

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
(Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

14 December 2020

Present:

Councillors Hannaford (Chair), Clayton, Peart, Thomas and Wheeler

Apologies:

Councillors Best and Vijeh

* **HRMDC/17** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

* **HRMDC/18** **Gender Pay Gap 2020**

The Committee received for information a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (HRMDC/20/5) that set out the latest iteration of the Service's Gender Pay Gap Report for 2020 which had to be published in accordance with the provisions in the Equalities Act 2010 by 31 March 2021.

It was noted that the gender pay gap showed the difference between the average (mean or median) earnings of men and women. This was expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. Used to its full potential, gender pay gap reporting was a valuable tool for assessing levels of equality in the workplace, female and male participation and how effectively talent was being maximised. The Service data for 2020 indicated a mean gender a gap in favour of male staff of 8.3% down from 11.6% in 2019 as compared with the position for the whole of the UK which was a 15.5% gender pay gap. The median pay gap also indicated that there was pay disparity in typical rates of pay between male workers and female workers of 9.9%, down from 11.8% in 2019. This continued the steady decrease in the gender pay gap which had been achieved since 2018.

Reference was made in particular to the action being taken by the Service to address the gender pay gap. This included:

- giving careful consideration to the make-up of moderating and interview panels for every recruitment and promotion process;
- the introduction of an anonymous application process for certain vacancies;
- the introduction of support networks for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and disabled staff;
- a more flexible On Call duty system which will allow for more people to consider the role;
- continuing to challenge the national fitness testing requirements and researching the impact on different groups of staff;

- the implementation of unconscious bias training to raise awareness around bias affecting recruitment and progression decisions;
- the introduction of 'inclusive leadership' into role development; and
- Commencement of a sponsorship programme for aspiring middle management women.

The question was raised as to the Service's approach to reducing occupational segregation. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer replied that there was a lot of work being undertaken on this both nationally at the National Fire Chiefs Council with the promotion of women role models and also locally. In Devon and Somerset, the Service was striving to show women in its recruitment advertising campaigns and positive action, amongst other things.

Reference was made to the ethnicity pay gap, the reporting of which was voluntary. This was calculated as the difference between the mean and median hourly earnings of the reference group (White or White British) and other ethnic groups as a proportion of average hourly earnings of the reference group. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer drew attention to a slight amendment in the figures set out in the report circulated at paragraph 5.1. The Service's workforce consisted of 2.6% BAME i.e. non-white/ non-British staff. The Control staff group had the highest diversity in that respect with 5.2%, although 'Not stated' and 'prefer not to say' is highest at 9.6% in that group as well. Breaking the Non-White group down into specific ethnic backgrounds led to group sizes with less than 5 people. The Service decided that this would not be statistically relevant and it could identify individuals therefore it would not be in line with data protection legislation. Therefore, only White/Non White and White/Mixed figures have been quoted. For the Service, this showed a mean white/non-white pay gap of 11.3% and a median pay gap of 8%. The report also set out the pay gap figures for each category of staff – wholetime, Control, On Call and Support. The ethnicity pay gap is mainly impacted by:

- In the group with the most diversity, BAME employees were mainly occupying middle management roles (grades 4-9);
- In the group who most affects the pay gap, Wholetime and On Call, 76% of BAME staff were at Firefighter level; and
- Most of BAME staff in the uniformed group are in On Call, where Watch Manager was the highest role/pay level.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised the Committee that the Integrated Risk Management Plan was to be re-named the Community Risk Management Plan in future. The review of this document, which was due within the next 18 months, would result in a substantial amount of engagement with communities in Devon and Somerset which could only assist the Service in its future service delivery improvements.

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**