pay gap calculation shows the difference between the mean hourly rate of pay those male and female employees receive as an average and can provide an overall indication of the size of the gender pay gap within an organisation. The **median** gender pay gap calculation is the difference between the middle hourly rate of pay for male and female employees and gives an indication of what a 'typical' situation looks like i.e., what most people earn. These are outlined in table 3 below:

**Table 3 - CDDFRS mean and median rates of pay**

	Female hourly rate	Male hourly rate	Difference	Gender pay gap
<b>Mean</b>	£16.68	£17.16	-£0.48	2.80%
<b>Median</b>	£15.74	£16.17	-£0.41	2.73%

15. The CDDFRS mean gender pay gap is 2.80% this is considerably lower than the national average figure of 7.7%, based on full time workers. [Gender pay gap in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peopleinwork/payandpensions/genderpaygap/articles/genderpaygapintheuk2023) (Office of National Statistics, Gender pay gap in the UK 2023). The gap means that female staff earn on average 2.80% less than male staff which equates to £0.48 per hour. This means the gap has decreased by a further £0.29 per hour since 2022 where it sat at £0.77. The data shows a decrease of £0.58 per hour over the last three years in the mean gender pay gap.

16. The median The CDDFRS median gender pay gap is 2.73% which shows that at the mid salary point of the organisation, male staff are paid £0.41 per hour more than females. There has been no change since 2023 as male workers were paid the same amount more than their female colleagues.

17. The high quartiles saw an increase of females from 15 to 19 during 2022/2023. The four additional females moved into the high quartile from the mid upper quartile as the result of the nationally agreed pay award. This leaves only 1 female in the mid upper quartile, compared to the 5 in the previous year data.
18. A sixth cohort of apprentices were welcomed into the Service in May 2022 and therefore reflected in the data as of 31 March 2023. The gender split was equal males to females (50%) therefore, aiding the lesser decline in a financial aspect.
19. The overall representation of females within CDDFRS has increased slightly to 19% in comparison to the last two years. There number of females within operational roles in CDDFRS continues to steadily increase and had risen to 12.8% at the point the data was collated for this report.

## Conclusion

20. The Service have met the legislative requirements to publish both the PSED and GPG reports within the given timescales and outline our findings.
21. It is acknowledged by CDDFRS that there is still work to be done within the community to understand the barriers faced to attract a diverse workforce and CDDFRS being recognised as an employer of choice. The recruitment of a further operational firefighters is planned for 2024 and Positive Action Workshops will be held prior to the recruitment campaign to encourage individuals from underrepresented groups.
22. The work that CDDFRS has undertaken over the past 18-months in building contacts and networks with groups and organisations of underrepresented groups within the areas of County Durham and Darlington will also be utilised to aid targeted recruitment campaigns to encourage applications from underrepresented groups of the workforce.
23. The People Strategy, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Leadership Framework set out a structure for engaging and developing employees assisting to enable the cultural changes which are necessary to deliver the Service's vision and strategic priorities whilst ensuring our values and code of ethics are at the center of all we do. Our commitments outlined in both the PSED and GPG reports are outlined below:
  - a) Continue to work closely with communities, charities, and partner agencies to break down barriers and understand perceptions which currently contribute to females not considering the FRS (Fire & Rescue Services) as an employer of choice.
  - b) Continuously review and monitor the recruitment and selection processes to ensure complete transparency and inclusivity at all stages.
  - c) Continue to work with our local schools and colleges in maintaining our award-winning FF apprenticeship scheme.
  - d) Build on the positive action work that has been undertaken and develop a continuous programme of events and materials to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.
  - e) Review policies and procedures to ensure the Service is proactively supporting and encouraging females within our workforce.
  - f) Review policies and procedures to ensure that they are transparent, support flexible working and provide family friendly options enabling greater attraction, retention, and development of the best people.
  - g) Review family specific policies to ensure we are offering maximum opportunity to both parents irrelevant of gender.

- h) Build on the work that has commenced in relation to building clear pathways to encourage women to advance in their careers.
- i) Continue to provide all employees with a choice of development, succession planning, talent management and mentoring opportunities.

### **Recommendations**

24. Members are requested to:

- a) Note and comment the contents of the report.

Katherine Metcalfe, Director of People and Organisational Development, Ext 5665



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# CDDFRS Equality Data Report 2024



## About this report

This report contains equality information required by Regulation 2 of the Equality Act (Specific Duties) Regulations.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. Which are to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Promoting equality of opportunity means public bodies have to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages for groups of people.
- take steps to meet the needs of protected groups of people.
- encourage all groups of people to participate in public life or other activity in situations where their participation is low.

To ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities, to publish:

- equality objectives, at least every four years.
- information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty.

As a public authority, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) is subject to this PSED.

This report shows how CDDFRS complies with the PSED in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to its diversity and inclusion, as an employer and in the community.

Although compliance with the general equality duty is a legal obligation, CDDFRS recognises that it also makes good business sense. We believe that if we can provide appropriate services to meet the diverse needs of our communities, we will undertake our core business more efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, a workforce that has a supportive working environment is a more productive one.

The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act are:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage and civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin).
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

This report includes information about our employees and the people who we provide a service to, in County Durham and Darlington and will be accessible to the public. The information contained in the report will enable customers, staff, and our regulators to assess our equality performance. The findings will also enable us to identify equality priorities and development areas which inform our equality objectives. We also publish these objectives every four years to show how we meet the general equality duty.

The report covers the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023. It reflects the policies and approaches that were current during this period.

# Background

## Our Purpose

CDDFRS undertakes a number of activities, aimed at making our communities safer and stronger. We know that responding to emergencies is our first duty, but we also recognise we can help prevent fires in the home and at work.

We are committed to making sure that people, businesses and organisations in County Durham and Darlington are protected by:

- (a) Planning and preparing for emergencies and providing a professional and effective response at all times.
- (b) Providing professional advice and assurance to support business development and ensure public safety.
- (c) Engaging and educating people to improve their safety and wellbeing.
- (d) Delivering an efficient fire and rescue service through the effective use of public money and be accountable to the public.
- (e) Working closely with our partners to improve public safety.
- (f) Supporting and developing our staff and ensure our values are at the centre of everything we do.

Whilst our core purpose will remain to save lives and prevent incidents as an emergency response provider, we recognise that as society, the economy and technology shifts, this has an impact on how people conduct themselves at home, at work and in the community.

## Our Strategic Objectives

We endeavour to 'Be the Best' and the Service of Choice and in order to fulfil our vital purpose, this report is based upon our Vision of 'Safest People, Safest Places' through:

- Business Fire Safety
- Community Safety
- Value for Money
- Working Together
- Our People Our Way

- Emergency Response
- Diversity and Inclusion

### **Our Values**

Our core value is to be the best by:

- Being Professional
- Being Innovative
- Being Effective

### **The People we serve.**

The Service area covers the two Unitary Authorities of County Durham and Darlington and a geographic area of 939 square miles with a population of approximately 623,000 people. Within the Service area there are approximately 290,000 households and around 18,500 business premises.

The Office of National Statistics provides key population information on the composition of the communities within County Durham and Darlington. The 2021 census figures for the population of County Durham and Darlington are shown below:

### **County Durham and Darlington Census 2021 population.**

<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>Male Population</b>	<b>Female Population</b>	<b>Population</b>
<b>County Durham</b>	255,304	266,764	522,068
<b>Darlington</b>	52,670	55,129	107,799
<b>Total</b>	307,974	321,893	629,867

Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

Since the last census carried out in 2011 County Durham has shown an annual population increase of 0.18% and Darlington an increase of 0.21%.

## Section 1: Our Employees

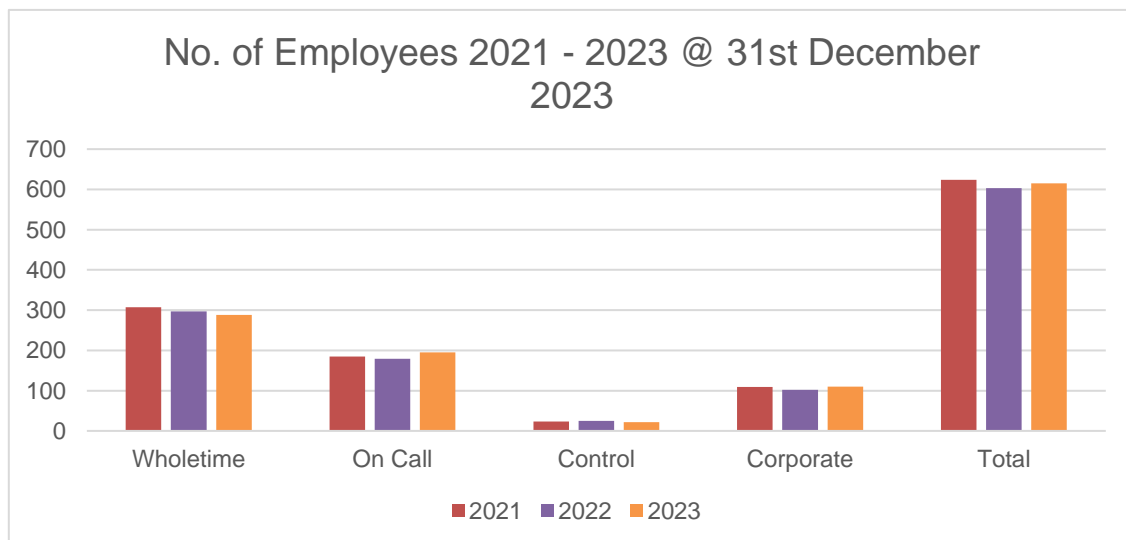
### 1.1 Workforce Profile

This information demonstrates that the make-up of our organisation strives to reflect the community we serve. The number of people employed by CDDFRS between January 2023 and December 2023 was 615.

There has been an increase of 12 employees in 2023 which is explained below.

#### Number of employees in post 2021 – 2023 (31 December 2023)

Year	Wholetime	On Call	Control	Corporate	Total
<b>2021</b>	307	185	23	109	624
<b>2022</b>	297	179	25	102	603
<b>2023</b>	288	195	22	110	615
<b>Change 22/23</b>	-9	16	-3	8	12
<b>% Change 22/23</b>	-3%	8.9%	-8%	7.8%	2.0%



## 1.2 Staffing Strength (FTE) by role (31 December 2023)

	Wholetime	On Call	Control	Corporate	Total
<b>Principal Officers</b>	1	0	0	0.61	2
<b>Area Manager/Grade 15</b>	2	0	0	2	4
<b>Group Manager/Grade 14</b>	5	0	0	1	6
<b>Station Manager/Grade 10-13</b>	16	0	1.6	15.76	33.36
<b>Watch Manager/Grade 8-9</b>	43	10.14	7.22	17.11	78.47
<b>Crew Manager/Grade 7</b>	56	19.05	2	24.29	101.34
<b>Firefighter/Grade 6 &amp; below</b>	165	99.61	8.5	28	301.11
<b>Apprentice</b>	0	0	0	14	14
<b>Total</b>	289	128.8	19.32	102.77	539.89

The number of staff employed by CDDFRS has increased by 2.0% over the last 12 months.

This is due to the Service undertaking further changes to the structure to ensure it continues to address the anticipated challenges over the medium term, such as the uncertainty surrounding future funding for the sector, ensuring internal skills, capacity, and ability to execute areas of improvement as required by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) (Effectiveness, Efficiency and People report, 2021/2022).

As part of these changes the Service introduced a modification of crewing to the remaining 5 appliances around the county which were crewed with 5 firefighters to being crewed with 4 the same as the rest of the Service. This resulted in 16 posts being removed from the operational establishment. Doing this safeguarded the Service to maintain the same number of fire engines around the county. CDDFRS still remains one of the fastest FRS to respond to emergencies and is

recognised by HMICFRS as the fastest predominantly rural FRS in England. The reduction in uniformed staff is being achieved through natural turnover.

The 3% decrease in wholetime employees is also as a result of the retirement profile of the Service which shows that several uniformed personnel have reached retirement age. The Service currently runs a successful firefighter apprenticeship programme to assist to alleviate any shortfall. However, it has been agreed that a wholetime recruitment campaign will take place during 2024 as there has been some unexpected leavers and this is deemed the most appropriate way to recruit.

The Service continue to carry out ongoing recruitment of on-call employees (Retained Duty System (RDS)) the number of employees has increased this year by 8.9% going from 179 to 195. This can be accounted to work life balance of homelife and primary employments and the demographic population within a 5-minute response radius of our on-call stations. We do however continue to enhance our ability to attract and retain the very best talent we can in this area.

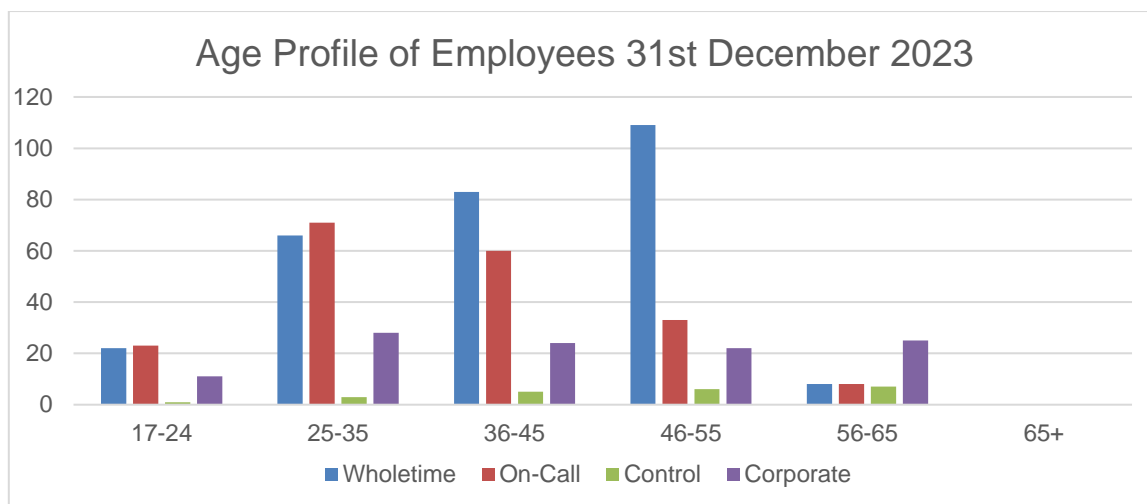
### 1.3 Age profile

The age profile of the workforce shows most staff are now aged between 36 and 45 (28%) where in 2022 (29.7%) the majority was aged between 46 and 55 which is a close second this year (27.6%).

#### Age of employees (31 December 2023)

	17-24	25-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	65+
<b>Wholetime</b>	22	66	83	109	8	0
<b>On-Call</b>	23	71	60	33	8	0
<b>Control</b>	1	3	5	6	7	0
<b>Corporate</b>	11	28	24	22	25	0
<b>Total in each age bracket</b>	57	168	172	170	48	0
	9.3%	27.2%	28.0%	27.6%	7.8%	0%





As shown above CDDFRS continues to both attract and retain employees across a diverse age range which is generally representative of our communities (ONS Census 2021).

The majority of employees remains largely within the 36–45 and 46–55 age brackets which will be a legacy of the recruitment freeze experienced a few years ago.

The 17-24 bracket remains around 9% thus demonstrating our continued commitment to develop the next generation of employees within the Service which is done via our apprenticeship scheme where we have successfully recruited 7 cohorts of firefighter apprentices over the last 7 years. We have also recruited apprentices previously within control, workshops, and other corporate roles.

We continue to raise the profile of our award-winning apprentice firefighter recruitment campaign throughout our communities to help encourage an age diverse workforce (there is no upper age limit to our apprenticeship schemes).

The Service continues to operate cadet schemes across a number of fire stations encouraging individuals from our diverse communities to participate either as a cadet or to help us support the delivery of our schemes. It is encouraging that some of our cadets have decided to join our firefighter apprenticeship scheme and on-call workforce. In addition, the Service remains committed to engage with all underrepresented groups through internal and external communication channels, achieving this through focused engagement, targeted communication,

and community interaction. We have also held a number of Positive Action events and will continue to do so to encourage under-represented groups to apply to the Service in operational roles. We will be running a positive action campaign for recruitment of wholetime Firefighters in 2024.

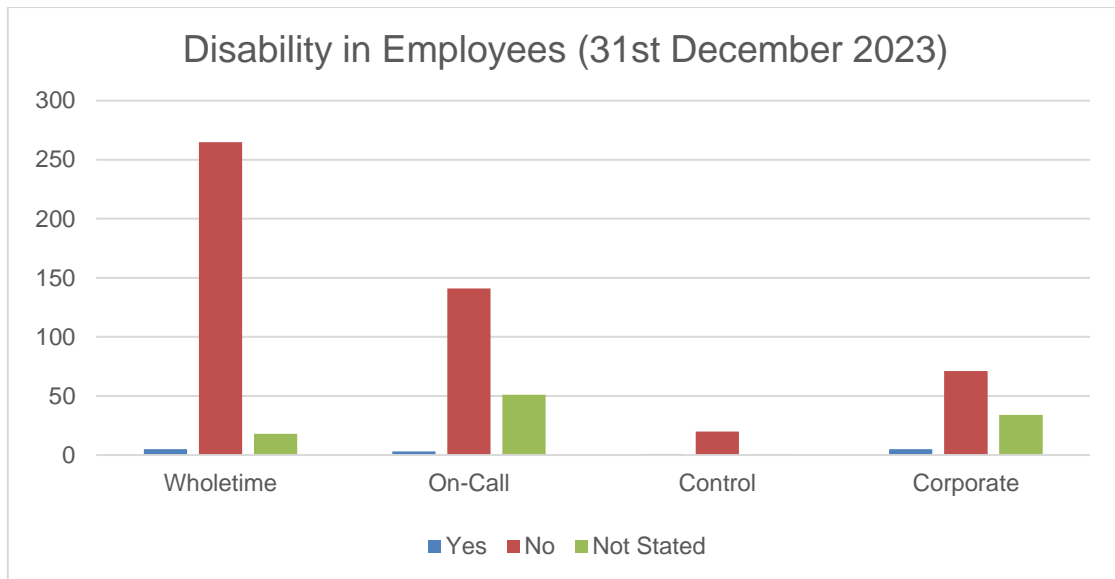
We are also committed to carrying out community events; open days, school visits where we can further demonstrate the vast variety of employment opportunities available. We have made good progress through the Services ‘Connect’ campaign which helps us understanding the communities we serve.

## 1.4 Disability

The disability profile of the workplace has remained the same since 2022. Of the 14 employees stating they are classed as having a disability, 5 were in support roles. In operational roles, 5 are from wholetime, 3 in on-call and 1 in control have declared themselves as having a disability. This represents 2.3% of the total workforce declaring themselves as having a disability in 2023.

### Disability in Employees (31 December 2023)

	Yes	No	Not Stated	Total	Yes %
<b>Wholetime</b>	5	265	18	288	1.7%
<b>On-Call</b>	3	141	51	195	1.5%
<b>Control</b>	1	20	1	22	4.5%
<b>Corporate</b>	5	71	34	110	4.5%
<b>Total</b>	14	497	104	615	2.3%



We continue to record and monitor disability profile of our workforce in order to best support employees with adjustments where appropriate.

We strive to understand and improve our support mechanisms and accessibility provisions for employees with disabilities. We continue to hold the 'Disability Confident Leader' certificate showing our continued commitment to inclusiveness.

Our Health and Fitness Advisor, Mental Health First Aiders, Trauma Support Team and People and Organisation Development Team continue to be proactive in raising the awareness of mental health issues. Our Mental Health First Aiders provide advice and support by assisting to identify the signs of mental health and how to signpost employees to the correct treatment and support. Our Trauma Support Team continues to be embedded into our employee welfare provision, the availability and support of which has been well received since it was established. Due to the success of the Trauma Support Team we are recruiting and training another 5 members of staff to assist in delivering this service.

We also have ongoing access for employees to an employee assistance programme (PAM Assist); which has a free confidential helpline and mobile app for all employees, providing advice and guidance on a wide range of issues.

We have dedicated Occupational Health, Physiotherapy and Health and Safety provision to help us ensure we can support our employees' health and wellbeing needs at all times; consideration is given to employee safety and wellbeing both

at home and at work. We continue to provide a hybrid working scheme allowing eligible employees to work from home or other service locations. All employees who are home working are asked to complete an online training package regarding their health and safety at home in addition to undertaking a DSE assessment. Following all assessments, where employees require additional equipment to ensure their safety and health is maintained, arrangements are made to provide these. Hybrid working arrangements are also reviewed regularly to make sure they are still suitable for both the Service and the individual.

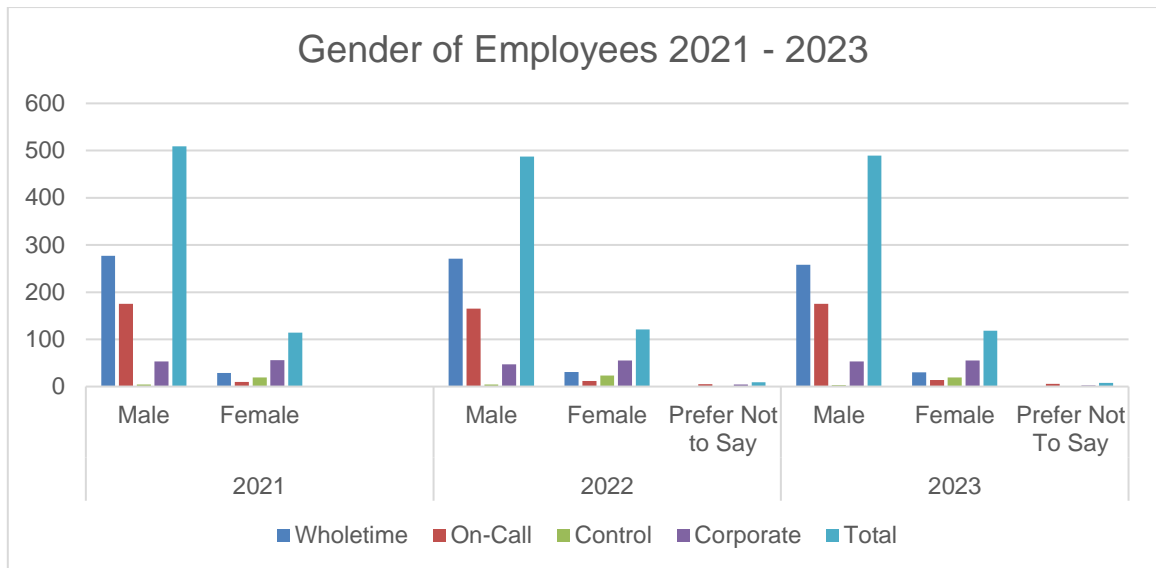
All new buildings across our estate are fully accessible and underwent an Equality Impact Assessment at various stages of planning and build. We aim to ensure adequate support and reasonable adjustments are supported whenever possible.

## 1.5 Gender

Even though there has been a decrease in the total number of employees there has been an increase in the ratio of female employees to male within the workforce. Almost 79.5% of employees within our organisation are male and 20.5% are female this has increased by 1.8% from 2022. 10.4% are female in an operational capacity which is a considerable increase from 6.5% last year.

### Gender of employees 2021 – 2023 (31 December 2023)

	2021			2022			2023		
	Male	Female	Prefer Not to Say	Male	Female	Prefer Not to Say	Male	Female	Prefer Not to Say
<b>Wholetime</b>	277	29	1	268	28	1	258	30	0
<b>On-Call</b>	175	10	0	163	11	5	175	14	6
<b>Control</b>	4	19	0	4	20	1	3	19	0
<b>Corporate</b>	53	56	0	46	54	2	53	55	2
<b>Total</b>	509	114	1	481	113	9	489	118	8



As of 31 March 2023; 8.7% (2,985) of all firefighters employed by Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA's) in the UK were women [source: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)]. Therefore, CDDFRS lies above the national average for female operational firefighters at 10.4%.

Within the operational roles, a number of females occupy roles which attract a higher rate of pay. Further details on the impact of Gender Pay Gap can be located within our Gender Pay Gap report.

In operational roles, women represent 10.4% of the workforce, an increase of 3.9% on the previous year. Women account for approx. 50% of support roles (corporate). The percentage of women in senior roles (Area Manager / Grade 15 and above) within the Service has decreased during 2023 due to changes within SLT as one female member of staff transferred to another service.

As a Service we are aware that our gender split is primarily male dominated and we continue working with our local communities to help us address this.

Throughout our recruitment programmes, we look to run a number of “taster” sessions encouraging all potential candidates to find out a little more information about our recruitment processes and what could be expected in relation to physical fitness.

## 1.6 Gender Reassignment

We currently do not collect gender reassignment data from employees and would not be unable to publish any data to ensure anonymity for our employees.

## 1.7 Pregnancy and Maternity

Three people who took maternity leave in 2022 have returned to their original roles in 2023 and one is expected to return in 2024. This is a positive statistic which can be attributed to our work life balance policies and flexible working options available to employees. We are committed to offering flexible employment practices which recognise that staff want to find a balance between their home and work life. We offer flexible working; job share and career breaks as well as various types of leave to employees to be as family friendly as practicable.

### Pregnancy and maternity in employees 2021 – 2023 (31 December 2023)

	2021	2022	2023
<b>Number expected to return</b>	4	4	3
<b>Total number returned</b>	3	1	3

We continually review our Family Leave policies, procedures and benefits. This enables us to gain credibility through women and family organisations, increase recruitment and retention of our workforce and improve staff morale and engagement.

## 1.8 Ethnicity

‘White British or Irish,’ make up the vast majority of the workforce (552). 49 people had not declared their ethnicity and 5 people had declared their ethnicity as ‘Asian or Asian British’.

White British ethnicity remains the same as last year at 90%. Asian or Asian British denomination has also remained the same since 2022. The percentage of staff who identify as being from an ethnic minority group has risen to 2.28% this year from 2.15% last year, the communities, we serve according to the 2021

Census which outlines that just over 3% of the population of County Durham identify as people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

**Race of employees 2021 – 2023 (31 December 2023)**

	2021	2022	2023
<b>White British/Irish</b>	566	548	552
<b>White other</b>	3	3	3
<b>Mixed</b>	1	1	3
<b>Asian/Asian British</b>	3	5	5
<b>Black/Black British</b>	5	4	3
<b>Chinese</b>	0	0	0
<b>Other ethnic minority</b>	0	0	0
<b>Not stated/blank</b>	50	42	49
<b>Total % ethnic minority employees</b>	<b>1.91%</b>	<b>2.15%</b>	<b>2.28%</b>

According to Fire and Rescue National statistics as published within the Fire Data statistics in 2022, 94.4% of all Fire and Rescue employees were ‘White’ and 4.5% of firefighters were from the combined ‘Asian, Black, Mixed and Other’ (including Chinese) ethnic groups.

The national average of fire and rescue service staff (including support staff) from Asian, Black, Mixed and Other backgrounds in 2022 was around 5.6%. CDDFRS remain lower than the national average at 2.28% of the workforce being from ethnic groups but as previously advised we remain relatively reflective of the communities we serve.

Source: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforce-diversity/fire-and-rescue-services-workforce/latest>

We continue to work with ethnic minority groups within the community to build relationships, understand challenges and opportunities and continue with further positive action events throughout our recruitment campaigns to encourage more members of under-represented communities to come into our organisation and understand what career opportunities are available.

## 1.9 Religion and Belief

The religion or belief profile of the workforce remains largely unchanged when compared to 2022; those with no religion has increased by 2.8% and those claiming other has decreased by 2.2%.

### Religion of employees 2021 – 2023 (31 December 2023)

	2021	2022	2023
<b>Christian</b>	194	192	187
<b>Buddhist</b>	3	2	2
<b>Humanist</b>	0	0	0
<b>Sikh</b>	0	0	0
<b>No religion</b>	156 (25%)	164 (27%)	183 (29.8%)
<b>Other</b>	198 (31.7%)	176 (29%)	165 (26.8%)
<b>Not stated/blank</b>	73 (11.6%)	69 (11%)	78 (12.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>615</b>





We continue to encourage all personnel to complete all aspects of equality data however 12.7% of staff have not stated or have left their religion blank which is an increase from last year. The Service will continue to communicate the importance of data monitoring to staff and encourage accurate data collection through understanding the reason this information is collected and collated and hopefully this will reduce.

Collection of this data enables the Service to appreciate the religious requirements of our employees when developing our policies and procedures.

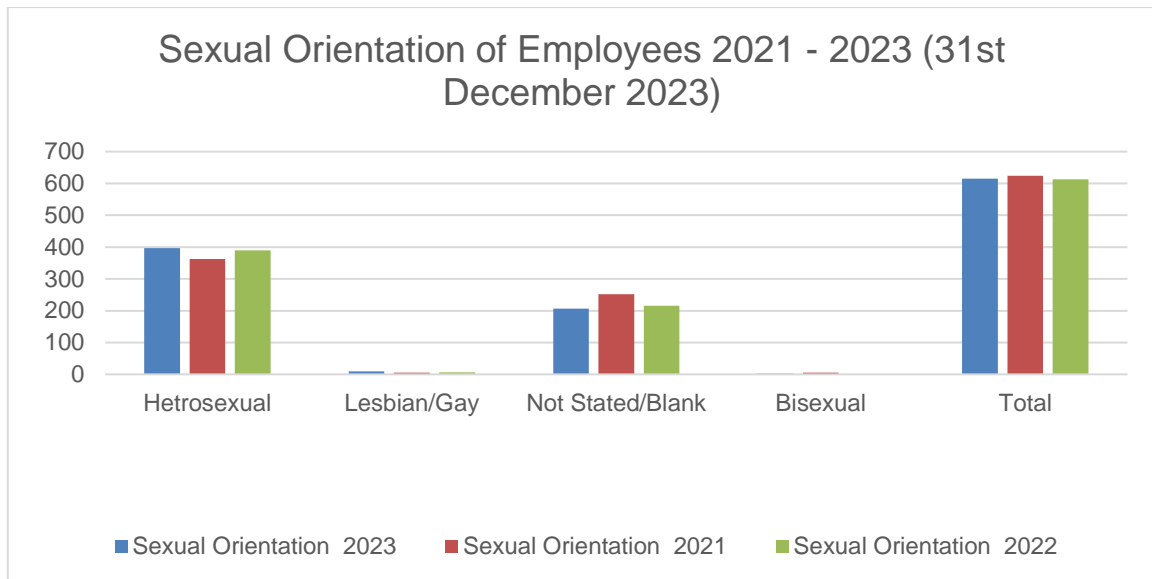
We also continue to engage with our communities through a range of activities, including promoting religious and beliefs festivals / events, to assist mutual understanding and respect for our diverse communities. All employees are required to undertake mandatory equality and diversity training every 2 years.

### 1.10 Sexual orientation

66% (408) of the Service's 615 employees have declared their sexual orientation, a slight increase on last year. 1.79% of the total number of employees have described themselves as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual, an increase of 0.63% since 2022.

#### Sexual orientation of employees 2021 – 2023 (31 December 2023)

	2021	2022	2023
<b>Heterosexual</b>	362	387	397
<b>Lesbian/Gay</b>	5	6	9
<b>Not Stated/Blank</b>	252	209	207
<b>Bisexual person</b>	5	1	2
<b>Total</b>	624	603	615



It is encouraging that more people feel confident to state their Sexual orientation. The majority of employees declare themselves to be Heterosexual.

However, we do recognise that sexual orientation can be a sensitive subject which may prevent some individuals from declaring this. We do endeavour to encourage a more inclusive workforce profile through positive action y and aim to create a working environment where people can be themselves.

We continue to try to increase the number of employees happy to state their sexual orientation by communicating the reasons why we need to collect the data, reassuring staff this will remain confidential and demonstrating our commitment to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), intersex, and asexual (or allies), (LGBTQIA+) employees and community members.

## **Section 2: Our Processes**

### **2.1 Internal disputes and concerns**

There were eight grievances raised and recorded in 2023. Two were from female members of staff and six was from male members of staff with three grievances partially upheld, two withdrawn, one not upheld, one dealt with informally and one still to be completed.

Thirteen informal grievances were raised and resolved with satisfactory outcomes in 2023.

There were 11 disciplinary investigations undertaken during 2023 resulting in various outcomes. 1 was concerning a female member of staff and 10 were concerning male members of staff.

### **2.2 Applications for flexible working**

In 2023, there were 4 flexible working requests received and all were approved. Two flexible retirement request was received and also granted. One member of the on-call duty system applied for a 6 months unpaid leave and was authorised.

Staff entitled to do so (currently 38 agreements in place) continue to work under the hybrid working procedure. This procedure reflects our commitment to flexible working whilst enabling us to deliver a service that is agile and efficient.

Understanding the value of a healthy work-life balance, CDDFRS offer employees the opportunity to request flexible working hours, homeworking, part-time, job-share and compressed/staggered/ annualised hours. Non-operational staff (where appropriate) work on a flexitime system between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

### **2.3 Promotions and recruitment**

A variety of internal and external recruitment and promotional processes were undertaken throughout 2023.

External recruitment processes included:

- Apprentice Firefighter recruitment
- On-going On-call Firefighter recruitment

- Various corporate support roles

### 2.3.1 Applications for Employment

Applications received for recruitment processes are usually broken down by Gender, Age, Sexual Orientation, Ethnicity, Religion and Disability. However, due to the jobs market being flooded and difficulty in recruiting certain roles we have needed to use different methods of recruitment during 2023 meaning equality and diversity data could not be obtained for all applicants. These have been recorded as blanks.

In 2023 the total number of applications received for all recruitment processes was 1027.

#### Applications received by Gender 2023

	Male	Female	Prefer not to say	Blank
<b>Internal</b>	51	10	0	13
<b>External</b>	40	59	n/a	15
<b>Online</b>	406	89	5	339
<b>Total</b>	497	158	5	367

Applicants in 2023 were predominantly Male (48%), and 15% Female which is the same as 2022. There has been an increase of 173 applicants recorded as blank, but this can be contributed to the different recruitment methods as advised above.

### Applications received by Age 2023

	under 18	18-24	25-40	41-59	59+	prefer not to say / blank
<b>Internal</b>	0	2	19	37	0	16
<b>External</b>	0	9	23	15	1	66
<b>Online</b>	77	340	364	49	0	9
<b>Total</b>	77	351	406	101	1	91

CDDFRS attracts more applicants within the 25-40 (39.5%) age range than any other. However, there is a fair spread of age groups who are interested in applying for posts within the Service.

33% of applications were received by individuals aged 18-24; and 9.8% of applications received by individuals aged 41-59. Overall applications to the service have increase by 36% since 2022.

### Applications received by Disability 2023

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say	Blank
<b>Internal</b>	7	51	0	16
<b>External</b>	4	43	0	67
<b>Online</b>	22	749	19	49
<b>Total</b>	33	843	19	132

3.2% of applications received regarded themselves as disabled which is an increase of 0.95% since 2022. The percentage of applications received where no indication was provided (prefer not to say or blank) was around 15%. This is significantly less than last year even though we have used different recruitment methods for some of our roles.

This does continue to highlight that the Service does endeavour to encourage transparency for the purpose of equal opportunities monitoring and execution.

### Applications received by Ethnicity 2023

	White	Indian	Mixed	Blank
<b>Internal</b>	52	0	5	17
<b>External</b>	42	2	4	66
<b>Online</b>	762	0	12	65
<b>Total</b>	856	2	21	148

The percentage of applications received where ethnicity was stated as 'White' was 83% which is a considerable increase compared with last year (70%).

The percentage of applications received where ethnicity was stated as other than white was around 2.2% which is only a slight decrease from last year.

The percentage of applications received where ethnicity was stated as 'blank' was 14% which has dropped considerably from 27% last year.

### Applications received by Religion 2023

	Christian	Buddhist	Atheist	Hindu	Muslim	Other	No religion	Prefer not to say / blank
<b>Internal</b>	33	0	15	0	0	3	1	22
<b>External</b>	22	0	12	2	0	6	0	72
<b>Online</b>	257	1	119	2	4	41	270	145
<b>Total</b>	312	1	146	4	4	50	271	239

The vast majority of online applications stated they were of no particular religion or belief (32%), followed by Christianity (31%) then prefer not to say / blank (17.3%).

The percentage of applications received where religion is stated as 'Hindu' or 'Muslim' is >1%.

### Applications received by Sexual Orientation 2023

The majority of applicants (76%) regarded themselves as Heterosexual, whilst Lesbian and Gay accounted for 2.5% and 1.3% respectively. The percentage of

applications received where people preferred not to declare their sexual orientation was 16.5%.

	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>Gay Woman</b>	<b>Gay</b>	<b>Bisexual person</b>	<b>Prefer not to say</b>
<b>Internal</b>	52	1		2	19
<b>External</b>	40	1	2	3	68
<b>Online</b>	689	24	11	33	82
<b>Total</b>	781	26	13	38	169

Our communities remain interested and engaged with our recruitment campaigns and where opportunities for employment within CDDFRS arise, we continue to receive a significant volume of applicants within our operational roles.

We continue to host Positive Action events where applicable and hope to still attract under representative groups from these events.

Applicants and therefore prospective employees continue to be underrepresented by females and LGBTQIA+ communities, ethnic minorities communities and individuals who are disabled. Further work is required to engage with these populous to understand what is preventing or discouraging applications.

CDDFRS will continue to promote our disability confident leader status on all recruitment paperwork and ensure advertisements for vacancies are shared with the appropriate organisations. Our disability champions will assist employees to understand and appreciate diversity through disabilities within the workforce, as well as educating our communities through a variety of interventions and programmes.

### **2.3.2 Leavers of the Service 2023**

During 2023, 60 employees left CDDFRS across all areas of the Service. 17 of those employees were wholetime operational members of staff. 7 of those wholetime employees left the organisation due to retirement, 3 left through ill health retirement, 3 transferred into another FRS and 4 other members of staff left our organisation for 'other reasons'.

14 corporate staff also left the Service; 9 resigned, 1 retired, 1 transferred to another FRS, 1 took voluntary redundancy and 2 left for other reasons / circumstances.

#### Number of leavers (1 January 2023 – 31 December 2023)

Reasons For Leaving	Wholetime	On-Call	Control	Corporate	Total
Voluntary Redundancy	0	0	0	1	1
Resignation	3	17	2	9	31
Transfer to another FRS	3	1	2	1	7
Normal Retirement	7	2	1	1	11
Ill Health Retirement	3	1	0	0	4
Other	1	3	0	2	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>60</b>

#### Age of leavers (2023)

17-24	3
25-35	21
36-45	11
46-55	18
55+	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

#### Disability of leavers (2023)

Yes	1
No	52
Not stated	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>



### Race of leavers (2023)

<b>White British/Irish</b>	54
<b>Mixed other</b>	1
<b>Black/Black British</b>	0
<b>Not stated</b>	5
<b>Total</b>	60

### Religion of leavers (2023)

<b>Christian</b>	19
<b>No religion</b>	18
<b>Other</b>	15
<b>Not stated</b>	8
<b>Total</b>	60

### Gender of leavers (2023)

<b>Male</b>	43
<b>Female</b>	15
<b>Total</b>	60

### Sexual orientation of leavers (2023)

<b>Heterosexual</b>	43
<b>Other</b>	0
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	17
<b>Total</b>	60

All leavers are invited to undertake an exit interview with our Chief Fire Officer. During the last year the Service has also compiled an exit questionnaire which is made available to the leaver by our People and Organisational Development Team. The questionnaire covers topics such as reason for leaving, their overall experience, job satisfaction, areas of improvement and suggestions for the organisation. Any issues raised will be looked into and dealt with accordingly.

The majority of leavers fell into categories of males aged between 46 and 55, which is the retirement age for firefighters. Most leavers were heterosexual, although this was followed by people who prefer not to declare sexual orientation. We continue encouraging employees to record their data in order to produce accurate information and detect areas of unrepresented groups within the service and subsequently to intervene and improve this.

### Section 3: Service User Data

The Service operates a targeted approach to identifying high risk people and properties as well as responding to partner agency referrals and direct requests from the public. Those initial calls are conducted by our local operational crews. Where the occupant is unable to install smoke alarms themselves a home visit will be arranged by a member of our operational crew.

Where the risk to the individual is high, our Community Safety Officers continue to complete face to face visits to the most vulnerable members of our communities, many of whom will fall into the over 65 category.

#### Age of People receiving Home Fire Safety Visits 2023 (31 December 2023)

Age	Number of People	Percentage
Under 65	12,747	70.67%
Over 65	5,291	29.33%
Total	18,038	100%

During 2023, the Service carried out 18,038 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) which was a decrease of 1,316 since 2022. The majority of visits were to those under 65, and there was a decrease of 1,130 visits to over 65 in 2023 than in 2022.

The HFSV the Service provides places a large emphasis on the overall health and wellbeing of individuals. The support offered to over 65's during and after the HFSV has helped make significant improvements in terms of their overall health and safety, not just home fire safety. As more people are made aware of HFSV via Service publicity and partner agency involvement it is expected that the number and percentage of over 65s receiving a visit will rise moving forward.

**Disability of people receiving HFSV 2023 (31 December 2023)**

	<b>Number of People</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Disability</b>	1,549	8.59%
<b>No disability</b>	16,489	19.41%
<b>Total</b>	18,038	100%

The percentage of people receiving HFSV that have declared themselves to have a disability is 8.59% which is 0.37% more than the figure reported last year. Not all disabilities are immediately identifiable during the visits and there is a subsequent reliance on an individual disclosing this information. Therefore, the actual figure of those people with disabilities may be higher than the reported figure suggests.

**Race of people receiving HFSV 2023 (31 December 2023)**

	<b>Number of People</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>White - British</b>	17,008	94.29%
<b>White - Irish</b>	16	0.09%
<b>White – Other White</b>	102	0.57%
<b>Mixed – White &amp; Black Caribbean</b>	2	0.01%
<b>Mixed – White &amp; Black African</b>	6	0.03%
<b>Mixed – White &amp; Asian</b>	10	0.06%
<b>Mixed – Other mixed</b>	17	0.09%
<b>Asian or Asian British - Indian</b>	51	0.28%
<b>Asian or Asian British - Pakistani</b>	14	0.08%
<b>Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi</b>	12	0.07%
<b>Asian or Asian British – Other Asian</b>	18	0.10%
<b>Black or Black British - Caribbean</b>	5	0.03%
<b>Black or Black British - African</b>	28	0.16%

<b>Black or Black British – Other Black</b>	13	0.07%
<b>Chinese or Other Ethnic Group - Chinese</b>	28	0.16%
<b>Chinese or Other Ethnic Group - Other</b>	33	0.18%
<b>Not stated</b>	675	3.74%
<b>Total</b>	18,038	100%

There has been a slight decrease in the number of individuals not stating their ethnicity this year. This has increased by 1.5% since last year showing that there has been a decline from previous year.

The figures suggest that the majority of people receiving HFSV remain to be White British, however there is also a wide range of other ethnicities that have received a visit. Community safety work in general is targeted towards the most vulnerable in the community irrespective of ethnicity and will therefore assist in steering education and services to those who need it most. Community Safety teams have access to education material in a range of languages helping them with engagement and have also used community leaders to get safety messages across to a diverse range of ethnic groups.

#### **Gender of people receiving HFSV 2023 (31 December 2023)**

	<b>Number of People</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Female</b>	9,341	51.79%
<b>Male</b>	7,024	38.94%
<b>Blank</b>	158	0.88%
<b>Not disclosed</b>	1,511	8.38%
<b>Other</b>	4	0.02%
<b>Total</b>	18,038	100%

Last year was the first year we have been able to provide this data so in 2023 visits carried out to females was 51.79% compared to 33.57% in 2022. Those leaving their gender blank or not disclosed has significantly decreased from 40.71% in 2022 to 9.26% in 2023.

### Emergency Response Data (1 January 2023 – 31 December 2023)

Age group	number of victims	% of victims
0 to 4	28	5.39%
5 to 9	2	0.39%
10 to 14	27	5.20%
15 to 19	33	6.36%
20 to 24	17	3.28%
25 to 29	15	2.89%
30 to 34	21	4.05%
35 to 39	14	2.70%
40 to 44	20	3.85%
45 to 49	10	1.93%
50 to 54	16	3.08%
55 to 59	15	2.89%
60 to 64	16	3.08%
65 to 69	14	2.70%
70 to 74	21	4.05%
75 to 79	12	2.31%
80 to 84	24	4.62%
85 to 89	17	3.28%
90 to 94	9	1.73%
95 to 99	3	0.58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

The term 'victim' is used to describe a person who has been rescued by fire service personnel, or who are injured as a result of an incident. It can be observed that there has been an decrease in the number of victims in County

Durham and Darlington from 756 in 2022 to 519 in 2023. The largest increase lying with the threshold of 80–84-year-olds and 15–19-year-olds.

In 2023, the age group of 80–84-year-olds more frequently required the support and assistance from the Service (4.62%), which differs to 2022 as it was the 0–4-year age range.

### Gender of people involved in incidents 2023.

gender	number of victims	% of victims
Female	213	41.04%
Male	275	52.99%
Not known/not specified	31	5.97%
<b>Total</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

The number of incidents and victims has dropped considerably in the last year and continues to be predominantly in the male gender group. The Service continues to engage in preventative activities particularly through HFSV that aim to address a wide range of issues across all sections of the community including social exclusion and isolation. This is targeted as part of Service project and station plans.

### Ethnicity of people involved in incidents 2023.

Ethnicity grouping	number of victims	% of victims
Asian or Asian British	3	0.58%
Mixed	3	0.58%
Not known/stated	130	25.05%
other	2	0.39%
White - British	377	72.64%
White - Other White	4	0.77%
<b>Total</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

From the victims where the Service was able to establish ethnicity, 72.64% of people involved in incidents were 'White British,' which is comparable, though slightly down, on 2022 figures. The number of victims from each ethnic group is slightly up from the previous year, with the greatest difference occurring in the

'Not known/stated' category, where in the previous year there were 19.18% victims, and in the current reporting period, there were 25.05%.

The number of victims being predominately from the "White British" ethnic group is reflective of the relatively low levels of diversity across the Service area. There are no specific ethnic groups which are currently noted at higher risk from the mean. Based on current and previous data it is also likely that those who have preferred not to state their ethnicity or have ethnicity unknown are predominately from the "White British" category. We provide information in various languages and have access to an interpreter scheme to ensure that education and advice can also be given to non-English speaking members of the community if required.



## Section 4: Conclusions and findings

CDDFRS endeavours to ensure that the monitoring data collated in this report is used to assist its employment practices and service delivery. As a result, this information will be used to develop significant policies and practices, key examples of which are as follows:

- Women, people from ethnic minority backgrounds and LGBTQIA+ communities remain underrepresented in the workforce, particularly in operational roles. Steps continue to be taken to change this however we are aware this will take time to become embedded. One of these steps has been the positive action programme which is ongoing and developing. This includes attending community events, schools' career days, holding awareness sessions, developing online resources for potential applicants in order to raise awareness about firefighting career and encourage members of underrepresented groups to apply. We are confident this will bring positive change moving forward.
- The report shows an overall increase in the ratio of female to male employees this year even though the total number of employees has decreased.
- Data collected during HFSV will be used to inform any future developments of this scheme.
- The 'Connect' project allows us to gain knowledge through contacts within the community.

The Service is an active member of a number of external networks and working groups which enable the sharing of best practice and provide guidance and support across all strands of equality. These include:

- Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG).
- National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Inclusion Practitioners Group.
- Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA).
- Women in the Fire Service (WFS).
- North East Rainbow Alliance (NEERA).

We will continue to use any best practices and information from these groups to further develop our Equality objectives.

# Gender Pay Gap 2024



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## 1. Introduction

Gender pay gap reporting legislation requires employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations each year. It identifies the difference between the average (mean and median) earnings of male and female employees, comparing hourly rates of pay and any bonuses staff may receive. The aim of the report is to identify any imbalance in pay between genders and encourages organisations to consider positive steps to address any identified gaps.

This report details the difference in the average earnings between males and females employed by County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS), provides a rationale for any differences in earnings (where applicable) and the strategies the Service intends to deploy to address any differences.

It is important to note that gender pay gap reporting is different to equal pay auditing. An equal pay audit involves comparing the pay of males and females doing equal work within an organisation.

CDDFRS is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion and ensuring equal opportunities to all our employees.

This document will be published on our website <https://www.ddfire.gov.uk/>, in addition to a submission on <https://www.gov.uk/report-gender-pay-gap-data>.

## 2. Social and sector specific factors

The gender pay gap is a longstanding occurrence and its causes are complex. Social pressures and norms influence gender roles and often shape the types of occupations and career paths which people choose to follow, and therefore their level of pay. Women are also more likely than men to work part-time and to take time out from their careers for family reasons ([www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)). Research conducted by ACAS suggests that gender pay gap can vary by occupation, age group and working patterns: [Equal pay and the law: Equal pay - Acas](#)

The Service has been historically a predominantly male dominated organisation, with Firefighters being a traditionally a male occupation. As of 31 March 2023,

8.7 per cent (2,985) of firefighters of known gender were women compared with 8.2 per cent (2,862) in 2022, and 5.7 per cent (1,980) in 2019, [Fire and rescue workforce and pensions statistics: England, year ending March 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-and-rescue-workforce-and-pensions-statistics-england-year-ending-march-2023)

What have we reported?

CDDFRS is required to publish pay information for all employees using a sample of data taken on 31 March 2023. The calculations take into consideration the various terms and conditions of employment, which includes Grey Book (which relates to operational employees), Green Book (which relates to predominantly corporate employees or non-operational employees) and Gold Book (which relates to Strategic Managers).

There are 6 calculations that must be considered:

- The mean (average) gender pay gap.
- The median (middle) gender pay gap.
- The mean bonus pay gap.
- The median bonus pay gap.
- The proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment.
- The proportion of males and females in quartile pay bands.

For the purposes of gender pay gap reporting the data is based on ordinary pay received by relevant employees. The method for calculating this information and an explanation of ordinary pay and relevant employees is published on the UK government website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/gender-pay-gap-reporting-make-your-calculations>. CDDFRS do not pay bonus payments therefore calculations three, four and five are not applicable and will not feature in this report.

### **3. CDDFRS Gender Pay Gap Data 31 March 2023**

As at the 31 March 2023, CDDFRS employed 589 employees which is a decrease of 17 employees since the report published in 2023, when there were 606 employees.

477 are male, this figure equates to 81% of the workforce which is slight drop on the percentage of males in the workforce reported last year. In comparison to

the figures reported during the last reporting period, CDDFRS has seen a decrease of 22 male employees during the year.

112 employees are female which equates to 19% of the workforce, which has increased during the year, by 8. There has been an increase in the number of wholetime, female employees since the report published in 2023, which has increased to 56.

Since the 2023 report, there have been 43 new employees, 32.6% (14) of new employees were female.

The breakdown of our staff is detailed in the table below.

**Table 1**

**CDDFRS employee break down by gender as 31 March 2023**

	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Variance since 2023 report</b>
<b>Wholetime (including Control)</b>	54	274	328	+3
<b>On-call (Operational staff)</b>	11	167	178	+2
<b>Corporate</b>	47	45	92	-13
<b>Total</b>	112	486	598	-8

**Table 2**

**CDDFRS employee break down by gender as 31 March 2022**

	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Variance since 2022 report</b>
<b>Wholetime (including Control)</b>	49	276	325	-9
<b>On-call (Operational staff)</b>	8	168	176	-13
<b>Corporate</b>	50	55	105	+3
<b>Total</b>	107	499	606	-19

### Mean and Median gender pay gap.

The **mean** gender pay gap calculation shows the difference between the mean hourly rate of pay those male and female employees receive as an average and can provide an overall indication of the size of the gender pay gap within an organisation.

The **median** gender pay gap calculation is the difference between the middle hourly rate of pay for male and female employees and gives an indication of what a 'typical' situation looks like i.e., what most people earn.

Table 3 demonstrates what the male and female mean, and median rates of pay are, the difference between the rates of pay by gender and the overall percentage gap within CDDFRS.

**Table 3**

#### CDDFRS mean and median rates of pay

	Female hourly rate	Male hourly rate	Difference	Gender pay gap
<b>Mean</b>	£16.68	£17.16	-£0.48	2.80%
<b>Median</b>	£15.74	£16.17	-£0.41	2.73%

The CDDFRS **mean gender pay gap is 2.88%** this is considerably lower than the national average figure of 7.7%, based on full time workers. [Gender pay gap in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peopleinwork/earningsandproductivity/genderpaygap/articles/genderpaygapintheuk2023) (Office of National Statistics, Gender pay gap in the UK 2023). The gap means that female staff earn on average 2.88% less than male staff which equates to £0.48 per hour. This means the gap has decreased by a further £0.29 per hour since 2022 where it sat at £0.77. The data shows a decrease of £0.58 per hour over the last three years in the mean gender pay gap.

The CDDFRS **median gender pay gap is 2.73%** which shows that at the mid salary point of the organisation, male staff are paid £0.41 per hour more than females. There has been no change since 2023 as male workers were paid the same amount more than their female colleagues.



## Bonus payments

CDDFRS does not offer a bonus scheme therefore the following calculations are not applicable within this report:

- Mean bonus pay gap.
- Median bonus pay gap.
- The proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment.

## 4. Salary quartile bands - Identifying the proportion of females and males within each quartile band.

The following tables demonstrate what proportion of male and female (full pay relevant employees) fall into four quartile pay bands. This is done by dividing our workforce into four equal parts:

- High
- Mid Upper
- Mid Low
- Low

Table 4 shows the percentage of females within each band, comparing with the figures CDDFRS reported during the last reporting period.

**Table 4**

### Salary quartile bands – Female 2019/2023 comparison

	High	Mid Upper	Mid Low	Low
<b>2019</b>	14.8%	9.2%	4.2%	33.3%
<b>2020</b>	15.9%	7.9%	6.7%	36%
<b>2021</b>	15.2%	14.1%	5.7%	35%
<b>2022</b>	15.2%	11.3%	9.9%	34.2%
<b>2023</b>	18.4%	10.2%	10.9%	36.7%
<b>Variance 2022-23</b>	+3.2%	-1.1%	+1%	+2.5%

Table 4a shows the percentage of males within each band, comparing the figures CDDFRS reported during the last reporting period.

**Table 4a**

**Salary quartile bands – Male 2019/2023 comparison**

	<b>High</b>	<b>Mid Upper</b>	<b>Mid Low</b>	<b>Low</b>
<b>2019</b>	85.2%	90.8%	95.8%	66.7%
<b>2020</b>	84.1%	92.1%	93.3%	64%
<b>2021</b>	84.8%	85.9%	94.2%	65%
<b>2022</b>	84.8%	88.7%	90.1%	65.8%
<b>2023</b>	81.6%	89.8%	89.1%	63.3%
<b>Variance 2022-23</b>	-3.2%	+1.1%	-1%	-2.5%

Tables 5 to 5c below break down the quartile data further. Each table compares 2023 with our previous reported data by hourly rate, gender, and the number of employees in each band.

**Table 5 Quartile band – High**

**Salary quartile bands – Hourly rate break down and annual comparison.**

<b>Band 1 High</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2019</b>	£15.83 - £64.44	21	14.8%	121	85.2%	142
<b>2020</b>	£16.14 – £65.73	22	15.9%	116	84.1%	138
<b>2021</b>	£16.47 - £67.04	24	15.4%	132	84.6%	156
<b>2022</b>	£16.71 - £68.05	23	15.2%	128	84.8%	151
<b>2023</b>	£17.88 – £68.05	27	18.4%	120	81.6%	147

**Table 5a Quartile band – Mid Upper****Salary quartile bands – Hourly rate break down and annual comparison.**

<b>Band 2 Mid Upper</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2019</b>	£14.31 - £15.83	13	9.2%	129	90.8%	142
<b>2020</b>	£14.60 - £16.14	13	7.9%	151	92.1%	164
<b>2021</b>	£14.89 - £16.47	22	14.1%	134	85.9%	156
<b>2022</b>	£15.12 - £16.71	17	11.3%	134	88.7%	151
<b>2023</b>	£16.17 - £17.88	15	10.2%	131	89.9%	147

**Table 5b Quartile band - Mid Lower****Salary quartile bands – Hourly rate break down and annual comparison.**

<b>Band 3 Mid lower</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2019</b>	£13.93 - £14.31	6	4.2%	137	95.8%	143
<b>2020</b>	£14.60 - £14.21	11	6.7%	153	93.3%	164
<b>2021</b>	£14.49 - £16.47 -	9	5.8%	147	94.2%	156
<b>2022</b>	£15.12 - £14.71	15	9.9%	137	90.1%	152
<b>2023</b>	£16.17 - £15.74	16	10.9%	131	89.1%	147

**Table 5c Quartile band – Low****Salary quartile bands – Hourly rate break down and annual comparison.**

<b>Band 4 low</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2019</b>	£3.90 - £13.93	48	33.3%	96	66.7%	144
<b>2020</b>	£4.15 - £14.09	51	36%	90	64%	141
<b>2021</b>	£4.30 - £14.49	55	35.03%	102	64.97	157
<b>2022</b>	£4.80 - £14.71	52	34.2%	100	65.8%	152
<b>2023</b>	£7.48 - £15.74	54	36.7%	94	63.3%	148

**Table 6**

This table illustrates the numbers of females working within our organisation per quartile banding. Figures from the last reporting period are included to enable comparison.

**Salary quartile bands – Breakdown by number of females in role**

	<b>Corporate</b>	<b>Wholetime (including Control)</b>	<b>On call (Operational)</b>
<b>High 2020</b>	13	9	0
<b>High 2021</b>	15	9	0
<b>High 2022</b>	15	8	0
<b>High 2023</b>	19	8	0
<b>Mid Upper 2020</b>	3	9	1
<b>Mid Upper 2021</b>	6	15	1
<b>Mid Upper 2022</b>	5	11	1
<b>Mid Upper 2023</b>	1	12	2

	<b>Corporate</b>	<b>Wholetime (including Control)</b>	<b>On call (Operational)</b>
<b>Mid Lower 2020</b>	1	7	3
<b>Mid Lower 2021</b>	0	6	3
<b>Mid Lower 2022</b>	0	12	3
<b>Mid Lower 2023</b>	0	11	5
<b>Low 2020</b>	29	19	3
<b>Low 2021</b>	30	19	6
<b>Low 2022</b>	30	18	4
<b>Low 2023</b>	27	23	4

## 5. What does our data mean?

In the 2022 reporting period CDDFRS reported a mean gender pay gap of 5.1% however in this reporting period, 2023, it has reduced to 2.80% demonstrating a significant reduction of 2.30%.

A sixth cohort of apprentices were welcomed into the Service in May 2022 and therefore reflected in the data as of 31 March 2023. The gender split was equal males to females (50%) therefore, aiding the lesser decline in a financial aspect. Cohort five apprentices did have a lower ratio of females however this will still be impacting positively, given that as all cohorts of apprentices' progress through the programme and transition from apprentice to development firefighter, to ultimately competent rates of pay, this will continue to be a positive impact on decreasing the gender pay gap within CDDFRS.

From the six cohorts of firefighter apprentices to date 40% have been female and 60% have been male.

Due to the age profile of operational employees within CDDFRS there has been further retirements as anticipated and there were resignations from corporate colleagues who have moved to other organisations. The age profile within CDDFRS will continue to impact on the workforce and will impact on the gender pay gap in future years.

As CDDFRS reported last year the organisational change that took place during 2021/2022 resulted in only a few numbers of corporate roles falling within the high and mid upper quartile bands. The high quartiles saw an increase of females from 15 to 19 during 2022/2023. The four additional females moved into the high quartile from the mid upper quartile as the result of the nationally agreed pay award. This leaves only 1 female in the mid upper quartile, compared to the 5 in the previous year data.

In line with the approach the Service took during the last reporting year, we have further examined where a gender pay gap may exist. Tables 5 to 5c and 6 look at the three employee groups (which are governed by the terms and conditions detailed within section 3) and compares the data year on year.

Looking at Table 6, from 2022 – 2023, most quartiles and staff groups have either remained the same with the number of females represented or seen an increase except for the mid upper which saw a decrease of 2 females. Hourly rates have increased slightly for both male and female employees, across all quartiles in line with terms and conditions and nationally agreed cost of living pay awards.

Within the reporting period the overall staffing figures within CDDFRS have decreased from 606 to 589, however the number of wholetime, female employees increased by 5, on-call increased by 3 and corporate saw a small decline.

The overall representation of females within CDDFRS has increased slightly to 19% in comparison to the last two years, 17.7% respectively. There number of females within operational roles in CDDFRS continues to steadily increase and had risen to 12.8% at the point the data was collated for this report. CDDFRS will continue to work hard on continuing to increase the overall percentage of females in operational wholetime roles.

## **6. Next Steps - Where do we need to focus our attention?**

This report has identified our female representation by headcount and percentage has increase slightly during the reporting period. The highest proportion of our female workforce are currently employed on Green Book terms and conditions in corporate roles which are paid on different pay scales to

colleagues on Grey Book terms and conditions. 51.1% of corporate employees are females. On-call female representation remains significantly low at 6.18% but has increased from previous year where it sat at 4.5%

### **Structure**

The structure within CDDFRS is very much led by the operational requirements to provide an emergency response service which requires a large proportion of senior roles to be occupied by wholtime operational employees.

CDDFRS has a small corporate function, which results in opportunity for progression being limited for both genders. This scenario is also the case within the on-call duty system and Control section where roles are only available to Watch Manager level, except for one Station Manager within Control.

### **On-call recruitment, retention, and progression**

On-call employees represent a moderate proportion of the entire workforce headcount (30%), however, similarly with wholtime recruitment campaigns there are significantly small numbers of female applicants in comparison to males and as reported previously within this report the number of female employees within these categories have increased in the reporting year by 3.

Analysis of the on-call recruitment campaigns suggests that the role of an on-call firefighter does attract interest from female applicants. However, it is evident that at certain points of the recruitment process female applicants will either voluntarily leave the process or do not meet the national standards required for the role. As part of a service wide project looking at the on-call provision, one aspect is specifically looking at what steps can be taken to encourage applicants from underrepresented groups in the coming years.

## **7. What have we done in the last reporting period?**

### **Recruitment**

It is acknowledged by CDDFRS that there is still work to be done within the community to understand the barriers faced to attract a diverse workforce and CDDFRS being recognised as an employer of choice. Should workforce planning allow for the recruitment of a further operational firefighters, Positive Action Workshops will be held prior to the recruitment campaign to encourage

individuals from underrepresented groups. Positive Action workshops were held prior the recruitment of apprentice cohort 6 who were appointed in May 2022 with a female ratio of 50%.

The work that CDDFRS has undertaken over the past 18-months in building contacts and networks with groups and organisations of underrepresented groups within the areas of County Durham and Darlington will also be utilised to aid targeted recruitment campaigns to encourage applications from underrepresented groups of the workforce.

The Service continues to recruit on-call employees continuously rather than in designated periods and the recruitment processes has been aligned to enable on-call employees to transition into the wholetime workforce when required.

CDDFRS's Hybrid Working Procedure allows flexibility to individuals to work from home when their role can facilitate it. It is acknowledged that this procedure is used predominately by the corporate staff group.

## **8. What will we continue to do?**

CDDFRS will continue to employ a workforce that is highly skilled, agile, engaged, and safe in their diverse roles, whilst ensuring where possible, employees have opportunities, choice and pathways for promotion and development. CDDFRS will continue to work towards having a responsive and diverse workforce which integrates with partners and professional experts across the wider skills set. The Service is eager to ensure that all employees enjoy their role and have a fulfilling and rewarding career.

The People Strategy and Leadership Framework set out a structure for engaging and developing employees assisting to enable the cultural changes which are necessary to deliver the Service's vision and strategic priorities whilst ensuring our values and code of ethics are at the center of all we do. To do this the Service will:

- Continue to work closely with communities, charities, and partner agencies to break down barriers and understand perceptions which currently contribute to females not considering the FRS (Fire & Rescue Services) as an employer of choice.



- Continuously review and monitor the recruitment and selection processes to ensure complete transparency and inclusivity at all stages.
- Continue to work with our local schools and colleges in maintaining our award-winning FF apprenticeship scheme.
- Build on the positive action work that has been undertaken and develop a continuous programme of events and materials to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

### **Policies and Procedures**

- Review policies and procedures to ensure the Service is proactively supporting and encouraging females within our workforce.
- Review policies and procedures to ensure that they are transparent, support flexible working and provide family friendly options enabling greater attraction, retention, and development of the best people.
- Review family specific policies to ensure we are offering maximum opportunity to both parents irrelevant of gender.

### **Career pathways**

- Build on the work that has commenced in relation to building clear pathways to encourage women to advance in their careers.
- Continue to provide all employees with a choice of development, succession planning, talent management and mentoring opportunities.

CDDFRS will continue to work towards eradicating the gender pay gap and the work that has been undertaken to date by reducing the gender pay demonstrates the Services commitment to s a time when there is no gender pay gap.

CDDFRS will continue to report on an annual basis the progress that is being made and what steps are being taken.

Joanne Sanderson  
 People & OD (Organisational Development) Co-ordinator  
 December 2023

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## HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

20 FEBRUARY 2024

### NFCC EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY MATURITY MODEL

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#### REPORT OF GROUP MANAGER JUSTIN PARRY

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#### 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress made in the implementation of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Equality Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) Maturity Model within County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS).

#### 2. NFCC Maturity Models

2.1. The NFCC drives improvement and development throughout the UK Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), offering up sector-led solutions. Recently, the NFCC have published a series of maturity models which allow FRS to:

- Assess their current level of maturity.
- Set their expectations linked to what is achievable for them.
- Identify their areas of improvement.
- Create a bespoke development plan to achieve their desired level of maturity.

2.2. To date there are currently 10 maturity models which cover Leadership Development, Recruitment, Learning Organisation, Blended Learning, Performance Management, Employee Recognition, Talent Management, Wellbeing, HR Analytics and EDI.

2.3. Each maturity model has 4 levels of maturity which each FRS is assessed against and then aspire to achieve, for EDI these are:

- Level 1 – Legislatively and Policy Compliant.
- Level 2 – Valuing Diversity.
- Level 3 – Integrating Inclusion.
- Level 4 – Leading from the front.

### 3. CDDFRS EDI Level of Maturity

- 3.1. To assess the current level of maturity within a FRS, the NFCC provide a self-assessment tool which is an electronic questionnaire that is designed to be filled in by a diverse group of employees to provide an unbiased and balanced assessment. The results are aimed at assisting the FRS to understand their current level of maturity.
- 3.2. In March 2023, the NFCC Implementation Liaison Manager (Jo Hardy) attended the CDDFRS EDI Working Group to provide an overview of the EDI Maturity Model.
- 3.3. In June 2023, CDDFRS EDI Working Group undertook the NFCC EDI self-assessment. Within the EDI self-assessment there are 48 questions which are aligned to the 4 levels of maturity, the respondents graded each question out of 5. The 48 questions are the questions are contained within Appendix A for reference.
- 3.4. In September 2023, CDDFRS EDI Working Group received feedback on the NFCC self-assessment tool from the NFCC Implementation Liaison Manager. The outcome of self-assessment was that CDDFRS was graded as level 2 - Valuing Diversity. More details of the results are displayed below.
- 3.5. Overall, for Level 1 - Legislatively and Policy Compliant, the average score was 4.7 out of 5, the score for each question is displayed below (Chart 1).

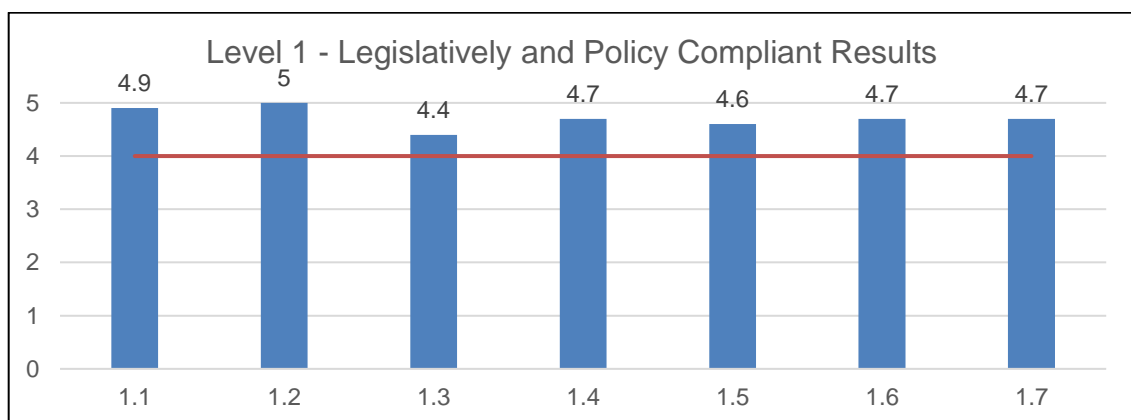


Chart 1 – CDDFRS results for EDI Maturity Model self-assessment 'Legislatively and Policy Compliant' section.

- 3.6. Overall, for Level 2 - Valuing Diversity, the average score was 4.0 out of 5, the score for each question is displayed below (Chart 2).

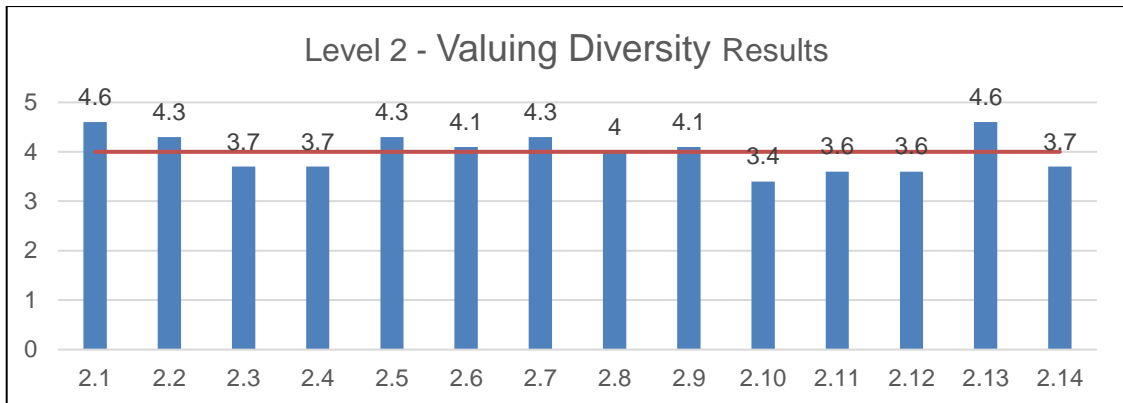


Chart 2 – CDDFRS results for EDI Maturity Model self-assessment 'Valuing Diversity' section.

- 3.7. Overall, for Level 3 - Integrating Inclusion, the average score was 3.5 out of 5, the score for each question is displayed below (Chart 3).

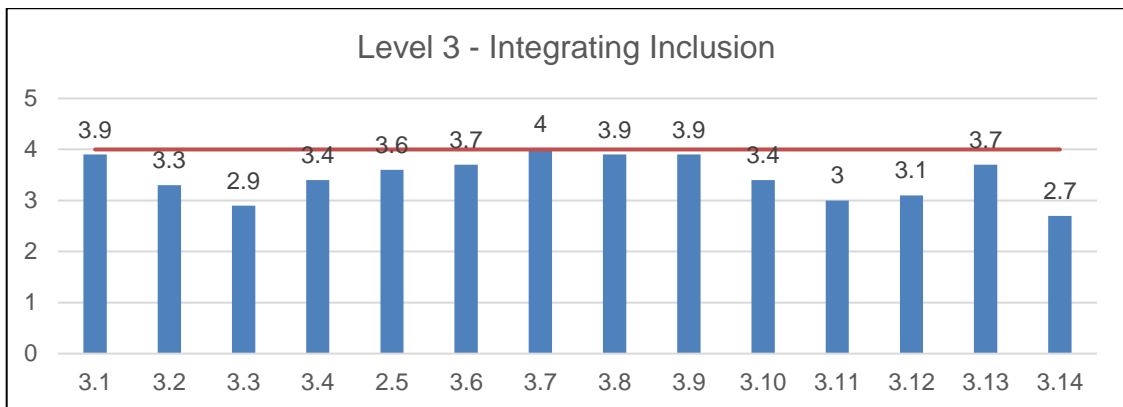


Chart 3 – CDDFRS results for EDI Maturity Model self-assessment 'Integrating Inclusion' section.

- 3.8. Overall, for Level 4 – 'Leading from the Front', the average score was 3.2 out of 5, the score for each question is displayed below (Chart 4).

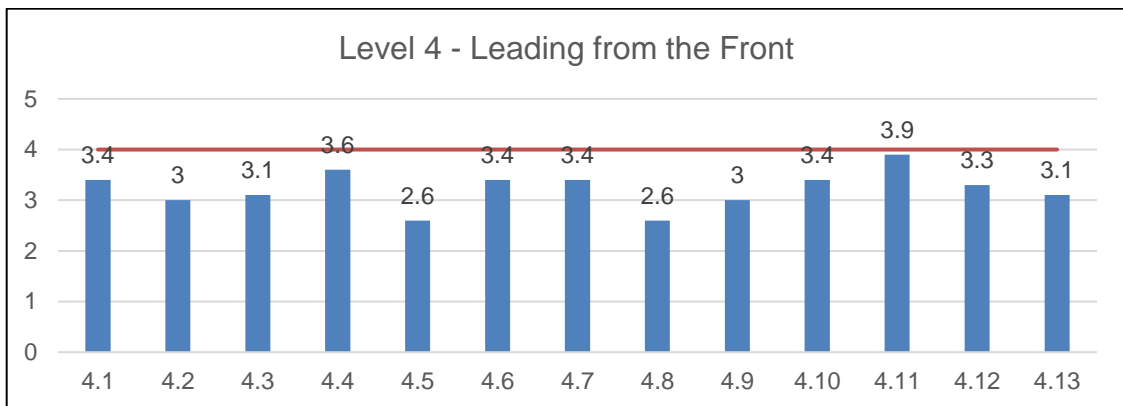


Chart 4 – CDDFRS results for EDI Maturity Model self-assessment 'Leading from the Front' section.

## **4. The Next Steps**

- 4.1. It is important that CDDFRS builds a solid foundation for EDI and to do this it must focus on fully achieving each area before moving on to the next. Whilst the overall outcome of self-assessment was that CDDFRS was graded as level 2 - Valuing Diversity, which is where CDDFRS aspires to be, given current resourcing, there are still several areas which fall short within this section.
- 4.2. Specifically, there are 6 areas within level 2 – ‘Valuing Diversity’ that fall below a score of 4 and therefore require additional work. These areas are:
- Building a diverse pipeline in recruitment and internal promotion.
  - People impact assessment training of the workforce.
  - Diversity and inclusion governance is established, building on EDI learning using coaching, workshops and courses where appropriate.
  - Ensure safe and inclusive for visitors and staff (prayer rooms/female facilities, etc.) and accessibility statement on website.
  - Consideration needed for estates, facilities, non-gender specific facilities. Ensuring to address gender identity, dignity, etc.
- 4.3. The above points will form the key areas of work for the CDDFRS EDI Working Group for 2024/25.

## **5. Summary**

- 5.1. The NFCC drives improvement and development throughout the UK FRS, one way of doing this is through the publication of maturity models which allow FRS to ascertain where they currently are, set their expectation of where they would like to be and create an informed action plan to get there.
- 5.2. Whilst there are 10 maturity models for a variety of different business areas, this report focuses on the maturity model for EDI. CDDFRS have fully engaged in the maturity model process, with the assistance of the NFCC and have been graded as level 2 – ‘Valuing Diversity’.
- 5.3. Whilst the self-assessment grading meets the expectations of CDDFRS, there are still several areas which fall short within this section. It is important that CDDFRS builds a solid foundation for EDI and to do this it must focus on consolidating its current grading by obtaining a strong score across all questions within level 2 – ‘Valuing Diversity’.
- 5.4. As a result of this work CDDFRS have strong direction of where the areas of focus are for EDI and what needs to be achieved over the coming year.

## **6. Recommendations**

6.1. CFA HR Committee are requested to:

- a. Note the contents of the report and receive updates on the action plan in due course.

	<b>Questions Areas for Level 1 - Legislatively and Policy Compliant</b>
1.1	Beginnings of evolutionary work of diversity and inclusion and at least meeting compliance level needed.
1.2	Focussed on adhering to legal standards.
1.3	EDI is an emerging policy focus.
1.4	Diversity and inclusion language and messages are frequent and consistent.
1.5	Good starting point on reporting for EDI data.
1.6	Evolution of diversity and inclusion meets compliance needs.
1.7	Regular diversity reporting.



	<b>Questions Areas for Level 2 - Valuing Diversity</b>
2.1	Identifying the business case for diversity – clear business rationale with intended actions and outcomes.
2.2	Communicating business benefit.
2.3	Building a diverse pipeline in recruitment and internal promotion.
2.4	People impact assessment training of the workforce.
2.5	Raising awareness and the importance of diversity and inclusion in the FRS.
2.6	Building grass roots engagement with our staff / our communities / suppliers.
2.7	Key Policies and projects/programmes undergo People/Equality Impact Assessment.
2.8	People/Equality Impact Assessment training of the workforce.
2.9	Providing equality of opportunity and seeking to eliminate discrimination in all people processes.
2.10	Diversity and inclusion governance is established, building on EDI learning using coaching, workshops and courses where appropriate.
2.11	Diversity and inclusion governance is established, building on EDI learning using coaching, workshops and courses where appropriate.
2.12	Ensure safe and inclusive for visitors and staff (prayer rooms/female facilities, etc.) and accessibility statement on website.
2.13	New ways of working to become more accessible to people wanting to join the service (flexible/remote working, etc.).
2.14	Consideration needed for estates, facilities, non-gender specific facilities. Ensuring to address gender identity, dignity, etc.

	<b>Questions Areas for Level 3 - Integrating Inclusion</b>
3.1	Focused on creating an inclusive culture through leadership, accountability and measurement.
3.2	Diversity and inclusion are embedded into the key talent management processes e.g. recruitment, performance management, leadership development, succession management.
3.3	Accountability and measurement is integrated into all decision making processes through People Impact Assessments.
3.4	Diversity of thinking is understood as part of the inclusion agenda.
3.5	Leaders utilise analytics and trend data to make decisions and identify problems.
3.6	Inclusion fosters engagement and an organisational culture aligned with strategy, brand and social responsibility.
3.7	Achievement of accreditations and externally assessed standards.
3.8	Embedding People/Equality Impact Assessments into everyday activities and service delivery
3.9	Diversity and inclusion are embedded into HR and business systems and processes.
3.10	Inclusion is supported by meaningful staff engagement and an organisational culture aligned with strategy, brand, and social responsibility.
3.11	A work culture where everyone understands their role in ensuring inclusion is embedded.
3.12	Recognising and awarding excellence in inclusion and showcasing role models.
3.13	Support and empower staff networks to add value and influence organisational change.
3.14	Diversity and inclusion are embedded into HR and business systems and processes using such tools as disability passports and other passports that outline an individual's reasonable adjustment requirements.

	<b>Questions Areas for Level 4 - Leading from the front</b>
4.1	Recognised as a leader in diversity and inclusion.
4.2	Inclusion and diversity is business critical.
4.3	External brand and internal brand aligned
4.4	Diversity and inclusion drives innovation.
4.5	Organisational diversity flourishes because it is integrated and not assimilated, avoiding homogeneity of thinking.
4.6	Cultural intelligence and community insights are integral to learning activities.
4.7	Promoting inclusive leadership throughout the organisation.
4.8	Inclusion analytics are predictive, automated and are used intentionally by leaders to drive strategy
4.9	Equal access to services and employment are central to organisational strategies.
4.10	The broader workforce is supportive of inclusion and take actions in their own teams and in provision of services to be inclusive.
4.11	Developing workforce awareness of the changes in respect of diversity and what this means i.e. transgender was relatively unknown or talked about until a few years ago – what is coming down the road in the future.
4.12	The FRS is an employer of choice across all of its communities. Senior leaders are personally leading EDI within their own teams and corporately.
4.13	A compassionate and safe work culture that enables you to be your authentic self, and be empowered to have a voice, challenge, and share your experiences,

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**Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Human Resources Committee**

**20 February 2024**

### **Additional Health Care Benefit**

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#### **Report of Director of People and Organisational Development**

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##### **Purpose of report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Human Resources Committee (HRC) on the implementation of the trial of an additional workforce healthcare benefit, through Benenden Health.

##### **Background**

2. A paper was presented to the HRC on the 5 September 2023 outlining the Service's intention to trial the use of Benenden Health care to offer both a cost effective solution to reduce sickness absence and to support the wellbeing of the workforce.
3. Sickness figures across the Service over recent years have been steadily increasing and are above the target for the number of shifts lost, per person, in a year. The target set by the service is currently 7 shifts per person, and the average over the last three years is 9.5 shifts, with current projected statistics for 23/24 remaining at 9.5 shifts per person.
4. Benenden Services is a not-for-profit healthcare provider which is complementary to the NHS, where NHS waiting times are longer than 5 weeks. It allows for pre-existing conditions (which is contra to private healthcare providers), with services being immediately accessible upon joining where the Service opt for a fully funded provision. The scheme provides for diagnostic treatment up to £2,500 per condition.

##### **Implementation**

5. The Service went live with the Service on 1 January 2024. Of the workforce, only 10 employees have chosen to opt out meaning 98.5% of the workforce are covered under this initiative. There are also 107 family members who have been opted in from the workforce (at their own cost).
6. Over December several visits were made to teams and stations to allow staff to ask questions and understand what services were on offer. We also received posters, leaflets, and resources such as videos, imagery, and information for internal communications to help launch and promote the benefit. The Benenden Health App has also been advertised across the Service and added to work devices.

## Services used to date

7. Quarterly reporting is provided to outline which services have been accessed and total corporate usage per period. However, at a recent meeting we were provided with the following data showing usage over the first month (January):

**Table 1**

<b>Service used</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>
24-hour GP Advice	8
Care Advice	1
Diagnostics and Tests	4
Mental Health Services	1
Physiotherapy	4
Potential Cases	2
Treatment and Surgery	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

8. One success story to date using Benenden Health is that an employee was able to bring forward a consultation appointment by 11 weeks and is awaiting a date for surgery through Benenden. Whilst its unknown how much quicker the process would have been in comparison to that of the NHS, the 11 weeks along is a significant cost saving to the service in terms of sick pay.
9. It is too early to see any impact on sickness absence numbers.

## Conclusion

10. A key theme of the People Strategy is Wellbeing and we have committed to ensuring that we create an environment where our People are physically and emotionally sustained to enable them to give their best and to be able to be at work more of the time to better serve our communities. The Benenden Health initiative is one of many which appears to be making a positive difference and a further supportive intervention which will hopefully positively impact on wellbeing indicators in the next staff survey.

## Recommendations

11. Members are requested to:
  - a) Note the contents of the report and receive further updates in due course.

Katherine Metcalfe, Director of People and Organisational Development, Ext.5665



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## **Human Resources Committee**

**20 February 2024**

### **Staff Survey Outcomes**

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#### **Report of the Director of Organisational People Development**

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##### **Purpose of report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Human Resources Committee (HRC) of the findings of the staff survey conducted by People Insight over September and October 2023.

##### **Background**

2. The Service, in collaboration with DUBS, launched its first cultural survey in October 2016 to study the impact of a range of workplace factors and how this affects service delivery to the public. To gain an independent, credible view of the culture of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS), this work was undertaken by Professor Les Graham who has worked with approximately 36 police forces nationally.
3. Unfortunately, we were advised by DUBS earlier this year that they could no longer facilitate a survey on behalf of the Service due to other ongoing pressures therefore the Service had to consider alternative options. A range of alternatives were considered before deciding to work with People Insight. The key benefit of the People Insight platform was that it allowed to benchmark data against other Fire and Rescue Services as they currently worked with 13 other FRS across the country.
4. The importance of improving values, culture and behaviour was highlighted in the spotlight report by HMICFRS on “Values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services” which was commissioned by The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire. The report draws on the evidence collected through all inspections since 2018 and highlights there is still a significant amount of work to do in the Sector regarding behaviours at work. The employee survey is a vital tool to enable us to seek the view of our workforce around what its like to work for CDDFRS. Outcomes from the staff survey feed into the overall People Strategy action plan so our achievements and areas of focus are transparent. It is also an area which is explored by HMICFRS during their inspection process.
5. The survey was launched on 25 September 2023 and closed on 25 October 2023. We received 290 completed responses which equated to 53% of the workforce. In 2021, our staff survey achieved a 54.7% response rate therefore is comparable.
6. The finding of the staff survey were delivered directly back to all managers at our leadership forums in November 2023 by People Insight. This gave managers an opportunity to ask questions and gain insights into our results alongside the SLT.

##### **Findings**

7. The key measures, survey findings and relationships between key measures for the basis of the findings. It's important to note the responses in this paper are based on the whole

workforce. The data set allows us to further analysis by category of staff i.e. WT, RDS, Corporate and Control as well as location.

- The main areas of the findings can be broken down into several topics which are outlined below. The percentage shown refers to the number of responses which were positive i.e. a respondent either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Theme	CDDFRS Result (%)	Benchmarking data (+/-)
Engagement	85%	+6
Purpose	69%	+8
Enablement	71%	+9
Autonomy	63%	+2
Wellbeing	69%	-2
Reward	66%	+10
Leadership	49%	+2
My manager	86%	+11
Governance	78%	+6

- The results show a positive response across multiple categories especially engagement, My Manager and Governance (workplace behaviours). In comparison with other FRS's our responses around Reward, Enablement and Purpose are significantly. Leadership against the least positive response, however, is comparable with other FRS's results with ours on average being +2 higher. Wellbeing is the one indicator where the service scored lower than other services. Leadership, Wellbeing and Autonomy are the three key areas of focus from the survey.

**Table 2: Average scores for measures used over time, all respondents – comparative Data**

Measure	2016	2018	2021	2023	Direction of travel
Organisational Support	59%	64%	59%	65.3%	Up
Behaviours at work	56%	63%	68%	78%	Up
Fairness	52%	55%	57%	53%*	Down
Job Satisfaction	78%	82%	85%	87%	Up
Engagement	78%	83%	85%	85%	Up
Wellbeing	71%	77%	61.7%	75%	Up

\*The new measure around fairness is not a direct comparison, previously this only covered procedural fairness the new measure includes fairness holistically i.e relationships, decisions & processes.

- The results show a positive direction of travel in 5 comparable measures used across four surveys.
- On a positive note, the workforce has reported lower levels of undermining behaviour and incivility than in previous surveys. This suggests individuals believe that, in general, the levels of undermining behaviour that occur in the workplace are low however, some individuals did still report experiencing this. Positive comments were made about the Services approach to tackling these issues through the call it our surveys, leadership forum discussions and subsequent workshops. A key principle of the People Strategy 2023 – 2026 and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022- 2025 is the drive to be a more inclusive organisation where individuals feel they can be their true self at work. This means staff feel able to openly express personal identities and act in a way that feels authentic and true to oneself. This can have important implications for individual wellbeing and their desire to speak up and make improvements. Keeping the conversation going around these issues

are key and will form part of the action plan as well as building upon the recommendations outlined in the HMICFRS Spotlight report which is updated and monitored through the HRC.

12. Improvements in the other key measures show high levels of job satisfaction and comparable levels of engagement which are positive indicators within our culture that staff are happy in their work and feel engaged with the Service. There is an upward trend particularly in the operational workforce with these measures.
13. Wellbeing can be considered as the amount of emotional and mental energy individuals have available to them to meet the daily demands they face in their roles. It is pleasing to see this indicator has seen an overall rise since the last survey. Research has found that low wellbeing levels are related to reduced performance, engagement, and increased absenteeism. Sickness has been particularly high over the past few years although there have not been any specific trends of this nature identified to date. Comments received from staff have been generally positive around wellbeing and the interventions that the Service provide. However, given this is one of the lowest scoring areas, this will feature in our action plan to make improvements.
14. There has been an increase organisational support. This has been one of the key measures we have been trying to improve since the first survey, so it is pleasing to see this has increased. POS refers to an individuals' beliefs regarding the degree to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. It also refers to a feeling of assurance that the organisation will provide support when individuals face particularly difficult or challenging circumstances when carrying out their duties. Given the results across the wellbeing indicators, it is clear to understand the impact of a variety of factors on this indicator. The comments from the survey also highlight pockets of staff feeling undervalued and not appreciated so this is an area we need to concentrate on in the future.
15. The results for My Manager are very positive suggesting individuals perceive their immediate supervisor as being competent, having personal integrity, caring about the wellbeing and development of those who work for them as well as being focussed on serving their communities. Feeling trusted can be thought of as a 'vote of confidence' by a leader in their people. It enhances the person's confidence in their own abilities and a feeling of being valued. These leadership behaviours underpin the principles of supportive leadership and demonstrate that the behaviours the Service have set are being exhibited on a daily basis. Results around development and access to training also support this with some of the main development interventions implemented recently being linked to leadership programmes and relevant qualifications in this area.
16. Whilst there is no direct comparison for improvement behaviour, this area was explored through questions relating to Autonomy, meaning our workforce are comfortable to generate and implement new and creative ideas and will proactively find solutions to organisational problems. The results were lower than we expected in these areas and so it is useful to reflect what we believe the organisation is seeing and feeling this in day-to-day practice. There are several avenues whereby individuals can make suggestions and put their ideas forward and make changes e.g. Fire Away however these are not always utilised to their full potential. This area will be explored with teams through focus groups.

## Summary

17. Overall, the survey reported positive findings across many of the measures included and improvements have been made across several comparable measures used in previous surveys.

18. People Insight commented that the results reported were reflective of an organisation that was performing well and that the Service should be pleased with the outcome of the survey. They also suggested we were in the upper quartile for engagement, and this is something we should be proud of.
19. To help us improve further, the report identified the following areas in which the Service should focus their attentions, these being:
- a) Continue to concentrate efforts around perceived organisational support and wellbeing.
  - b) Removal of any barriers staff may be experiencing which should positively impact engagement, support and wellbeing factors.
  - c) Work to further reduce inappropriate workplace behaviour which should positively impact on wellbeing factors.
  - d) Identify ways to improve SLT visibility and engagement with the wider workforce.

### **Next Steps**

20. The following next steps have been identified following the receipt of the survey outcomes:
- a) The results of the survey have been shared with all staff.
  - b) A workshop has been facilitated with the SLT to consider the data in more depth and agree the key areas of work. SLT has discussed its current approach to engagement and how it intends to adapt its strategy and methods to address some of the concerns raised by staff.
  - c) Localised data sets have been shared with the relevant managers to review.
  - d) The POD team are undertaking a range of focus groups with watches and teams to help us to understand the outcomes more fully and the interventions that will be required. These will be captured in an action plan.
  - e) Further analysis of the data will take place to identify if there are any trends within specific groups which need addressing.
  - f) A range of ideas for improvement have been put forward by staff. These need to be considered and any changes to ways of working made. All changes will be logged in the action plan.
  - g) Following development of the action plan, consideration should be given to any areas that may warrant further consultation and discussion at a Leadership Forum or Fire Forum.

### **Recommendations**

21. Members are requested to:

- (a) **note** and comment on the content of the report.

Katherine Metcalfe, Director of People and Organisational Development, Ext.5665



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