

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	PC/23/5
MEETING	PEOPLE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	26 APRIL 2023
SUBJECT OF REPORT	WORKFORCE & RECRUITMENT DIVERSITY REPORT 2022
LEAD OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, PEOPLE AND ESTATES
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 provides for the general public sector equality duty. 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.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	N/A
EQUALITY RISK AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	N/A
APPENDICES	A. Annual Diversity and recruitment Report 2022
BACKGROUND PAPERS	N/A

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1. 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.

1.2. 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.

2. **KEY RESULTS**

2.1. 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 8, was 2 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 4 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. 1 additional female manager.

3. ACTIONS AND PLAN

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. 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.

- 3.5. 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.
- 3.6. The Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion benchmarked the Service against Talent, Inclusion, Diversity & Equality and awarded the Service a Silver Award in August 2022.
- 3.7. 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.
- 3.8. 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.
- 3.9. 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.

SHAYNE SCOTT

Director of Finance, People and Estates