



Safest People, Safest Places

Human Resources Committee

20 February 2025

Equality Reporting 2024

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 2024 and the key findings are outlined below.
7. The number of people employed by CDDFRS between January 2024 and December 2024 was 612. There has been a decrease of 3 employees in 2024 which is explained below in Table 1.

Table 1 - Number of employees in post 2022 – 2024 (31 December 2024)

Year	Wholetime	On Call	Control	Corporate	Total
2022	297	179	25	102	603
2023	288	195	22	110	615
2024	300	181	25	106	612
Change 23/24	12	-14	3	-4	-3
% Change 23/24	4.2%	-7.2%	13.6%	-3.6%	-0.5%

8. Key areas of the report highlighted the following with regards to changes in our Workforce statistics:
 - a) The total number of staff has decreased by 0.5%.
 - b) The age profile shows that most staff are now aged between 36 and 45 (27.8%), with 27% aged between 25-35. There has been a slight shift in the age profile, last year the second highest age category was 46-55.
 - c) The disability profile has decreased by one person since 2023, representing 2.1% of the total workforce declaring themselves as having a disability.
 - d) Despite the decrease in the total number of employees, there has been a slight increase in the ratio of female employees to male. Currently, 78.1% of employees are male and 20.9% are female, which is an increase of 0.4% from 2023. Additionally, 11.3% of employees in an operational capacity are female, which is above the national average of 9.3% for female operational firefighters.
 - e) Four people took maternity leave in 2024, and some have returned on a part-time basis, taking advantage of flexible working procedures.
 - f) The percentage of staff identifying as being from an ethnic minority group has risen to 2.78% from 2.28% last year. According to the 2021 Census, just over 3% of the population of County Durham identify as people from ethnic minority backgrounds.
 - g) The religion or belief profile of the workforce remains largely unchanged compared to 2023.
 - h) 75% of the Service's 612 employees have declared their sexual orientation, with a slight increase to 2.12% from last year.
9. The report highlighted the following with regards to our processes during 2024:

- a) There were thirteen grievances raised and recorded.
- b) Six disciplinary investigations were conducted, resulting in various outcomes.
- c) All four flexible working requests received were approved.
- d) A variety of internal and external recruitment and promotional processes were undertaken, including apprentice and on-call firefighter recruitment as well as various corporate roles. A total of 2392 applications were received for all recruitment processes. The data shows that 79% of applicants were male, 3.3% regarded themselves as disabled (a slight increase from 2023), 75.5% identified as 'White' (a decrease from 83% last year), and 3.1% identified as LGBTQ+.
- e) 59 employees left CDDFRS across all areas of the Service, with 14 of those being wholetime operational members of staff.

10. The report highlighted the following with regards to our Service Users during 2024:

- a) In 2024, the Service carried out 20,968 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV), which is an increase of 2,930 visits compared to 2023. Most of these visits were to individuals under 65, with an increase of 479 visits to those over 65.
- b) The percentage of people receiving HFSVs who declared themselves to have a disability rose to 9.43%, which is 0.84% higher than the previous year.
- c) The figures indicate that most people receiving HFSVs remain predominantly White British, but there is also a wide range of other ethnicities that have received visits. Notably, there has been a significant increase in the number of individuals not stating or disclosing their ethnicity, which now stands at 13.82%.
- d) In 2024, the age group of 55-59-year-olds more frequently required support and assistance from the Service, accounting for 5.68% of the total, which is a shift from 2023 when the 80-84-year age range was more prevalent.
- e) Gender data recording only started in 2022, so the history of this statistic is limited. Visits carried out to females in 2024 were 45.87%, compared to 51.79% in 2023. Additionally, the number of individuals leaving their gender blank or not disclosed has significantly increased from 9.26% in 2023 to 19.45% in 2024.

Gender Pay Gap

- 11. CDDFRS is required to publish pay information for all employees using a sample of data taken on 31 March 2024 (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 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 2):

- a) As at the 31 March 2024, CDDFRS employed 588 employees which is a decrease of 10 employees since the previous report.
- b) 473 employees are male, this figure equates to 80% of the workforce which is slight drop on the percentage of males in the workforce reported last year.
- c) 115 employees are female which equates to 20% of the workforce, which has increased during the year, by 5.
- d) Since the previous report, there have been 69 new employees, 21.7% (15) of new employees were female.

Table 2 - CDDFRS employee break down by gender as 31 March 2024

	Female	Male	Total	Variance since 2024 report
Wholetime (including Control)	53	263	316	-12
On-call (Operational staff)	12	163	175	-3
Corporate	50	47	97	+5
Total	115	473	588	-10

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	£17.06	£18.05	-£0.99	5.50%
Median	£16.54	£17.01	-£0.47	2.76%

15. In the 2024 reporting period, CDDFRS reported a mean gender pay gap of 5.50%, a significant increase from 2.80% in 2023, reflecting a rise of 3.20%. This increase is partly due to the highest-paid operational female (Director level) transferring to another service, leaving the highest-paid female operational member at the Watch Manager level.
16. In August 2023, a seventh cohort of apprentices joined the service, with a gender split of 6 males and 4 females (40%), helping mitigate the financial impact on the gender pay gap. Previous cohorts had an equal gender split, positively impacting the gender pay gap as apprentices progress to higher pay rates.
17. The age profile and retirement age of operational employees and corporate colleagues moving to other organizations will continue to impact the workforce, and the gender pay gap in future years. Organisational changes during 2023/2024 resulted in fewer corporate roles in the high and mid-upper quartile bands. The high quartile saw a decrease in females from 19 to 15 during 2023/2024, partly due to a higher pay award for operational staff compared to corporate staff. This resulted in 4 females in the mid-upper quartile, compared to 1 in the previous year. The overall representation of females within CDDFRS

slightly increased to 20%, compared to 17.7% two years ago. The number of females in operational roles continues to increase, reaching 13.2% at the time of data collection for this report. CDDFRS will continue efforts to increase the overall percentage of females in operational wholetime roles.

Conclusion

18. The Service have met the legislative requirements to publish both the PSED and GPG reports within the given timescales and outline our findings. Copies of these reports are available on the service website via the following link:

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service](#)

19. 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 2025, and Positive Action Workshops will be held prior to the recruitment campaign to encourage individuals from underrepresented groups.
20. 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, and the ongoing partnership with Teakisi will also be utilised to aid targeted recruitment campaigns to encourage applications from underrepresented groups of the workforce.
21. The People Strategy, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and Leadership Framework are essential for engaging and developing employees. They help drive the cultural changes needed to achieve the Service's vision and strategic priorities while ensuring that values and ethics are at the core of all activities. Our commitments outlined in both the PSED and GPG reports are outlined below:
- a) Continue collaborating with communities, charities, and partner agencies to break down barriers and understand perceptions that currently deter females from considering the Fire & Rescue Services (FRS) as a preferred employer.
 - b) Continuously review and monitor recruitment and selection processes to ensure complete transparency and inclusivity at all stages.
 - c) Maintain the award-winning Firefighter (FF) apprenticeship scheme by continuing to work with local schools and colleges.
 - d) Build on positive action work and develop a continuous program of events and materials to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.
 - e) Review policies and procedures to ensure proactive support and encouragement for females within the workforce.
 - f) Ensure policies and procedures are transparent, support flexible working, and provide family-friendly options to attract, retain, and develop the best talent.
 - g) Review family-specific policies to offer maximum opportunities to both parents, regardless of gender.
 - h) Build clear pathways to encourage women to advance in their careers.
 - i) Continue providing all employees with development, succession planning, talent management, and mentoring opportunities.

Recommendations

22. Members are requested to:

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