



DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Recruitment and Workforce Diversity Annual Report

January – December 2022

Diversity & Inclusion Team

February 2023

Recruitment and Workforce Diversity Annual Report

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Document Control

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1. Introduction

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 provides for the general public sector equality duty. This requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The duty requires public bodies to publish equality information pertaining to the makeup of its workforce on an annual basis and covers all the protected characteristics including gender, disability, ethnic group, religion and sexual orientation.

The analysis within this report covers Gender, Disability, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation and Religion for the following:

- Current staff composition, new starters, promotions, unpaid leave and leavers
- Applicants for jobs (uniformed, non-uniformed, Support, Control) advertised in the data period

For guidance on the Equality Act 2010 please see www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance and www.equalityhumanrights.com.

Service procurement guidance sets out expectations to our potential providers and publishes this report to adhere to these requirements and provide an example.

LEVEL 1 – MINIMUM STANDARDS Firms of 5 or more employees		LEVEL 2 – MINIMUM STANDARDS Firms of 50 or more employees		LEVEL 3 – MINIMUM STANDARDS Firms of 150 or more employees	
1	Provide a written equality policy which covers at least: recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline & dismissal, and (a) victimisation, discrimination & harassment, making it clear that these are disciplinary offences within the firm; (b) identification of the senior position with responsibility for the policy and its effective implementation; (c) communication of the policy to staff.	5	Written instructions to managers and supervisors on equality in recruitment selection, training, promotion, discipline & dismissal of staff and other relevant HR policies such as Pregnancy & maternity, work-life balance policies etc. These can be instructions for general opportunities in employment.	9	Regular consultation on equality issues within the workforce
2	Where a contractor is carrying out the functions of DSFRS the contractor must meet the same standards as DSFRS, including the undertaking the Specific Duties, regardless of the size of the contractor.	6	Training in equality, diversity and inclusion for managers and staff.	10	Regular diversity monitoring of selection transfer, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal – and bullying and harassment
3	Effective implementation of the policy in the firm's recruitment practice, to include open recruitment methods such as the use of job centres, careers service or press advertisements Regular monitoring of the number of job applicants from different groups (covering the protected characteristics)	7	Monitoring of: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The numbers of job applicants for employment from different groups. • The numbers of employees from different groups, by grade and section. 	11	Mention in the firms recruitment advertisements and publicity literature of its arrangements for offering equal opportunities. Publish Equality monitoring information
4	Regular Reviews of the policy and commitment to meet the appropriate level of the standard following any recruitment which increases the size of the organisation.	8	If monitoring reveals under-representation of particular groups, action to check that criteria 1-3, & 6-7 are being used effectively in the organisation and to have an action plan in place.	12	If monitoring (as in criteria 7 and 10) indicates under-representation of any group take action to check the criteria 1-3, 5, 6, 9 and 11 are being used effectively within the firm and if not, take appropriate advice. Take appropriate action (including positive action as a result of that advice)

2. Methodology

This report has the purpose to identify any potential equality issues within recruitment, retention and promotion.

Diversity data for applicants is captured in the 'Talentlink' Recruitment system and data for new starters, promotions/transfers and leavers is recorded in the 'Workforce' personnel system. Data is extracted for the purposes of regular monitoring and scrutiny. Reports can only be created by certain members of the People & Culture team who are cleared for access to this confidential data. Written reports are always in anonymous format and where it is possible to identify an individual, data will be generalised to a format where this is no longer possible.

Diversity monitoring in order to monitor progress of under-represented groups through the various stages is undertaken for all Firefighter recruitment processes in relation to several characteristics. Monitoring this data is not mandatory. Other recruitment workflows are not currently actively monitored in relation to protected characteristics for the stages in between application and starting employment.

Gathering Diversity information from staff is done at the start of employment by extracting data from the 'Talentlink' recruitment system and recording those details on the 'Workforce' system. Throughout employment with the Service, staff can change or add data by using an "app," which allows all employees to check and amend their details very easily, with reminders sent every 6 months to update.

Benchmark figures for 2021/22 are taken from the data used to support the Communities and [Local Government Association](#) returns which were last updated October 2022.

Data is correct as of 4/1/2023 Only valid data has been analysed. No data gaps have been identified. Some vacancies were still open for applications at the time of data extraction.

The word 'On-call' has been used within the data tables. This is our group of 'On-call' staff who respond to a station when incidents occur. They are usually self-employed or have a primary employer who releases them for the time it takes to resolve the incident.

'Wholetime' are our group of fulltime Firefighters, working 42 hours per week.

'Minority ethnic group' means all ethnic groups, including people of colour, other than UK white, including Irish, European, Australian etc.

'People of Colour' (PoC) means Black, Asian, mixed and 'other'.

The recruitment system uses 4 classifications for vacancies;

- 1 On-call
- 2 Wholetime
- 3 Promotion/Transfer/Development
- 4 Support, which includes Control

Data from those groups has been split further to separate 'Control' vacancies, 'Promotion On-call', 'Promotion Wholetime', 'Development' opportunities like assessment centres and access to progression pools and 'On-call to Wholetime'.

3. Summary of key observations

The key findings identified in this set of data are:

- Female representation in operational roles (on-call and wholetime) remains small at 6.5%. This represents a movement of 0.3% over the previous year, but remains below the national fire sector representation of up to 8%.
- For the third year in a row there was a reduction in female on-call new starters, which, at eight, was two less than in 2021. However, the overall number of operational posts occupied by a woman increased to the highest ever at 110.
- The 2022 female application percentages for Wholetime and on-call were 13.1% and 15.1% respectively which represents a reduction of 14.2% and 17.7% respectively over the previous year.
- The percentages of female applicants for internal operational promotion opportunities at 4.6% for Wholetime and 8.7% for on-call is broadly in line with the female workforce representation of 6.5%. However, increased success in attracting female applicants at 17% has been observed through the introduction of progression development, i.e. assessment centres which affords access to progression and additional development opportunities.
- The attraction rate from female applicants for Support vacancies reflects the communities of Devon and Somerset at c49%.
- The percentage of applicants with a minority ethnic background 7.8% is near the representation in our community (8%) for externally advertised vacancies. The percentage of minority ethnic new starters in across all positions was 7.5%. Specifically within our wholetime positions this was well above the application rate at 13%.
- Around 1% of new starters in On-call and Wholetime Firefighter positions were people of colour. No people of colour started Professional/ Support roles.
- The representation of people of colour in the service (0.8%) which is four times lower than in the communities of Devon & Somerset (4.0%).
- No people of colour were promoted either temporarily or permanently in any of the staff groups. For 2022, there were four applicants in this category who applied for operational promotion.
- External application rates from LGB (anything other than Heterosexual) are higher than the community and identification of staff as LGB, with 2.5% identifying within this category, is slightly lower than the community average of 3.7%
- Female representation in the senior management team increased from 19% to 27% i.e. one additional female manager.

Actions and plan

Corporate commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion are set out in the Community Risk Management Plan. The plan states how the Service will meet the needs of different communities and vulnerable people to reduce risk and align with

the changes needed to support the new target operating model and external inspection outcomes.

The People Committee monitors progress of actions relating to the people aspects of and particularly matters of diversity and inclusion, every three months. In addition, the Service has introduced a Diversity and Inclusion Commission consisting of key stakeholders, including union representatives and staff support network chairs. This Commission has the mandate to propose and agree actions to improve the Services' diversity and inclusion. An action plan is currently under development.

The Service has a process in place to ensure that potential equality impacts are identified and mitigated when preparing or reviewing policies and procedures, including possible racism. The process is called Equality Risks and Benefits Analysis (ERBA) and it helps the Service to deliver better services and working practices as well as ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. It sits within a broader assessment, the People Impact Assessment. Besides equality impacts, this assessment also includes impacts on people in relation to wellbeing, data protection, health & safety and safeguarding.

Mandatory equality, diversity & inclusion training has been reviewed and rolled out in line with the cause for concern action plan and the Service is increasing awareness of psychological safety with the aim to improve safety and wellbeing in the workforce. Part of this work will focus on addressing identified levels of unwanted behaviour by introducing learning approaches to build capability in challenging unethical and inappropriate behaviour.

Work to build understanding of and integrating the national code of ethics into relevant processes has been completed and incorporating ethics into a cultural communication and engagement is now business as usual.

The Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion benchmarked the Service against Talent, Inclusion, Diversity & Equality and awarded the Service a Silver Award in August 2022.

New recruitment processes for operational staff are in place with a particular emphasis on eliminating bias including several anonymous stages at the start. Current progression processes and development pathways, including promotion, are under constant review with new eligibility requirements being considered to create a more level playing field between staff groups and be more inclusive to Support Staff.

Positive action initiatives in relation to development in the form of Action Learning Sets and a Sponsoring programme continue, with completed sets and sponsoring relationships showing good outcomes.

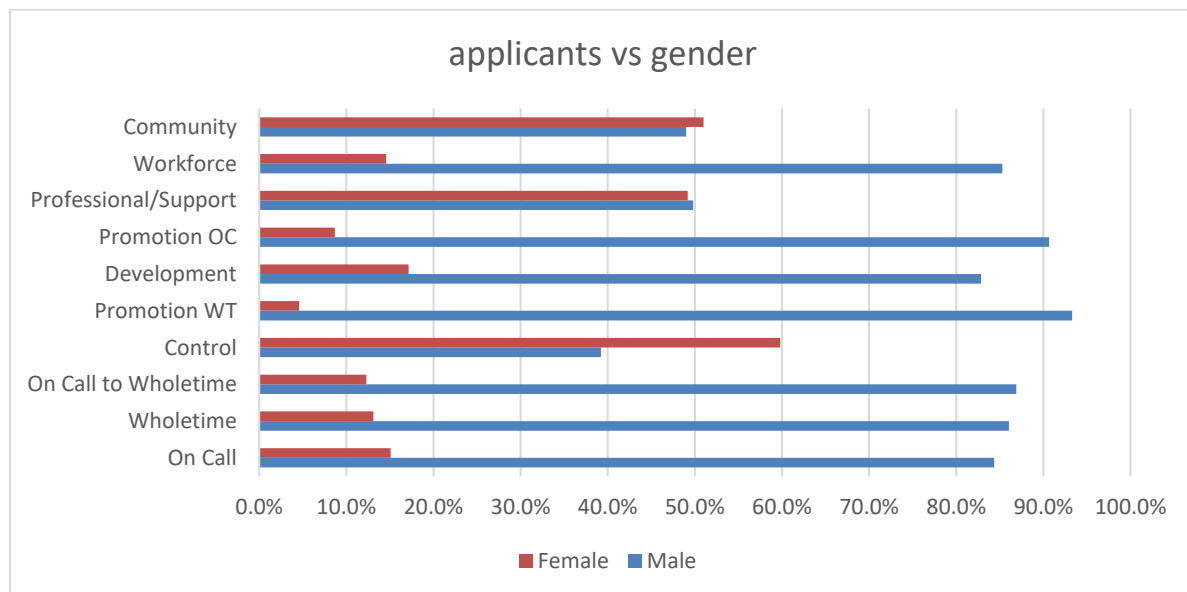
Any positive action work is and will continue to be supported through working closely with the Asian Fire Service Association and the Employer Network of Equality and Inclusion.

4. Recruitment

4.1 general recruitment

In 2022 a total of 2084 applications were received through the recruitment system for 225 advertised vacancies, of which 148 vacancies were advertised externally.

The graph below shows the vacancy type against applicant gender and the gender percentages for the workforce and the Community. The few transgender applicants and staff have not been included in this graph for data protection reasons.

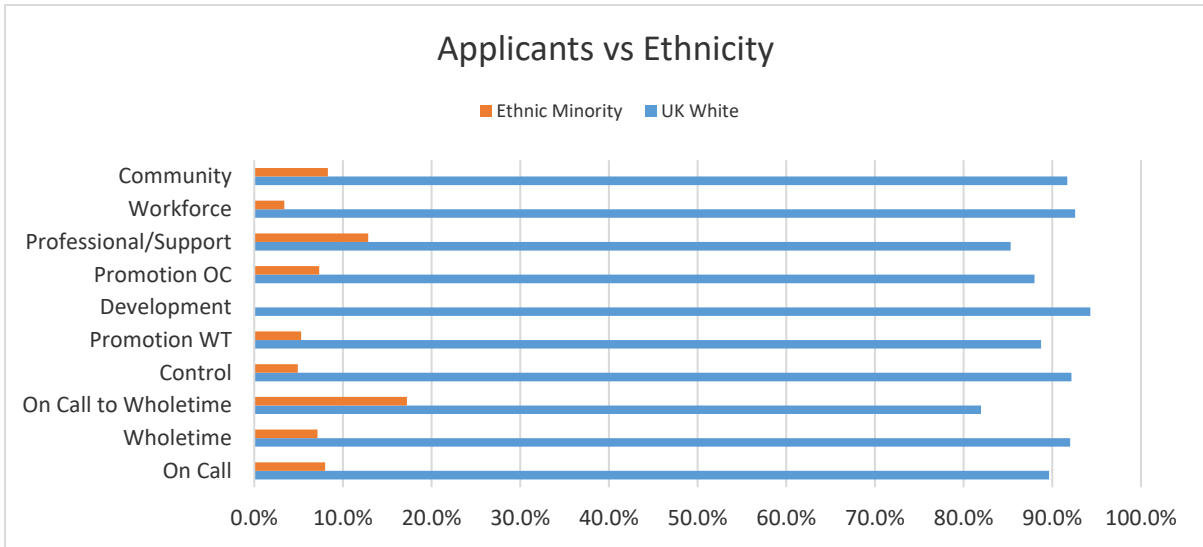


The graph highlights that the Professional/Support application gender balance is very near the gender balance in the working age community. The Control gender balance reflects the workforce representation within that staff group and the type of work.

It also shows a continuing underrepresentation in female applicants in Wholetime and On-call groups. However, the application percentages of 12-13% and 15% are higher than in the representation in the operational workforce (6-7%), but 1-2% lower than in 2021.

Percentages of female applicants for internal operational vacancies remain low as can be expected in an operational workforce with low female representation. Interest from women for progression development was much higher at 17%.

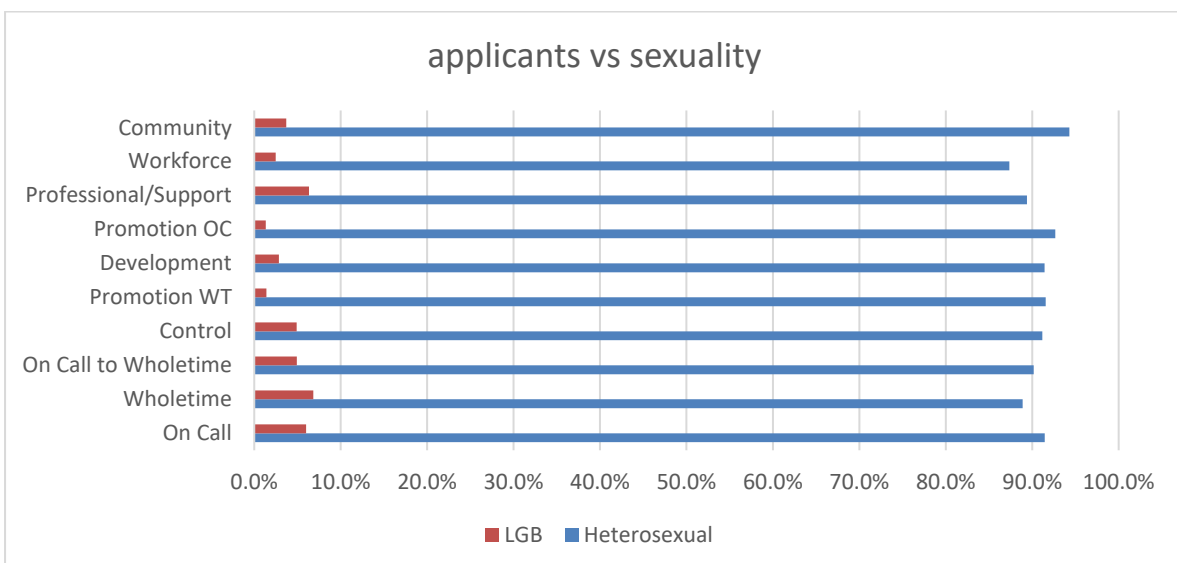
The next graph shows the vacancy type against applicant ethnicity and the ethnicity percentages for the workforce and the Community.



Ethnic minority [representation in Devon and Somerset](#) was 8.3% in 2021. The graph shows that for 2 of the vacancy categories, the minority ethnic group applications are above the representation in the community i.e. On-call to Wholetime 17.2% and Professional/Support 12.9% On-call and Wholetime application percentages are near the community average. Two people of colour started in an operational roles and another 13 people with a minority ethnic background started across the groups.

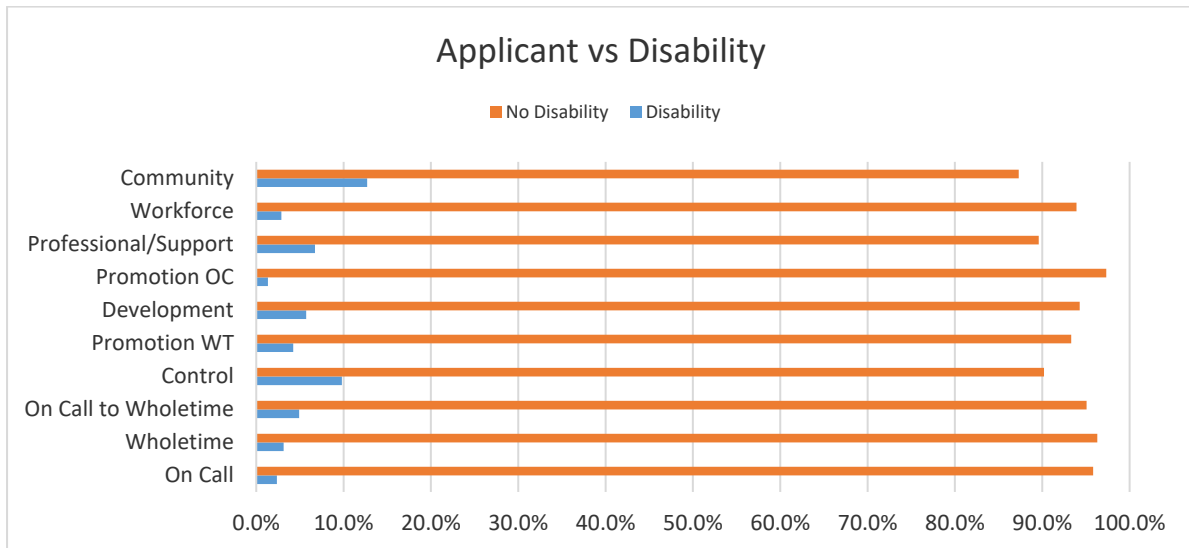
In the promotion, transfer and development groups, which consists mainly of internal/Fire Service applicants, the percentage of ethnic minority applicants is higher than the representation in the workforce as a whole. No one with a minority ethnic background, including people of colour, applied for development opportunities. 2.8% of those promoted identified as having a minority ethnic background and of these 0.5% were people of colour.

The next graph shows the vacancy type against applicant sexual orientation and the sexual orientation percentages for the workforce and the Community.



From the graph it is apparent that the application rates from LGB individuals in all vacancy groups, except the internal promotion, transfer and development groups are a lot higher than the community (3.7%). The Workforce percentage (2.5%) is slightly less than in the community and is similar to hiring percentages. This is despite the 'non-disclosure' rate (10%) for this characteristic.

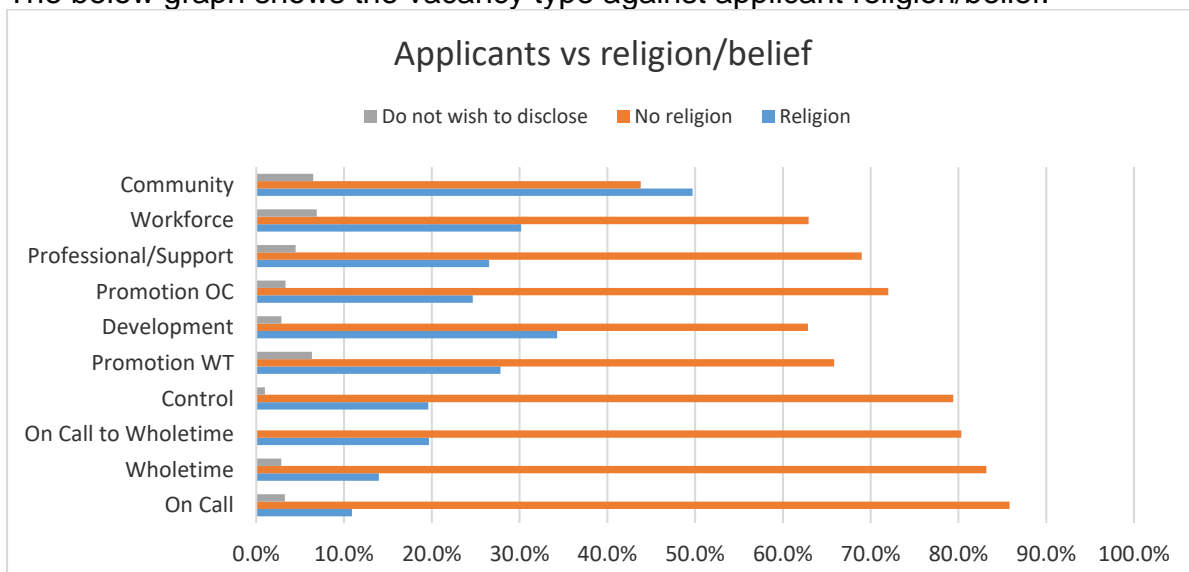
The next graph shows the vacancy type against applicant disability status.



According to the ONS Labour market status A08, in the community 12.7% of people of *working age* live with some sort of disability and are economically active. There are more disabled women than men in the UK. People from white ethnic groups are almost twice as likely as people of colour to have a limiting long-standing illness or disability.

Disabled people are less likely to be in employment. In September 2022 52.6% of disabled people were in employment, down from 54.1% in December 2019. The employment rate for people who are not disabled is around 80%.

The below graph shows the vacancy type against applicant religion/belief.



The main observation in relation to the religion figures is how many applicants (80-90%) and staff (60-70%) indicate they have no religion or don't disclose it. This makes it difficult to say anything around equal opportunity in access to or taking up of employment on the basis of religion/belief.

Non-disclosure rates	applicants	new starters
Disability	1.9%	1.7%
Ethnicity	2.7%	2.4%
Sexual orientation	4.3%	4.7%
Religion	3.6%	2.8%

It is clear from the table above that the non-disclosure rates are low. This is a good indication that people are equally comfortable disclosing their characteristics, including sexuality.

4.2 Wholetime recruitment

Wholetime Firefighter recruitment took place from our On-call staff and from external applicants. The latter recruitment opened in 2021 and closed end of June 2022. None of the applicants who applied in 2022 have been hired by the end of the reporting period, but some are still in the process or awaiting vacancies. Most operational management positions, which were advertised, were also open to external competent Fire & Rescue personnel.

Opportunities for On-call staff members to take up a Wholetime position were also available through the promotion process.

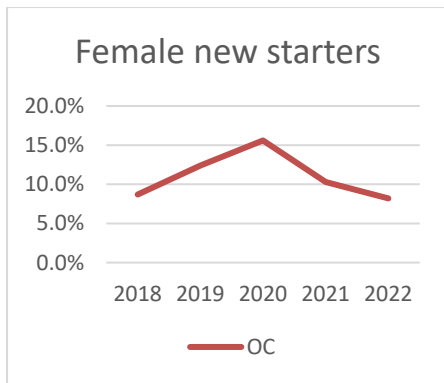
Forty-six external women applied for the position Wholetime Firefighter, 13.1% of all applicants. Of the On-call staff who applied for a Wholetime Firefighter position, 15 were female (12.3%). These percentages are more than twice as high as the female representation in either the Wholetime or On-call staff group.

Sixty-one people started a Wholetime contract. Of these starters 14.8% were female.

Thirteen percent of the new starters in this group identified as belonging to a minority ethnic group (including 1.6% people of colour), which is much higher than the 7.1% of the applicants recording as a member of a minority ethnic group. 3.3% of new starters indicated they consider themselves as having a disability and 6.6% of new starters identify as LGB+, both similar to staff representation.

4.3 On-call recruitment

Eighty-three women (15.1%) applied for positions at On-call stations which were recruiting. The total applicants in 2022 was 550, which is significantly more than in 2021 (404) when 73 women applied. Eight new starters were female (8.2%), 2 less than in 2021 (10.3%), but 13 less than in 2019. All On-call recruits start at Firefighter level.



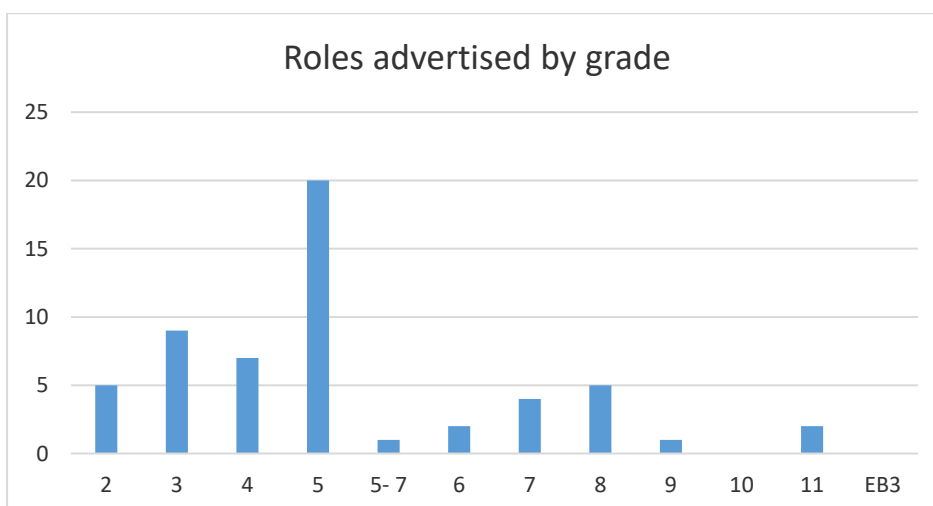
6% of applicants recorded as LGB+, 8% as being a member of a minority ethnic group (including 3.8% people of colour) and 2.4% indicated they considered themselves to have a disability. For the new starters the percentages were respectively 1%, 6.1% and 0%.

4.4 Support Staff recruitment

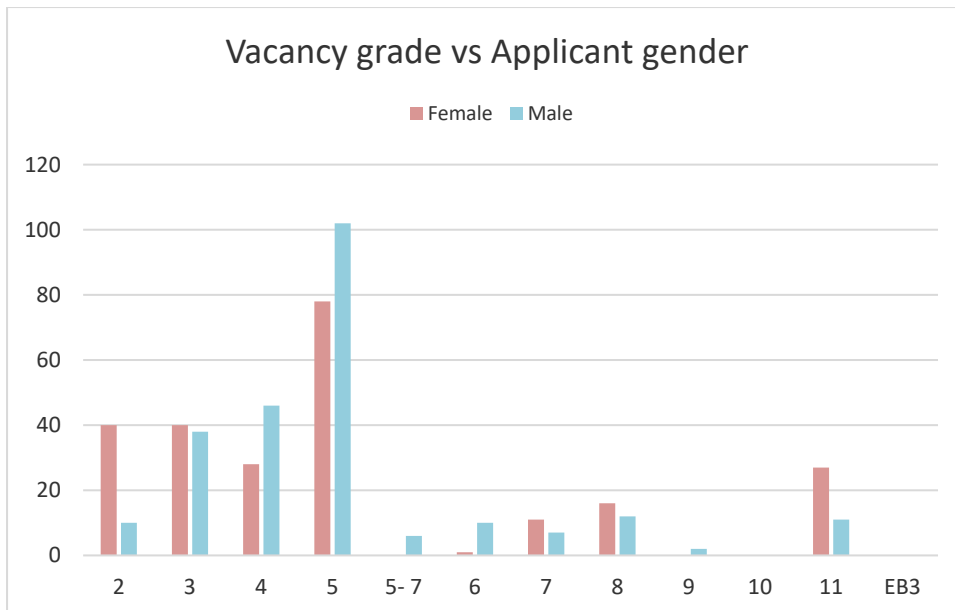
In 2022 490 people applied for 51 advertised positions. Twenty-two jobs were advertised as permanent and 22 as temporary opportunities. A further four were casual and three variable hours contracts.

The attraction rate for Support vacancies from female applicants (49.2%) is only slightly below the percentage of women of working age in employment (50.5%), and more than 2021 (41%). This may be because of the amount and type of Support Staff vacancies advertised in 2021. 47% of the new starters were female with most of them starting in supervisory roles.

The graph below shows the number of jobs advertised per grade.



Almost all roles with grades 2 and 3 are either apprenticeships or of an administrative nature, with grades 4-9 being more subject specific and requiring specific knowledge and/or experience. Grade 10 and above are of strategic level and EB grade roles are within the Executive Board.



Grade 3, 7 and 8 jobs attracted fairly similar amounts of male and female applicants, grade 2 and 11 vacancies had more female applicants than male and grade 4, 5 and 6 had more male applicants than female.

The amount of LGB applicants in this group (6.3%) is higher than in 2019, and more than twice the representation in the workforce and the community. No new starters identify as LGB.

Of the applicants, 12.9% identified as belonging to minority ethnic group, which is reflective of communities like Exeter and Plymouth and well above the Southwest region (8.2%) and Devon & Somerset (5-6%).

Out of 63 applicants who identify as a member of a minority ethnic group (including 47 people of colour) 2 people were successful or appointed who identified as 'White/other' or 'Other'. No people of colour started employment in this group in 2022.

5.1% of applicants indicated they considered themselves to have a disability and 4.4% of new starters did.

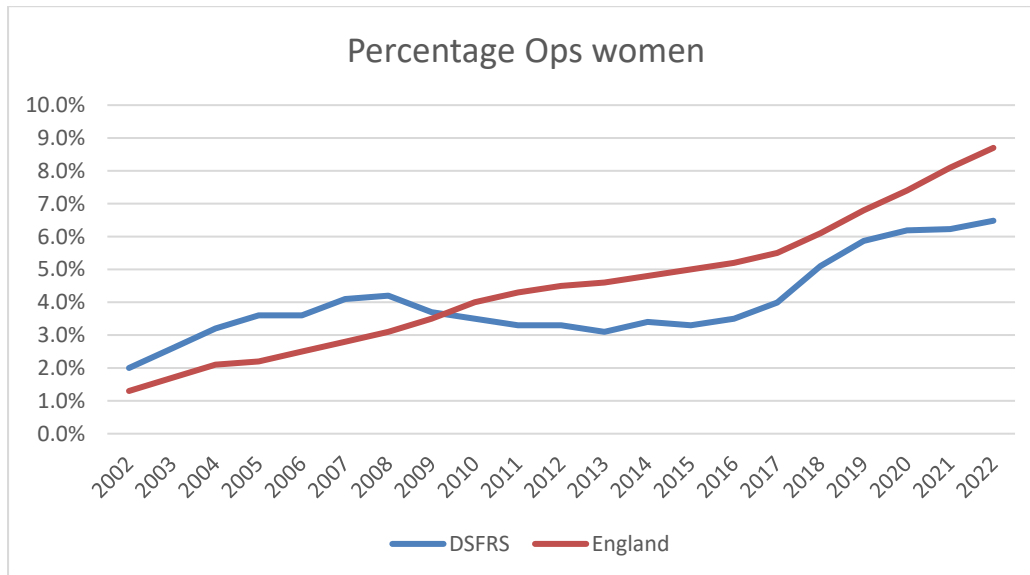
4.5 Control recruitment

Of the eight Control room positions which were advertised, three were advertised as temporary. Seven positions were promotion opportunities and only open for internal applicants. All vacancies included, there were 102 applicants. 59.8% of those were female, 4.9% identified as LGB and 4.9% as a member of a minority ethnic group.

Two external new starters were female and, of the seven promotions, four were female. Other diversity details will not be published due to personal data protection considerations.

5 Workforce diversity profile

Overall, in DSFRS the female representation is 14.6% of the workforce at the end of the period. Within the operational categories this proportion was 6.2% for the On-call group and an increase from 6.3% to 7% for the Wholetime staff. Nationally, these percentages are 6.5% (On-call) and 8.0% (Wholetime). We have three Wholetime stations and 34 On-call stations without any women on the team.



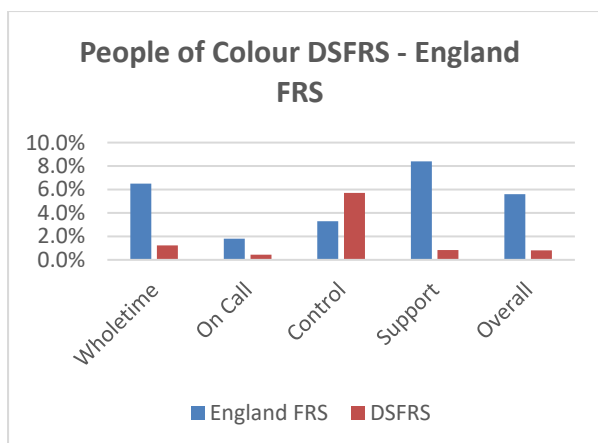
The proportion of female staff in the Support staff group remained at 47% and in the Control staff group it increased from 72.5% to 74.2%. 0.1% of staff identify as transgender.

Not considering the 4.0% of individuals who have chosen not to state their ethnic background, currently the Service's workforce consists of 3.4% ethnic minority staff, slightly up from the beginning of the period when it was 2.8%. The English Fire & Rescue Service average of 'not stated' is 8.7% whilst DSFRS is less than half of that.

It needs to be noted that the 'ethnic minority' category in the [national FRS figures](#) (table FIRE1104) does not include 'White Other' (groups like eastern Europeans, White South Africans, Australians etc), whilst the DSFRS figures do *include* those groups in the term 'ethnic minority' as they have varied cultural backgrounds and on many occasions have English as a second language.

For a better comparison, excluding all 'white' groups, the representation of People of Colour (Black, Asian, mixed, other) in the Service is 0.8%.

Compared to the English Fire & Rescue Service average of 5.1% for representation of People of Colour (this includes staff who have not stated ethnicity), DSFRS has a much lower diversity. This needs to be considered in view of the community ethnic makeup of the region, which is in general lower than other parts of the country. The community percentage (2021 census) in most areas is 2-4%, but more in urban areas (Exeter 10%, Plymouth 6%). In Devon and Somerset, on average, that percentage is 4%.



The identification as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or other sexuality, with 2.5% identifying within this category, closely reflects the community average of 2.5% (4.5-5% in urban areas). The 'prefer not to say' rate is 7.2%. 'Not stated' (where no data has been provided) has further reduced to 3%.

Besides on average 3.2% of individuals who have chosen not to state whether they have a disability (visible or invisible), currently 2.9% of the Service's workforce has declared a disability. This is far below the average of 12.7% within the community.

As expected, considering the physical nature of the role, only 1.6-3.5% of operational staff indicated that they consider themselves to have a disability. Within the Control and Support staff groups percentages are higher at 4.8-8.6%.

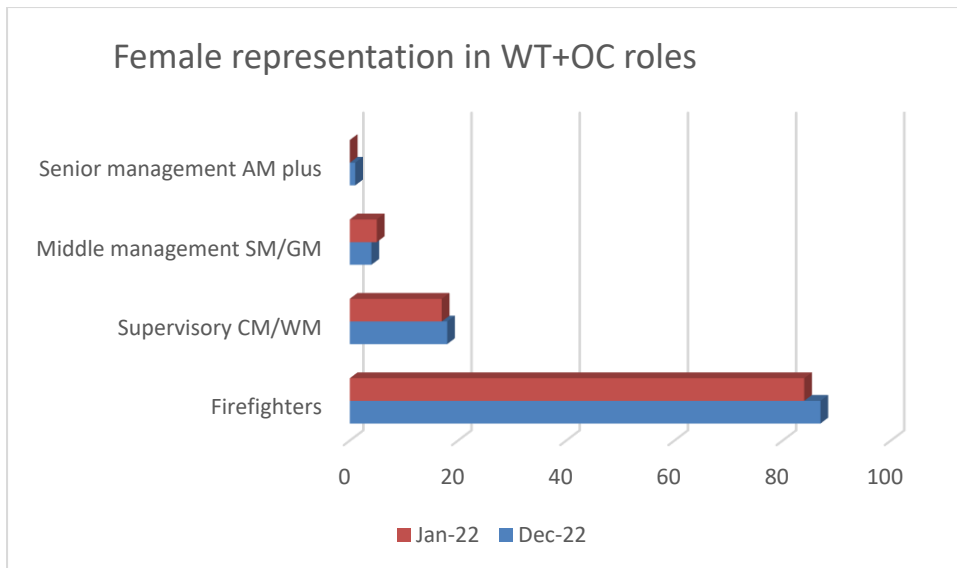
Executive Board and senior management team

In 2022 the Executive Board (EB) existed of the Chief Fire Officer, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, two Assistant Chief Fire Officers (Director of Service Delivery and Director of Service Improvement), the Director of Finance, People and Estates and the Director of Governance & Digital Services. All posts were occupied by white men. Due to the size of the group and data protection regulation, no other diversity characteristics can be released.

The senior management team consists of EB and managers with an Area Manager role or Grade 11 and above. At the beginning of the period the representation of women in this group was 19%. During the period 2 women joined the team and 1 man left, which increased the percentage of women to 27%. Other diversity parameters showed no significant change.

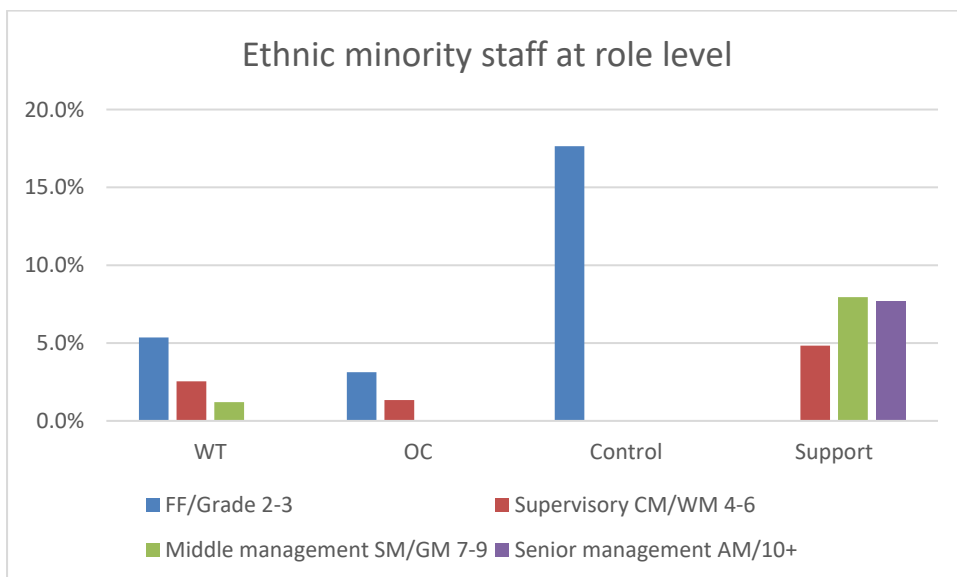
Diversity in other (management) levels

Due to the overall small representation of women in the operational roles, the distribution at different levels shows a declining trend from entry role of Firefighter up to senior management roles. This trend is a result of the Service having no direct entry into uniformed management roles and progression to higher management roles can only be achieved through development time and time in role.



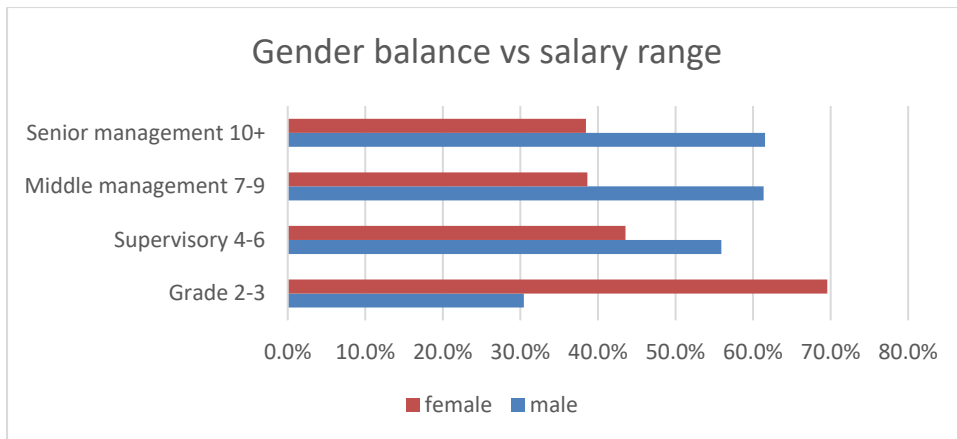
A similar explanation can be used for the distribution of those with an ethnic minority background and people of colour in operational posts where all but two people of colour are at Firefighter level with none in operational middle management roles.

A different pattern emerges in the Support staff group where there is direct entry to every level and a more even distribution can be found with most staff with an ethnic minority background in middle and senior management.



As entry to Support roles can be at any level, the analysis in this section will only focus on Support roles.

In many organisations it is found that women hold most of the roles at lower grades and men hold relatively more management positions. A similar distribution is found here, although the representation of women in middle and senior management is similar.



6 Promotion/Transfer

Promotion, whether temporary or permanent, is a regular occurrence within the uniformed roles and part of a career in an organisation with a rank/role structure like the Fire Service. This is much less so within Control and Support roles where the diversity and number of available roles is limiting.

Eighty-one vacancies were advertised as 'Promotion/Transfer' for operational staff. These are opportunities for staff to gain a promotion, get access to development in preparation for a promotion or to change job role and/or location. Considering this only relates to staff, the diversity data should at least reflect the staff composition data.

There was a total of 214 promotions in this period across all staff groups of which 9.8% concerned female staff, 2.8% staff who identified as a minority ethnic group, 3.3% as LGBT and 3.7% who considered themselves to have a disability.

In the Support group, more women were promoted than men.

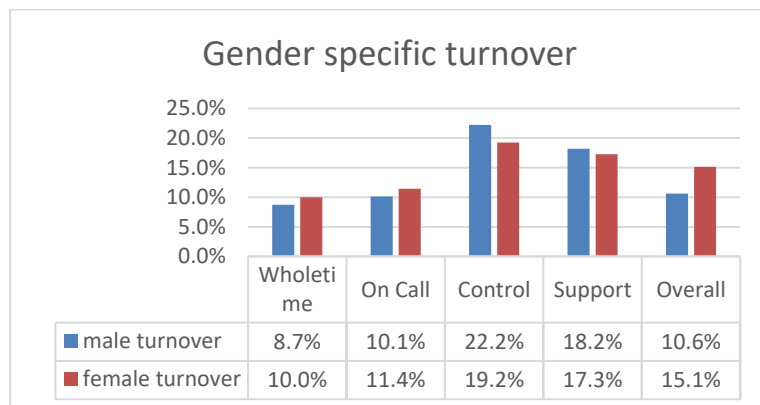
'White Other' is the largest minority ethnic group to gain promotion with 1.9% of those being promoted identifying as such. No people of colour were promoted either temporary or permanent in any of the staff groups. This is the same as 2020 and 2021.

7 Leavers

In this period there were 235 leavers; less than last year when 243 people left the Service. The main reason for leaving is voluntary retirement or resignation as a result of a change in personal circumstances.

The resulting turnover rate is 11.3% over all staff categories, with On-call and Wholetime Staff turnover rates 10.2.% and 8.8% respectively. Support Staff was 17.7% and Control 20%. The latter two staff groups are smaller and a few individuals leaving has a relatively big impact.

Female turnover is slightly higher (around 1%) than male turnover, the reverse is true for Support and Control staff.



Of the 50 Wholetime leavers, 62% retired and 14% completed their fixed term contract.

In On-call, only 10% left with the reason of retirement. All but 8, of 115, chose to leave voluntarily. After resignation for reasons of work/life balance, the biggest group of leavers are for personal and relocation reasons (30), followed by other/no reason (16) and career break (5).

In Support, voluntary retirement as a reason for leaving was recorded for only 8% of the leavers. The biggest group of leavers did not state a reason (31) and for 9 people their temporary contract came to an end.

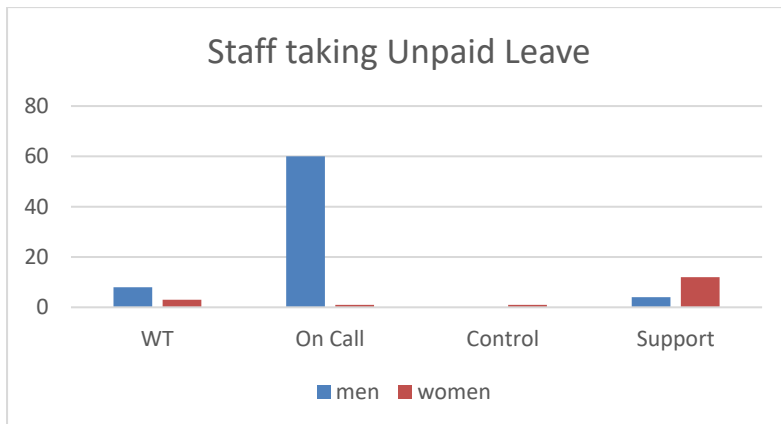
8 Unpaid Leave and Career Breaks

The purpose of the Career Break Scheme is to allow employees to request an opportunity to leave their employment on a medium to long-term basis (normally between six months and two years), with the intention of returning to the same or a similar post afterwards. Longer periods may be approved in exceptional circumstances. Shorter periods may be considered as Special Leave. The employee will be considered to have resigned from their post during the career break which means that these figures will appear in the Leavers data.

DSFRS will consider requests for special leave which is covered by policies. This might include extending the entitlements for maternity, adoption, paternity, parental or compassionate leave; leave to cover periods of care; leave to cover attendance at rehabilitation centres, or unpaid leave of less than six months for the purposes of a career break. The individual normally returns to their previous post/role.

Unpaid Leave and Career Breaks are a regularly used option by On-call staff when they experience periods when they are not able to provide the availability required within their contract due to a (temporary) change in primary employment or personal circumstances. The length of the periods is usually longer in nature. The difference in uptake between men and women could be explained by the fact there are overall more men than women in this staff group.

On-call staff account for 61 occurrences of unpaid leave with an average duration of 93 days, compared to 28 in total by the other staff groups with an average around 20-30 days. Of the 61 occurrences, seven were taken as career break i.e. more than six months



9 Discipline and Grievance cases

In this 12 month period 21 discipline cases were initiated of which 19 concerned men and 21 UK/white individuals. Cases have slightly decreased from 29 in the 2021.

Twenty-five grievance cases were raised, of which 24 by UK/white individuals, including five women. The number of cases has increased since the last period, most likely as a result of a focus on 'speaking up' and introduction of additional ways to raise concerns.

In total, two members of staff, male and UK/white, were dismissed for reasons of performance or conduct.

Appendix A Equality duty

The equality duty consists of a general equality duty, supported by specific duties which are imposed by secondary legislation. In summary, those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

General Duties

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty.

Specific Duties (England)

1. Public authorities to publish information **annually** to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty.
2. Public authorities to prepare and publish one or more equality objectives it thinks it should achieve to meet the general equality duty. To be done at least every four years.