



Safest People, Safest Places

Human Resources Committee

20 February 2024

Equality Reporting 2023

Report of Director of People and Organisational Development

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
2021	307	185	23	109	624
2022	297	179	25	102	603
2023	288	195	22	110	615
Change 22/23	-9	16	-3	8	12
% Change 22/23	-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]. 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
Wholetime (including Control)	54	274	328	+3
On-call (Operational staff)	11	167	178	+2
Corporate	47	45	92	-13
Total	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
Mean	£16.68	£17.16	-£0.48	2.80%
Median	£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.

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