



Meeting	Performance & Resources Board	Agenda no.	10
Meeting Date	26 May 2022		
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Subject	Annual Workforce Report 2021-2022		
Type of Report:	Information		
Action Point No.		For Publication	Yes

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is for noting and provides an overview of the Service's workforce for the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Annual Workforce report provides an annual snapshot of our workforce and looks back on the previous financial year. Data is broken down into four employee groups (i.e. Wholetime, On-Call, Control and Support). This report provides commentary on the headline topics from the data and focuses on the areas where there has been the biggest change since the previous report.

BACKGROUND

For the purposes of this paper a series of data extracts were taken from our HR information system to drill down to the specific workforce metrics. Exit interview data and Recruitment and Selection data has also been used to provide further analysis.

Calculations for averages and percentages have been rounded to one decimal place.

Where reference is made to national statistics the source is Fire and Rescue Workforce and Pension Statistics: [Fire and rescue workforce and pensions statistics: England, April 2020 to March 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-and-rescue-workforce-and-pensions-statistics-england-april-2020-to-march-2021)

Please see Appendix for further detailed Workforce Demographics data.

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS – ACTION BEING TAKEN

Workforce Demographic Action

Whilst the Service's workforce demographics are broadly comparable to the national picture for fire and rescue services in England, there is still more we need to do. Table 2 – 8 in the Appendix provides information on five diversity characteristics – Age (Table 2 and Table 3), Gender/Sex (Table 4 and Table 5), Ethnicity (Table 6), Disability (Table 7) and Sexual Orientation (Table 8).

In our People Strategy 2020-24 we gave a commitment to reviewing our recruitment approaches and assessment and selection methodology. Fairness, inclusion and diversity was a strong thread through these commitments. We have worked within our agreed policy review framework to ensure our pre-employment, recruitment and resourcing policies and practices are consistent, transparent and inclusive, and that they build on good practice as noted from the NFCC maturity model frameworks and the NFCC policy products.

We continue to develop and implement inclusive and diverse ways to assess all candidates for vacancies including developing training, guidance and toolkits that support consistent and effective recruitment assessment e.g. unconscious bias, process maps and assessor toolkits. Additionally we have made changes to our assessment centres to support neuro-divergent needs.

Nationally the number and proportion of female firefighters has slowly increased to 7.5 per cent in 2021. The Service has been continuing the commitment to increasing gender diversity. As of 31 March 2022 5.5 per cent of firefighting personnel (i.e. Wholetime and On Call combined) of recorded gender were female.

During Quarter 1 and 2 an 'Inclusion and Diversity in Resourcing/Recruitment Review' was undertaken by an associate of the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA). This review found substantial progress had been made in relation to embedding inclusive recruitment principles and practices in terms of both attraction and assessment on candidates. They found too that the Service is building key relationships with external groups and organisations and is embedding systemic change in our practices and processes. They also signposted further action that we can take and this is underway.

As of 31 March 2022, 3.2 per cent of firefighting personnel (i.e. Wholetime and On Call combined) of recorded ethnicity identified as a non-white, ethnic minority.

The overall age profile has moved *down* an age banding, with the majority of employees now in the 36-45 band; this is reflective of our positive action focus and retirements. The age profile in Control has moved into the next age category, which is associated with both an ageing workforce and the low turnover in the employee group overall. The average age of all firefighting personnel (i.e. Wholetime and On Call combined) on 31 March 2022 was 41.0 years.

Our data for sexual orientation shows a decrease in the number of people who have told us that they identify as LGBTQ+. We have also seen a reduction in the number of employees that have not disclosed their sexual orientation.

Our Inclusion Insights monthly newsletter was launched during Quarter 1 to communicate and support our year of allyship through a programme of learning.

Turnover Actions

Table 13 in the Appendix details our workforce turnover by employee group. Turnover rates remain healthy but have increased for a third year. Whilst leaver data provides some insights, it is the exit interviews and questionnaire where we are able to gain a better understanding to inform what actions may be required. When colleagues leave the Service they are invited to complete an exit interview questionnaire. This is optional, but we encourage colleagues to take up this opportunity in order to gain a

better understanding of the drivers for our turnover and identify any interventions which may be required.

44 online exit interview submissions were received in 2021/22, reflecting 23.8% of all leavers during the period. Response rates were as follows:

Employee Group	Leavers	Exit Interview Submissions	Response Rate
Wholetime	53	13	24.5%
On-Call	88	11	12.5%
Control	1	0	0%
Support	43	20	46.5%
OVERALL	185	44	23.8%

This is the first full financial year since the online exit interview questionnaire was launched during 2020/1, so year-on-year comparisons are not possible.

Leavers are provided with a web link to the online questionnaire and do not need to be logged in via the Service network in order to complete it.

Primary reasons for leaving were recorded as:

- Wholetime: 61.5% of all leavers were retiring to take their full pension. A further 15.4% indicated that they were retiring early.
- On Call: 36.4% left for personal reasons (including/work life balance). A further 18.2% left to take up alternative employment
- No Control leavers completed an exit interview.
- Support: 70.6% were leaving to take up alternative employment. A further 11.8% indicated that they were leaving to draw their pension.

Across all employee groups, 58.5% of all exit questionnaire respondents indicated that they would return to the Service should a suitable opportunity present itself.

The Strategic Workforce Plan indicates that turnover will increase over the next five years, given the age of our Wholetime employees. This is being addressed through the programme of recruitment and the work the Lead People Partners continue to do with the Group Managers to map and plan the next six to twelve months, with consideration given to retirements, LRS and the expected completed dates for candidates and portfolio development plans.

Absence Actions

The year 2020-2021 was unprecedented in terms of health and wellbeing due to the Covid pandemic, this continued into 2021-22 The Omicron COVID variant had a significant impact on staffing levels, particularly in December.

A new Absence Policy was launched in Quarter 2, following consultation with recognised trade unions, it fulfils our commitment to support a positive wellbeing culture by taking proactive steps to create a safe and healthy work environment by addressing any health or attendance related issues at the earliest opportunity. The 'toolkit' guides, for managers and colleagues, will help our Service to make consistent decisions based on individual health and wellbeing needs. We have been proactively supporting absence case management as part of the wider attendance management agenda, the People Partners are coaching managers and Hydra training, including a focus on attendance, has been run for newly promoted Watch Managers. The HR team continues to review cases on a weekly basis to ensure that referrals to Occupational Health are happening on a timely basis and to ensure managers' support.

Attendance cases are increasing in duration due to an emerging theme of significant wait times for treatment and appointments with the NHS. We are seeing an increase in business case funding requests to support fast track medical support.

Our Service's Fitness Policy was relaunched during Quarter 4 and the Fitness Team continue to work with individuals and their managers that are currently below the required level to mitigate risk of impacting our Service commitments.

The wellbeing element of the People Strategy 2020-24 has focused on mental and physical health, as well as financial health and social activity, healthy eating and fitness. Being a Mental Health First Aider – Toolkit was produced in Quarter 1 to complement and give guidance to mental health first aiders on the completion of the MHFA training course that promotes a positive wellbeing culture, talking about mental health openly and taking practical steps to create mentally healthy workplace.

Many of the management referrals around mental health will have been referred on for counselling or specialist trauma therapy; we have a network of counsellors and therapists across the county.

A SharePoint site was created to showcase all discounts available to employees this has helped to drive update and awareness among colleagues no matter where they work. We have a benefit/discount focus each week in 'The Shout', our weekly eBrief.

Employee Relations Actions

A Deep Dive on case management was conducted during Quarter 1 with the PFCC. We are continuing to focus on early interventions and resolving issues as early and informally as possible. We have leveraged lessons learned and feedback from previous cases to improve effective resolution of employee relations issues. As a team, we are looking at ways to continuously improve our support to employee issues, such as case reviews. Having effective case management also supports our commitment to continuous improvement and embedding our values and behaviours.

We recognise the value of benchmarking and the important opportunities it brings for us to accelerate improvements in our Service. Focus during the year has been internal with updates to policy and the associated communication.

We have committed to working collaboratively with the representative bodies to design an appropriate investigations and disciplinary training workshop.

During 2021-22 we have reviewed and relaunched 13 policies: Attendance, Code of Conduct embedding Code of Ethics, Equality & Diversity, Organisational Change, Lone Working, Family Friendly (Maternity, Paternity, Parental and Adoption), Redeployment, Social Media, Disciplinary, Probation Policy.

During Quarter 2 grievance cases rose most significantly, whilst there was no specific underlying trend causing the increase, cases were mostly due to changes in working arrangements, policy or procedural dissatisfaction or issues with working relationships.

The average time to close cases dropped from 131 days in 2020/21 to 108 days in 2021/22.

See Table 18 for a full breakdown of the Service's employee relations casework metrics as at 31 March 2022, with comparison to the end of the previous financial year.

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

There are no additional risk management implications.

Strategic risk - SRR150005

There is a risk that the Service does not develop and manage its people effectively therefore not delivering a range of activities which save lives, prevent harm, and protect our communities due to failure to deliver against the Service's People Strategy and have the right people, in the right place, with the right skills, at the right time.

Control measure - SRR150005/003

Efficient workforce planning and recruitment procedures.

LINKS TO FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

As set out in the Fire and Rescue Plan

- Promoting a positive culture in the workplace
- Be transparent, open, and accessible
- Make best use of our resources

As well as the following Service Values

- Value the contribution of all
- Always professional
- Work as one team

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

There are no staffing implications as a result of this report.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

We have considered whether individuals with protected characteristics will be disadvantaged as a consequence of the actions being taken. Due regard has also

been given to whether there is impact on each of the following protected groups as defined within the Equality Act 2010:

Race	No	Religion or belief	No
Sex	No	Gender reassignment	No
Age	No	Pregnancy & maternity	No
Disability	No	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No
Sexual orientation	No		

This Workforce Report does not have any direct impact on protected groups as defined within the Equality Act. However, each individual policy and deliverables under the People Strategy has a full People Impact Assessment which demonstrates consideration of all impacts arising from them.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no health and safety implications associated with this report.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Our current approach to consultation and negotiation complements our formal mechanism – the Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (JNCC). The schedule of consultation involves seeking acceptable solutions to problems through a genuine exchange of views and information.

FUTURE PLANS

Work will continue within the 2022-23 Annual Plan: HR.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES

APPENDIX

Table 1: Workforce Headcount / FTE					
Employee Group	31 Mar 2021		31 Mar 2022		FTE Variance
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	
Wholetime	650	649.0	635	633.6	-15.4
On-Call	505	398.8	524	414.0	+ 15.2
Control	38	35.2	40	35.7	+ 0.5
Support	329	305.2	323	296.5	- 8.7
OVERALL	1522	1388.1	1522	1379.8	- 8.3

This section covers information on five diversity characteristics – age, sex, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation. We also look to compare our staff data to the population we serve and work within and also to national fire and rescue service data.

Table 2: Age Profile				
Employee Group	Mean	Median	Min	Max
Wholetime	43.1	44.0	21	63
On-Call	38.4	37.0	18	72
Control	43.0	41.5	24	64
Support	46.9	48.0	20	73
OVERALL	42.3	43.0	18	73

Based upon current age as at 31 March 2022.

Table 3: Majority Age Group				
Employee Group	31 Mar 2021		31 Mar 2022	
	Majority Group	% of Employees in Group	Majority Group	% of Employees in Group
Wholetime	46-55	39.5%	46-55	38.0%
On-Call	25-35	36.0%	25-35	35.3%
Control	25-35	34.2%	36-45	32.5%
Support	56-65	27.5%	56-65	29.1%
OVERALL	46-55	30.0%	36-45	29.3%

Table 4: Sex Distribution				
Employee Group	31 Mar 2021		31 Mar 2022	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Wholetime	93.2%	6.8%	92.9%	7.1%
On-Call	97.0%	3.0%	96.6%	3.4%
Control	15.8%	84.2%	15.0%	85.0%
Support	47.4%	52.6%	48.3%	51.7%
OVERALL	82.6%	17.4%	82.7%	17.4%

Table 5: Gender Distribution								
Employee Group	31 Mar 2021				31 Mar 2022			
	Male	Female	Other	Not Recorded	Male	Female	Other	Not Recorded
Wholetime	82.4%	6.6%	0.6%	10.3%	82.8%	6.9%	0.7%	9.6%
On-Call	88.7%	2.8%	0.4%	8.1%	89.5%	3.2%	0.4%	6.9%
Control	13.2%	84.2%	0%	2.6%	15.0%	85.0%	0%	0%
Support	45.3%	50.5%	0%	4.2%	46.7%	50.2%	0%	3.1%
OVERALL	74.7%	16.8%	0.4%	8.1%	75.7%	16.9%	0.4%	7.0%

'Not Recorded' figure includes 'not stated' and 'prefer not to say' responses

Table 6: Ethnicity						
Employee Group	31 Mar 2021			31 Mar 2022		
	White ¹	Other	Not Recorded	White ¹	Other ²	Not Recorded
Wholetime	70.4%	2.6%	27.0%	70.7%	9.3%	20.0%
On-Call	70.1%	1.4%	28.5%	71.4%	4.4%	24.2%
Control	92.1%	2.6%	5.3%	90.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Support	84.3%	3.0%	12.7%	82.7%	6.2%	11.1%
OVERALL	73.9%	2.3%	23.9%	74.0%	6.8%	19.2%

Note 1: 'White' includes: White British, White English, White Gypsy or Irish Traveller, White Irish, White Northern Irish, White Scottish and White Welsh.

Note 2: 'other' includes all other actively disclosed ethnic backgrounds, including "Prefer Not To Say".

Significant efforts by I&D BP have resulted in dramatic increase in ethnic origins being identified by employees

Table 7: Disability				
Employee Group	31 Mar 2021		31 Mar 2022	
	Disability	Not Stated	Disability	Not Stated
Wholetime	4.3%	95.7%	4.1%	95.9%
On-Call	3.6%	96.4%	4.0%	96.0%
Control	0%	100%	2.5%	97.5%
Support	6.0%	94.0%	5.9%	94.1%
OVERALL	4.3%	95.7%	4.4%	95.6%

Table 8: Sexual Orientation			
Employee Group	Heterosexual	LGBQ+	Not Recorded
Wholetime	57.0%	3.3%	38.4%
On-Call	53.4%	2.3%	44.3%
Control	77.5%	2.5%	20.0%
Support	69.0%	3.4%	26.6%
OVERALL	58.9%	3.0%	37.5%

Not recorded figure includes “not stated” and “prefer not to say” responses

Workforce joiner diversity

Table 9: Workforce Joiner Sex		
Employee Group	Male	Female
Wholetime	83.8%	16.2%
On-Call	92.5%	7.5%
Control	0%	0%
Support	54.5%	45.5%
OVERALL	83.6%	16.4%

Table 10: Workforce Joiner Gender				
Employee Group	Male	Female	Other	Not Recorded
Wholetime	83.8%	16.2%	0%	0%
On-Call	91.6%	7.5%	0%	0.9%
Control	0%	0%	0%	0%
Support	54.5%	45.5%	0%	0%
OVERALL	83.1%	16.4%	0%	0.6%

Not recorded figure includes “not stated” and “prefer not to say” responses

Table 11: Workforce Joiner Ethnicity			
Employee Group	White *	Other	Not Recorded
Wholetime	70.3%	8.1%	21.6%
On-Call	69.2%	0.9%	29.9%
Control	0%	0%	0%
Support	51.5%	3.0%	45.5%
OVERALL	66.1%	2.8%	31.1%

'White' includes: White British, White English, White Irish, White Scottish, White Welsh

Table 12: Workforce Joiner Age Distribution						
Employee Group	17-24	25-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66+
Wholetime	13.5%	64.9%	13.5%	8.1%	0%	0%
On-Call	25.2%	43.9%	24.3%	6.5%	0%	0%
Control	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Support	12.1%	21.2%	21.2%	27.3%	15.2%	3.0%
OVERALL	20.3%	44.1%	21.5%	10.7%	2.8%	0.6%

TURNOVER

Table 13: Workforce Turnover		
Employee Group	2020-21	2021-22
Wholetime	4.6%	7.3%
On-Call	12.0%	13.9%
Control	0%	2.6%
Support	8.9%	10.4%
OVERALL	7.9%	10.1%

Leavers

Table 14: Reasons for Leaving								
Employee Group	Transfer to other service	Retirement	Resignation	Redundancy	End of Contract	Dismissal	Death	Not Recorded
Wholetime	0%	75.5%	13.2%	3.8%	0%	7.5%	0%	0%
On-Call	0%	11.4%	87.5%	0%	0%	0%	1.1%	0%
Control	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Support	0%	18.6%	67.4%	9.3%	2.3%	2.3%	0%	0%

OVERALL	0%	31.9%	61.1%	3.2%	0.5%	2.7%	0.5%	0%
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Table 15: Length of Service at Leaving						
Employee Group	< 1 Year	1-3 Years	4-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	20 Years +
Wholetime	5.7%	0%	0%	1.9%	22.6%	69.8%
On-Call	30.7%	26.1%	6.8%	9.1%	13.6%	13.6%
Control	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Support	20.9%	30.2%	16.3%	7.0%	18.6%	7.0%
OVERALL	21.1%	19.5%	7.0%	6.5%	17.3%	28.6%

Joiners/Recruitment

Table 15: Joiners		
Employee Group	2020-21	2021-22
Wholetime	37	37
On-Call	34	107
Control	2	0
Support	33	33
OVERALL	106	177

ABSENCE

Table 17: Sickness Absence		
Employee Group	Working/Duty Days Lost in 2020-21	Working/Duty Days Lost in 2021-22
Wholetime	9,056	7,640
On-Call	9,535	9,582
Control	846	902
Support	2,503	2,422
OVERALL	21,941	20,546

Absence figures for both 2020-21 and 2021-22 include any time recorded as self isolating or otherwise absence from the workplace due to Covid-related reasons. Figures are rounded to the nearest full day.

During the course of 2021-22, 30.7% of all recorded absence was for Covid-related reasons.



EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

The following table presents the Service's employee relations casework metrics as at 31 March 2022, with comparison to the end of the previous financial year.

Table 18: Casework Volumes 2021/22												
Case Type	Number of New Cases in Year			Number of Cases Closed in Year			Average time to Close Cases (Calendar Days)			Number of Cases Open at Year End		
	2020/21	2021/22	TREND	2020/21	2021/22	TREND	2020/21	2021/22	TREND	2020/21	2021/22	TREND
Attendance	68	94	↑	88	80	↓	131	112	↓	16	30	↑
Disciplinary	6	11	↑	8	10	↑	296	130	↓	1	4	↑
Grievance	11	30	↑	13	30	↑	79	58	↓	0	1	↑
Performance	22	38	↑	32	41	↑	108	131	↑	4	4	←
OVERALL	107	173	↑	141	161	↑	131	108	↓	21	39	↑