



**DEVON &
SOMERSET**
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Recruitment & Workforce Diversity Annual Report

January – December 2020

Diversity & Inclusion Team

Devon & Somerset
Fire & Rescue Service

May 2021



Recruitment & 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.

DSFRS 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) viclismisation, 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 bring 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

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 HR 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 On Call recruitment in relation to female applicants and On Call to Wholetime recruitment for several characteristics. Monitoring this data is not mandatory. No other recruitment workflows currently are actively monitored in relation to protected characteristics for the stages in between application and starting employment. This report has the purpose to identify any potential issues with vacancies.

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 2019/20 are taken from the data used to support the Communities and Local Government Associations returns which were last updated October 2020. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables#workforce-and-workforce-diversity>

Note: Where information has been benchmarked, references are recorded as appropriate.

Data is correct as of 14/1/2021. Only valid data has been analysed. A small data gap is apparent where Talentlink was not used to submit and process applications. No other gaps have been identified. Some vacancies were still open for applications at the time of data extraction.

In places the word 'Retained' 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. 'Minority ethnic group' means all ethnic groups other than UK white, including Irish, European, Australian etc. People of Colour means Black, Asian, mixed and 'other'.

The recruitment system uses 4 classifications for vacancies;

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



3. Summary of key observations

The key findings identified in this set of data are:

- Pandemic has influenced recruitment of external people into operational roles as recruitment events and assessments were unable to take place or had significantly reduced capacity. On Call had 89 new starters, compared to 170 in 2019 and 138 in 2018.
- In line with the previous point, there was a reduction in female On Call new starters, which with 14 was 7 less than the previous year. Together with 2 new female Wholetime staff starting in the same period we reached the highest ever female representation in operational roles with 106 roles occupied by women.
- Operational female representation has hardly changed as, despite 14 women joining as On Call Firefighters and 5 taking on a Wholetime position, 13 women left On Call positions for various reasons.
- In On Call, the female turnover is twice (18.1%) the level of male turnover (9.5%).
- In comparison to female representation, the amount of women gaining promotion in the operational roles is disproportionately low and no women gained a permanent promotion.
- The attraction rate from female applicants for Support vacancies near enough reflects the community.
- The On Call vacancies female application percentage is 16.6%, which is 2.5% higher than 2019.
- The numbers of applicants with a minority ethnic background is higher than our community (5-6%) with Support 9.7%, On Call 7.7% and Wholetime (despite being only internal candidates) 6.5%.
- No people of colour were offered a Support role despite a 5.2% applications rate.
- The representation of people of colour in the service (0.8%) is 2-4 times less than in the community.
- Application rates from LGBT for Support (4.9%), On Call (3.8%) and Wholetime (10.1%) are all higher than the community (2.2%).
- The identification as LGBT (anything else than Heterosexual), with 2.2% identifying within this category, closely reflects the community average of 2.2%. In addition, the non-disclosure rate has reduced.
- Female representation in the Extended Leadership Team dropped from 28.5% to 21%.

Actions and plan

In line with the DSFRS Plan, a People Strategy has been implemented and is continuously monitored. Various initiatives are under way and planned to increase the diversity of the workforce in line with the DSFRS plan. Good practice within recruitment, including positive action, will be shared and implemented across the Service. Inclusion of ethnic minority staff has become more visible through setting up a support network and this drives initiatives and accountability in view of the events in society in relation to racism. The Service continues to monitor the impact of initiatives, including possible racism, through Equality and People Impact assessments.

New recruitment processes for operational staff were launched with a particular emphasis on eliminating bias including the introduction of anonymous recruitment. 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.

Monitoring of adverse impact around protected characteristics continuously throughout the Wholetime recruitment process stages will be introduced in 2021.

Positive action initiatives in relation to development in the form of Action Learning Sets and a Sponsoring programme have started, but outcomes may not be visible for a while due to the length of the programme.

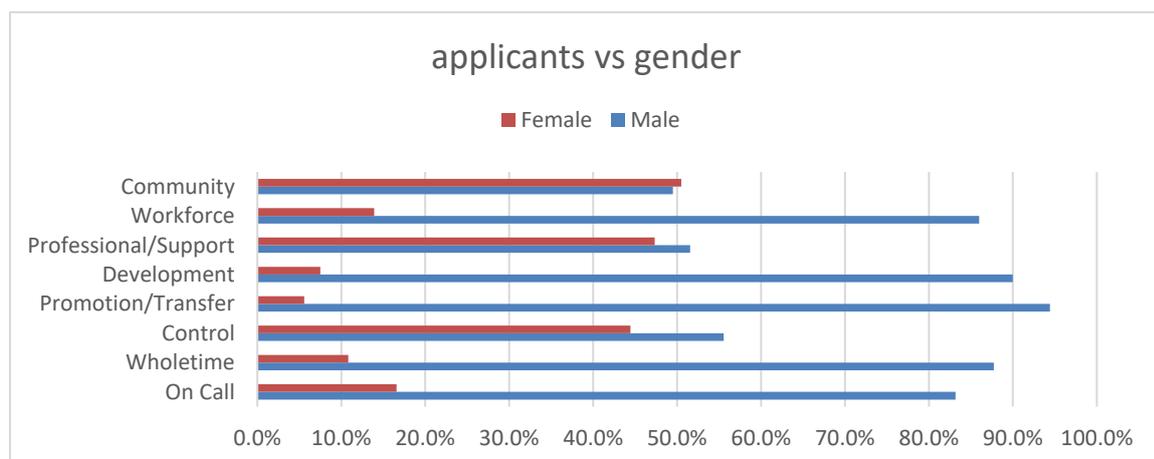
Any positive action work is and will continue to be supported through working closely with the Asian Fire Service Association and the Employer Network of Equality and Inclusion. The Service achieved the Silver Standard in the Talent, Inclusion & Diversity Evaluation of the latter.

4. Recruitment

4.1 general recruitment

In 2020 a total of 1021 (416 On Call + 18 Control + 547 Support + 40 development) individuals applied through the recruitment system for 125 externally advertised vacancies (71 On Call FF, 2 Control roles and 52 Support roles). The Promotion/transfer process saw another 161 internal individuals apply and 277 On Call Firefighters applied to become Wholetime.

The graph below shows the vacancy type against applicant gender and the gender percentages for the workforce and the Community.



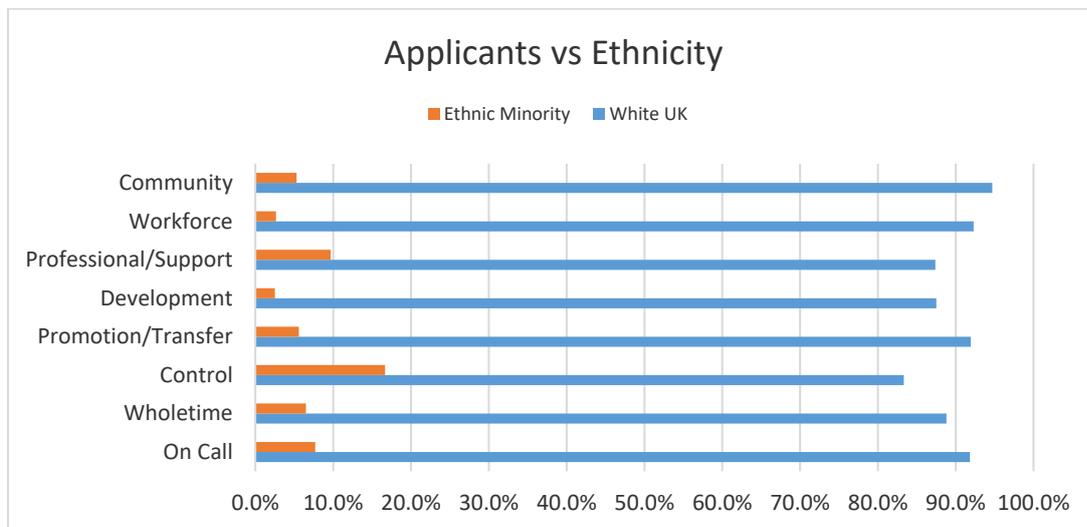
The graph highlights that the Support and Control application gender balance is very near the gender balance in the working age community. Although it also shows a



continuing underrepresentation in female applicants in Wholetime and On Call groups. However, the application percentages (10.8% and 16.6%) are higher than that in the representation in the workforce (6%).

Since 2018, both the percentages of female applicants and female new starters in the On Call group have increased significantly, 7.4% to 16.6% and 8.7% to 15.6% respectively. In the Wholetime group, female applicant percentages have remained fairly steady around 11%. New starter percentages are very dependant on whether Wholetime recruitment is taking place, not just promotion processes.

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

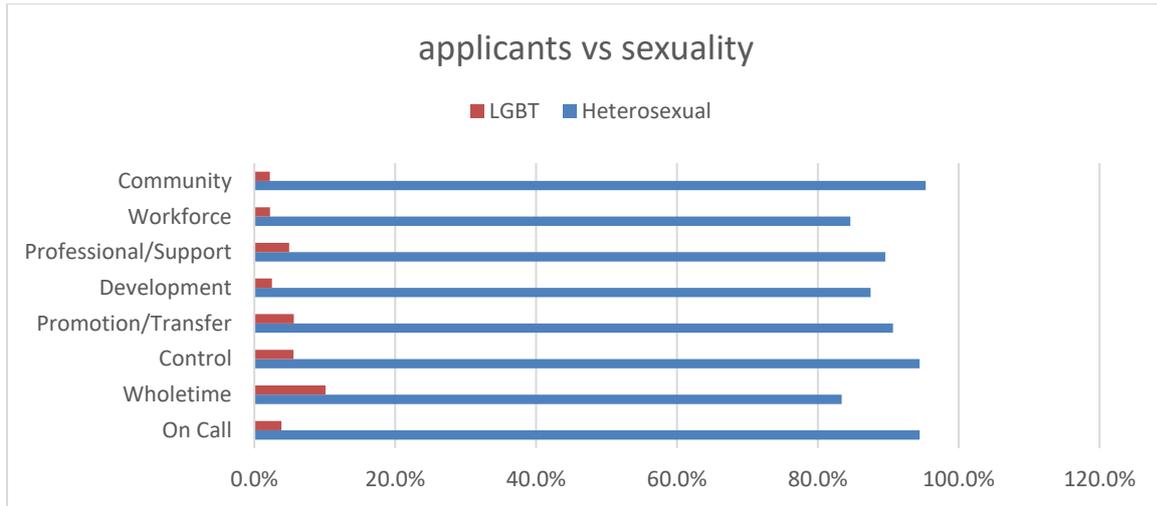


The graph shows that for 5 of our 6 vacancy categories, the minority ethnic group applications are above the representation in the Devon & Somerset community (on average 5-6%) i.e. Control 16.7%, Support 9.6%, On Call 7.7% and Wholetime (despite being internal candidates) 6.5%. The percentage of ethnic minority applicants for Support vacancies is more reflective of representation in urban areas (Exeter 10-11%, Plymouth 7-8%) where most of those vacancies are based. Ethnic minority representation in the Southwest was 8.2% in 2011.

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest>

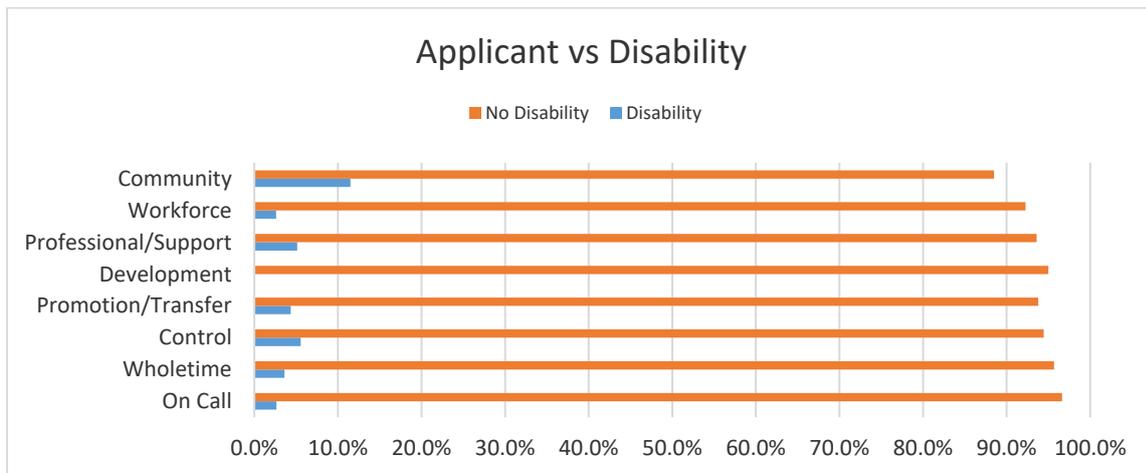
In the Promotion/transfer group, which involves only internal applicants, the percentage of ethnic minority applicants (5.6%) is on a par with the community and well above the representation in the workforce as a whole (2.7%).

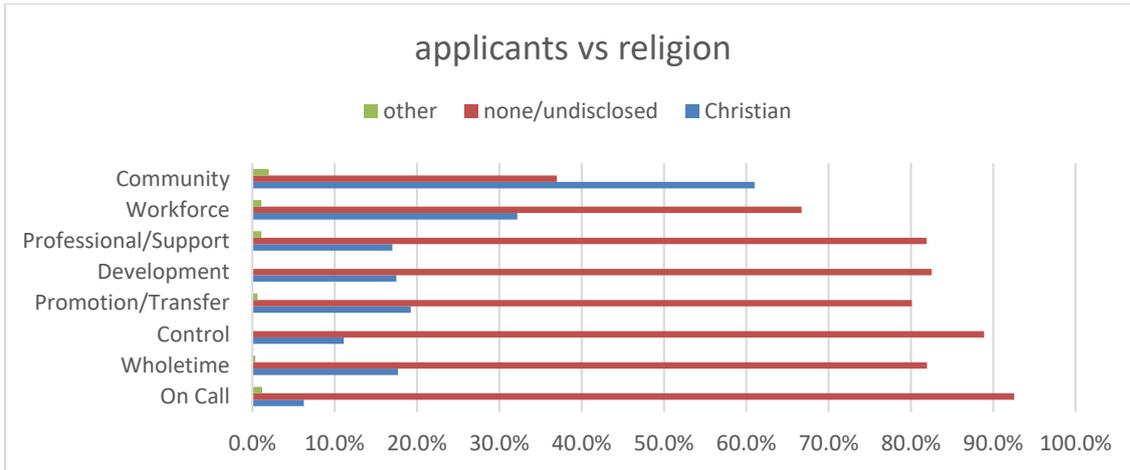
The next graph shows the vacancy type against applicant sexual orientation and the sexual orientation percentages for the workforce and the Community.



From the graph it is apparent that the application rates from LGBT individuals in all vacancy groups are higher than the community (2.2%) i.e. Support (4.9%), On Call (3.8%) and Wholetime (10.1%). Even the Workforce percentage is similar to that of the community. This is despite the 'non-disclosure' rates in the various groups.

The next two graphs show the vacancy type against applicant disability and the vacancy type against religion.





According to the ONS Labour market status A08, in the community 11.5% of people of *working age* live with some sort of disability. There are more disabled women than men in the UK. People from white ethnic groups are almost twice as likely as those from non-white ethnic groups to have a limiting long-standing illness or disability. Disabled people are less likely to be in employment. In June 2020, the UK employment rate among working age disabled people was 53.6%, compared to 81.7% of non-disabled people.

Considering the workforce consists of 2.6% people with recorded disabilities, the percentage in Promotion/Transfer applicants, which are all internal, was 3.3%. This may indicate that those with a disability may be slightly more inclined to seek promotion.

The main observation in relation to the religion figures is how many applicants (80-92%) and staff (67%) 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.

The highest percentages in relation to applicants with an 'other' religion i.e. 1.1% for Support roles and 1.2% for On Call roles is still only half of the Community percentage of 2%.

Non-disclosure rates	applicants	new starters
Disability	1%	4%
Ethnicity	2-5%	3%
Sexual orientation	2-7%	8%
Religion	n/a	5%

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 only from our On Call staff. No Firefighter roles were advertised for external candidates to apply for. 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 provided through the promotion process.

Of the On Call staff who applied for a Wholetime Firefighter position, 30 were female, i.e. 10.8%. This percentage is nearly twice as high as the female representation in either the Wholetime or On Call staff group.

Thirty eight people started a Wholetime contract. Of these starters 13.2% were female.

One of the new starters (2.6%) in this group identified as belonging to a minority ethnic group, despite 6.5% of the applicants recording as a member of a minority ethnic group. The same trend can be seen in relation to disability with 3.6% of applicants indicating they consider themselves as having a disability, but none of the new starters record as such, and sexuality with 10.1% of the applicants in this category identifying as LGBT and 2.6% of new starters doing so.

4.3 On Call recruitment

Sixty nine women applied for positions at On Call stations which were recruiting. The total applicants in 2020 was 416. This makes the female representation 16.6%, which is 2.5% higher than in 2019 (14.1%). For 1 applicant there was no gender data recorded. 15.6% of new starters were female and all On Call recruits start at Firefighter level.

3.8% of applicants recorded as LGBT, 7.7% as being a member of a minority ethnic group and 2.6% indicated they considered themselves to have a disability. For the new starters the percentages were respectively 3.3%, 5.6% and 0%. These figures, and those for gender as well, indicate that the recruitment process is based on merit and is not likely to be biased.

The numbers of undisclosed diversity data in applicants (0.2-1.7%) and in new starters (5.5-7.7%) is relatively low and there is hardly any difference between recording rates of the different characteristics.

4.4 Support Staff recruitment

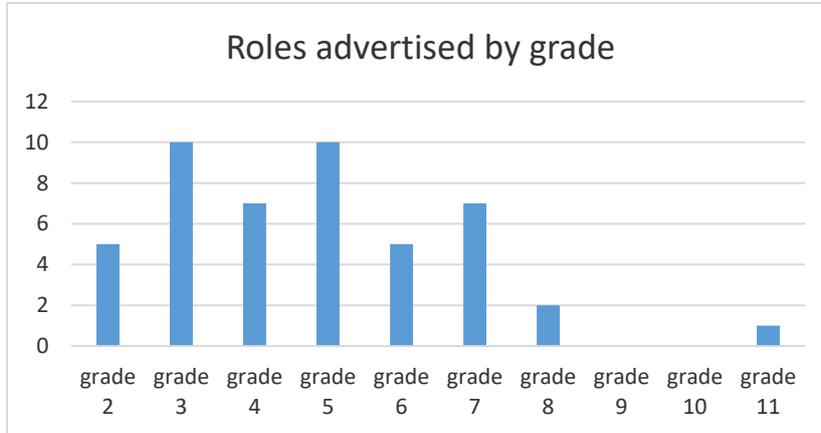
In 2020 547 people applied for 52 advertised positions. Five jobs were advertised as internal (development) opportunities and 20 as temporary. The rest were due to be filled on a permanent basis.

The attraction rate for Support vacancies from female applicants (47%) is slightly below the percentage of women of working age in employment (50.5%), but better

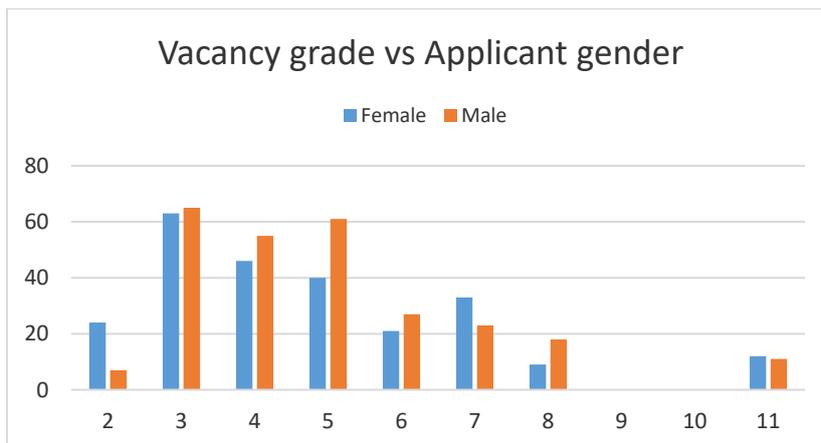


than 2019 (45%). This may be as a result of the amount and type of Support Staff vacancies advertised in 2020. On the other hand, only 31% of the new starters were female.

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



Grades 2-3 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.



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

Of the 32 jobs advertised within grades 2-5, 13 had mainly or only female applicants and 9 had mainly or only male applicants.

It is worth noting that the amount of LGBT applicants in this category (4.9%) is less than 2019, but still more than twice the representation in the workforce and the community. Of the applicants, 9.7% 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%). 5.1% indicated they considered themselves to have a disability.



Out of 50 applicants who identify as a member of a minority ethnic group (including 27 people of colour) only 1 person got hired and this person identified as 'White other'. This means that no people of colour received an offer of employment in this group in 2020.

4.8% of new starters identify within the LGBT category and 2.4% as having a disability.

In relation to religion, 82% of applicants and 76% of new starters recorded no religion, this is only second highest to On Call with 93% and 78% respectively.

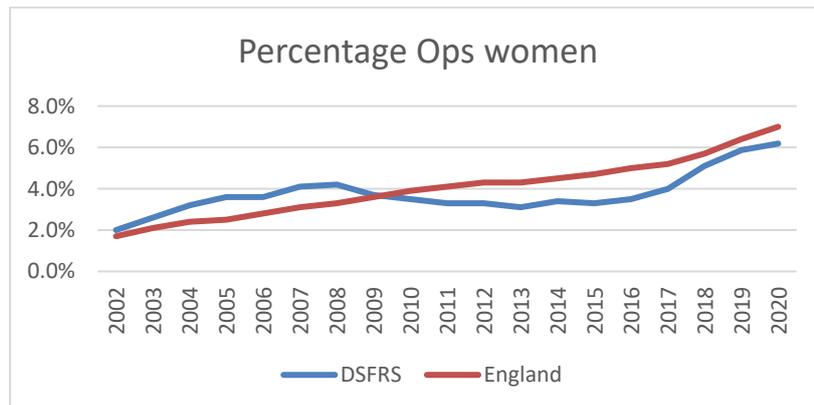
4.5 Control recruitment

In 2020 one permanent and one temporary Control room positions were advertised and there were 18 applicants. 44% of those were female, 5.6% identified as LGBT and 16.7% as a member of a minority ethnic group.

Two of the three new starters 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 13.9% of the workforce at the end of the period, up from 13.6% at the start. Within the operational categories this proportion was 6.1% for the On Call group and an increase from 5.6% to 6.2% for the Wholetime staff. Nationally, these percentages are 6.2% (On Call) and 7.4% (Wholetime).

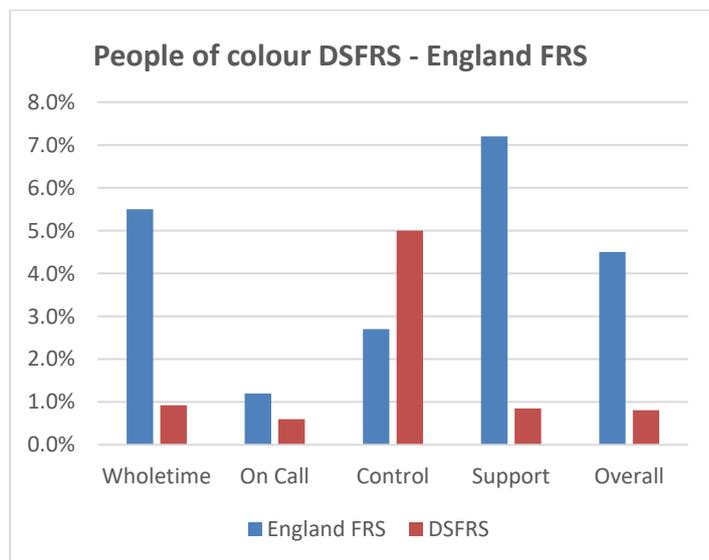


The proportion of female staff in the Support staff group dropped slightly to 44.5% and in the Control staff group it decreased from 76.3% to 75%.

Not taking into account the 5.0% of individuals who have chosen not to state their ethnic background, currently the Service's workforce consists of 2.7% ethnic minority staff, slightly up from the beginning of the period when it was 2.5%. The Control staff group is most diverse with regards to minority ethnic representation with 7.5% and 0% 'not stated'. The Support Staff group is the next highest with 4.0% at the end of

the period, but with 'not stated' of 5.9% (down from 7.4%). The English Fire & Rescue Service average of 'not stated' is 10.1% whilst DSFRS only have 5.0% 'not stated'.

Compared to the English Fire & Rescue Service average of 4.5% (this includes staff who have not stated ethnicity), DSFRS has a much lower diversity but this needs to be considered in light of the community ethnic makeup of the region, which is in general lower than other parts of the country.



It needs to be noted that the 'ethnic minority' category in the national FRS figures does not include 'White Other' (groups like eastern Europeans, White South Africans, Australians etc), whilst the DSFRS figures does *include* those groups in the term 'ethnic minority' as they, despite their skin colour, have different cultural backgrounds and often 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%. The community percentage in most areas is 1.5-2.5%, but more in urban areas (Exeter 7%, Plymouth 3.8%). In the Southwest that percentage is 4.6%.

The identification as LGBT (anything else than Heterosexual), with 2.2% identifying within this category, closely reflects the community average of 2.2%. In addition, the 'prefer not to say' rate has remained at 7.5%. 'Not stated' (where no data has been provided) has further reduced from 7.1% to 5.7%.

Besides on average 5% of individuals who have chosen not to state whether they have a disability (visible or invisible), currently 2.6% of the Service's workforce has declared a disability. This is far below the average of 11% within the community.

As expected, considering the physical nature of the role, only 1.8-2.4% of operational staff indicated that they consider themselves to have a disability. Within the Control

staff group the percentage of 7.5% is much nearer the community average. In the Support group the percentage is 5.1%.

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

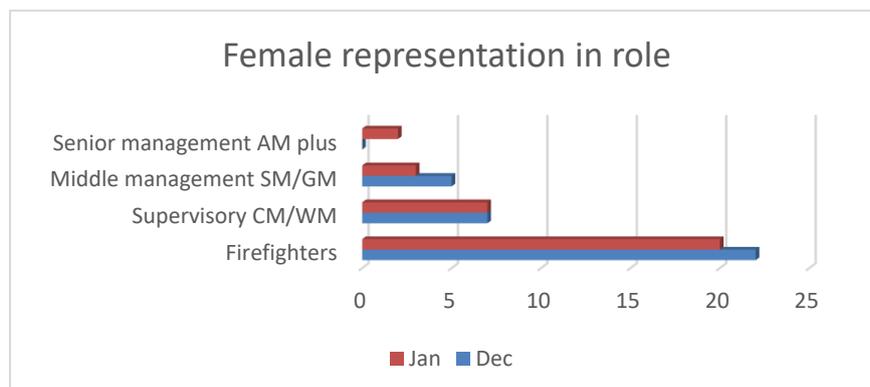
Executive Board and Extended Leadership Team

In 2020 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 & Resourcing and the Director of Governance & Digital Services. Of these 6 posts, only one was occupied by a woman. Due to the size of the group and data protection regulation, no other diversity characteristics can be released.

The Extended Leadership Team (ELT) consists of EB and most of the managers with an Area Manager role or Grade 10 and above. At the beginning of the period the representation of women in this group was 28.5%. During the period 3 women left posts at Grade 10 and above (and one man left), which decreased the percentage of women to 21%. Other diversity parameters showed no statistically significant change.

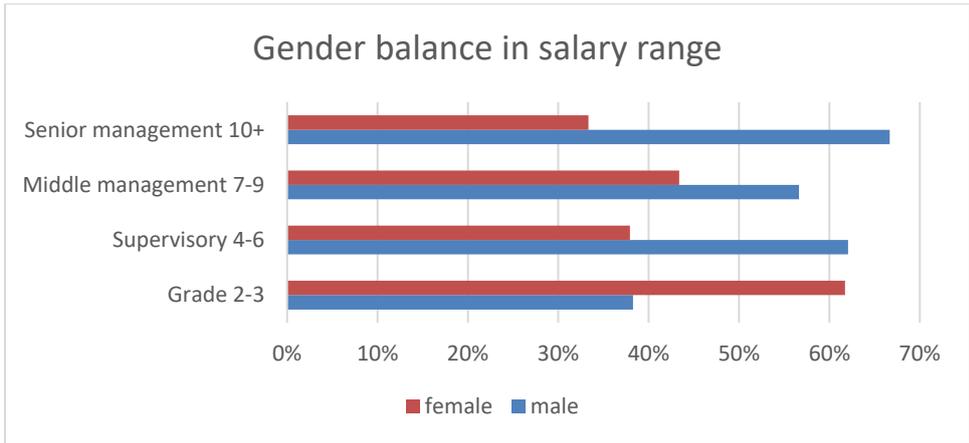
Diversity in other (management) levels

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.



Entry to Support roles can be at any level. Therefore, 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.



The picture is different for ethnic background, where the lowest and highest grades have no minority ethnic representation and the highest representation (9.6%) is found in Grades 7-9.

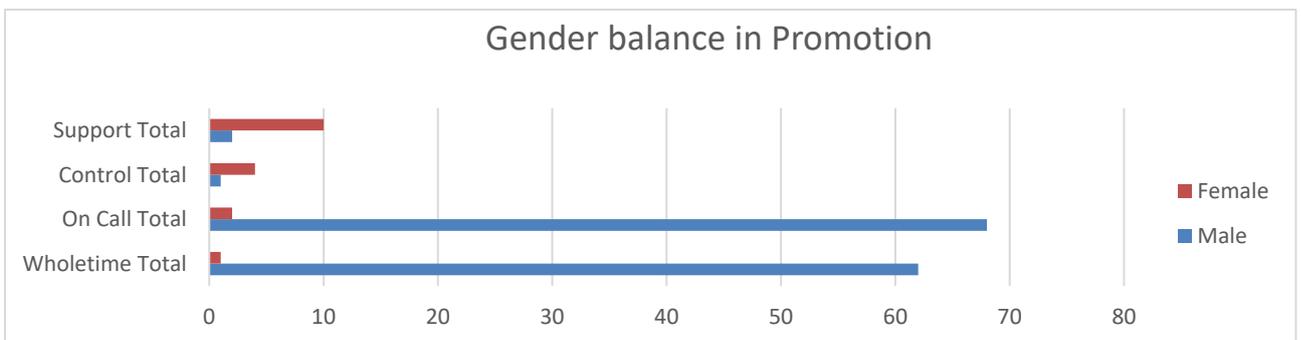
6 Promotion/Transfer

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 amount of available roles is limiting.

Forty eight vacancies were advertised as 'Promotion/Transfer'. 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 133 promotions in this period across the Service of which 11.3% concerned female staff, 4.7% staff who identified as a minority ethnic group, 1.3% as LGBT and 3.3% who considered themselves to have a disability.

In comparison to the female representation in the group, the amount of women gaining promotion in the operational roles (On Call 2.9%, Wholetime 1.6%) is disproportionately low and no women gained a permanent promotion. This may indicate the existence of some barriers to progression.



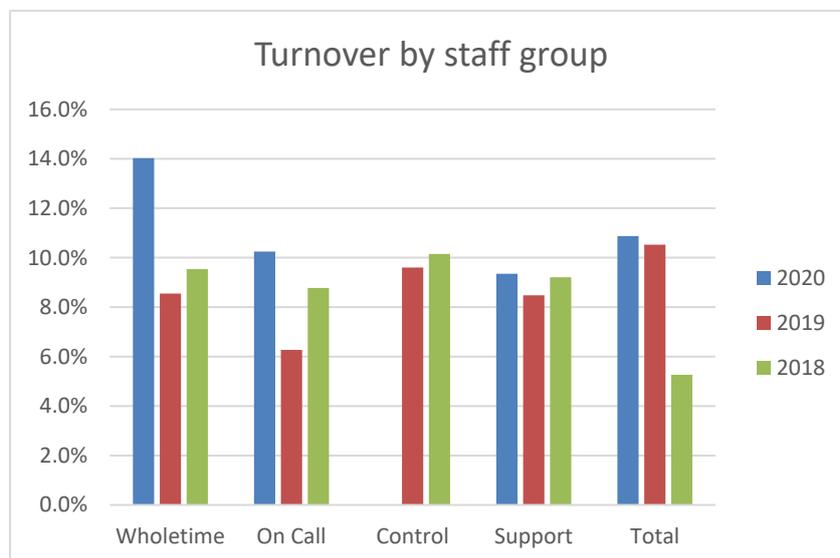
In the Support group, most women were promoted in and into the supervisory level.

‘White Other’ is the largest minority ethnic subgroup to gain promotion, except within Control, with 3.2% to 8% of those being promoted identifying as such.

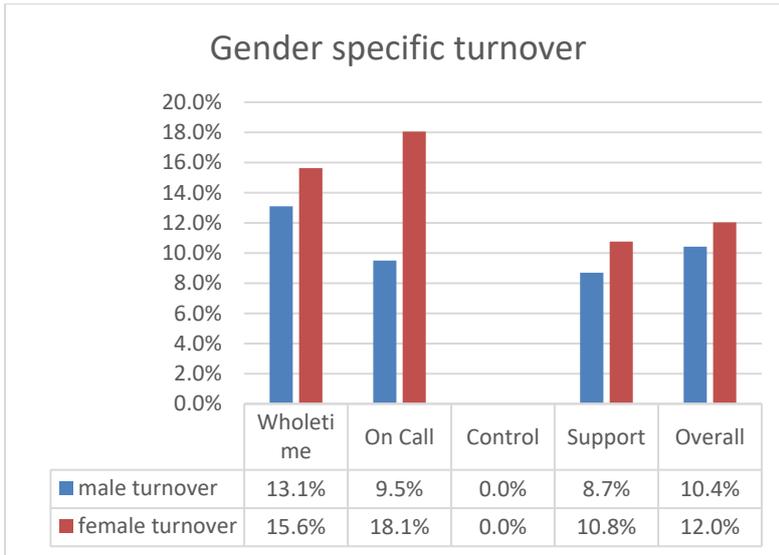
7 Leavers

In this period there were 229 leavers; more than last year when 184 people left the Service. This is mainly due to the expiring of temporary Wholetime contracts.

The resulting turnover rate is 10.5% over all staff categories, with On Call and Wholetime Staff turnover rates 10.2% and 14% respectively. Support Staff was 9.3% and Control had no leavers. The latter 2 staff groups are smaller and a few individuals leaving has a relatively big impact.



Male and female turnover is reasonably balanced across most groups, except in On Call where female turnover is twice (18.1%) the level of male turnover (9.5%). This may indicate retention issues specific to this period as retention levels were around 9.6% in 2019 for both genders.



Of the 76 Wholetime leavers, 47% retired and 38% completed their fixed term contract.

In On Call, only 12% left with the reason of retirement. All but 8, of 120, chose to leave voluntarily. 57 people (48%) resigned for personal, work/life (35), or other/no reason.

In Support the main reason for leaving is temporary contracts expiring (27%) followed by resigning for personal reasons (18%).

8 Unpaid Leave and Career Breaks

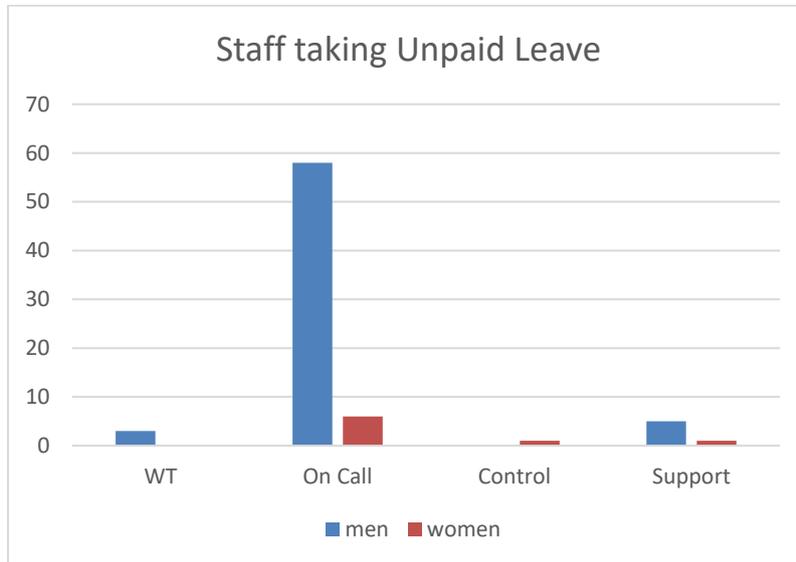
The purpose of the Career Break Scheme is to allow employees to request an opportunity to leave their employment on a medium to long-term basis (normally between six months and 2 years), with the intention of returning to the same or a similar post afterwards. Longer periods may be approved in exceptional 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 in any circumstances not 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 6 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 the On Call staff Group 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 58 occurrences of unpaid leave with an average duration of 112 days, compared to 8 in total by the other staff groups with an average around 60 days. In addition, 8 On Call staff started a Career Break in this period.



9 Discipline and Grievance cases

In this 12 month period 13 discipline cases were initiated of which 12 concerned men and 11 UK/white. There is a downward trend in discipline cases from 24 in 2018 to 13 in this period.

All 12 grievance cases were raised by UK/white individuals, including 1 woman. The amount of cases has remained constant since 2018.

Half of the grievances relate to either On-Call to Wholetime recruitment or development pathways, 16% relate to unwanted behaviour. All capability issues are in relation to Fitness standards

In total 3 members of staff, all 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.