



DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Diversity Data Annual Report

January – December 2023

Diversity and Inclusion

March 2024

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Document Control

Amendment History

Version	Date	Author:	Remarks/Reason to Change
1	6/3/24	E Willshaw	Annual report

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Distribution List

People Committee
Diversity & Inclusion Commission
Intranet/internet

Ownership

Has it been agreed that this is a publicly owned document? ~~Yes~~/ No

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Foreword

Welcome, and thank you for taking time to read through our annual report.

Over the last twelve to twenty-four months, we have been working hard to ensure we have a people centric approach to everything we do, putting the communities that we serve at the heart of our decision making.

We have an organisation full of fantastic people, who believe firmly in the values of the service and the ethical framework in which we operate, and we need to ensure staff are appropriately trained to deliver our services to our communities.

We have an ambition to be an outstanding organisation, which delivers excellent services to our communities and partners.

To achieve this, we need to ensure that we can attract, recruit, and retain talented individuals to our service, and once recruited we need to provide a safe and happy workplace for them to flourish and shape the future of our service. We are committed to continuing our people improvement journey and will not be complacent or apologetic in our strong and tenacious drive in this area.

Our approach to continuous improvement ensures we are agile in our approach which drives our policies, processes, and structures to reflect the ever-changing needs of talent management and our communities.

We are steadfast in our desire and ambition to be an employer of choice and an exemplar across the Fire & Rescue sector and wider public sector. To do this we must be self-aware and understand our barriers, create action plans in addressing the areas and plan for the future.

Gavin Ellis PGCert, PGDip, MBA

Chief Fire Officer



Introduction

At Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service we want a workforce that better reflects our communities. We know that achieving this will make us a stronger organisation, better able to understand the risks of our communities, and deliver our Services, while also creating an environment where each member of our workforce feels valued for who they are, the contribution they make, and be able to reach their full potential.

The Public Sector Equality Duty and the Equality Act 2010 requires the Service to publish equality information about our employees broken down by characteristic to show how Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service is having due regard to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different protected characteristics
- foster good relations between people from different protected characteristics

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

The protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

This report provides an overview of the diversity of the workforce as at the 31 December 2023. Data is based on our applicants and workforce figures, which are taken from our Talentlink and Workforce systems. The report does not include casual staff.

The report will highlight what our workforce looks like (new starters including applicants, promotions, all staff, and leavers), and any key recommendations for how we can improve and ensure we continue to achieve cultural change to enable an inclusive environment for our staff no matter who they are.

For context, some characteristics may be included in sections that may be unexpected and specific terms have been used to enable us to understand more

accurately what our Service looks like. These terms have been agreed with the staff support networks and the Service will continually seek advice from them to ensure staff are happy with wording and terms used.

If at any point societal changes and advice from the staff support networks indicates we need to update the language used within the reports we produce, we will make the required changes.

In this report Transgender is included within our statistics for gender rather than within the sexual orientation category. This is because our data is captured in this way. This allows us to really look into the numbers of staff we have and understand where we need to offer support which may be different to those of our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Queer / Questioning staff (LGB+). The 'prefer not to say' category for staff has been excluded from analysis due to this being a mandatory question for the 2021 Census.

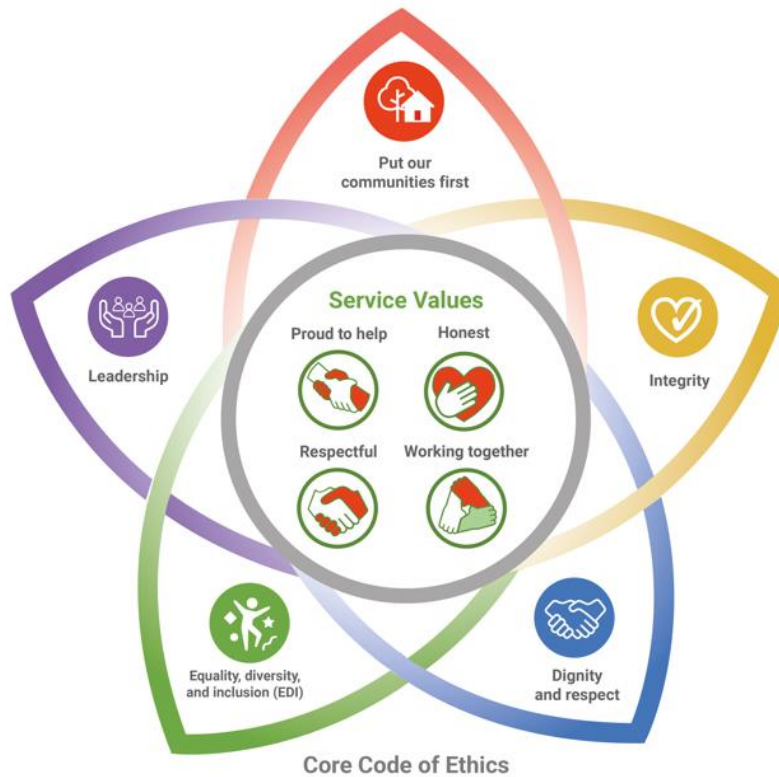
Transgender is not a mandatory category within the Census; however numbers of staff are too small to be able to disclose. Gender of our staff has not been compared to the community in the same way as other characteristics because the gender split of the community is relatively even at 48.7% male and 51.3% female.

We also use the term 'People of Colour' to indicate staff who identify as Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage or Other. We use 'White Other' to include staff who identify as Irish, European or Australian for example and also Gypsy and Traveller which includes, but is not limited to New Travellers, Boaters, Bargees, Showpeople, Irish Travellers and Roma. By reporting on our staff in this way we can more accurately compare with the demographics of our communities, see where we are reflective, where we are not, and what work we may need to do to support or increase participation / engagement / recruitment attraction.

Data for ethnicity does not include staff who have 'preferred not to say' or 'not stated'. This is because in the 2021 census the question for ethnicity is mandatory, therefore for a more accurate comparison with the community data, this has been excluded. Where staff have preferred not to say or state their ethnicity, this has been compared separately against other characteristics where the census allows the community to not state.

All data within the report has been rounded to 1 decimal place.

Our Values and Ethics



Our Values were developed by our staff, and these have been combined with the Core Code of Ethics as developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council. Our Values and Ethics are embedded in everything that we do, and staff are expected to act in the right way with each other and with the public. The Values and Ethics support us to do our jobs to the best of our ability and to create an environment of respect and inclusivity.

Key Observations

The key findings of interest in the 2023 data are:

- Gender representation for On-Call new starters has not changed from 2022, so the split has remained at 92% male with 8% female. This is still 2% less than in 2021.
- Female Wholetime (WT) new starters in Crew Manager (CM) / Watch Manager (WM) positions rose from 12.5% to 25% in 2023 compared to 2022; however, firefighters stayed comparable to 2022 with 13.6%.
- No people of colour were appointed in any staff group other than On-Call in 2023.
- The percentage of female promotions in WT rose from 5.6% to 10.3% in 2023.
- There was an increase in male promotions for On-Call, rising from 95.7% to 98.3% from 2022.
- Total promotions for support staff were 16.7% male and 83.3% female, an increase in 29% for female staff.
- No people of colour were promoted in any staff group in 2023.
- Disproportionate percentages of staff have 'preferred not to say' or 'not state' their sexual orientation compared to other characteristics. For WT, combined this is 13.2%, On-Call 7.4% and Support staff 10.4%.
- Increase in percentage of female Support staff in senior management roles (Grade 10+), 45.5% compared to 38.5% in 2022.
- 3.5% of applicants to On-Call roles were from People of Colour, out of applicants who were hired, 5.6% identified as People of Colour which is higher than the 4.5% 2021 Census figure for our community.
- No applicants who identified as People of Colour were hired in Support Staff roles in 2023. Applicants for these roles from those who identified as People of Colour were at 21.1% which is over 4 times the community percentage of 4.5%.

Our People

All Staff

The workforce of the Service as at the 31 December 2023, is 85% male and 15% female; transgender is included in the gender category, however the number of trans staff in the Service is too small to disclose.

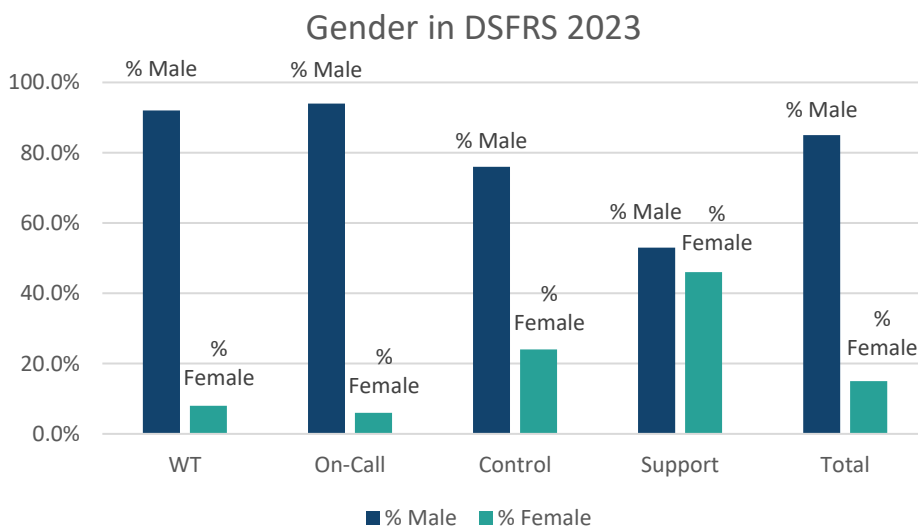
The Service has 96.4% who identify as White British, 1.2% of staff who identify as People of Colour and 2.4% as White Other. 88% of our staff identify as heterosexual, with 2% identifying as LGB+, however 7% of staff preferred not to say and 3% did not state at all.

3% of staff identify as having a disability and 3% did not state in this category. For religion, 65% as having no religion, 28% of staff identify as Christian, with 1% as Other; 2% preferred not to say and 4% did not state anything.

Within the staff role groups of Wholetime (WT), On Call, Control and Support staff, we see a slightly different make up.

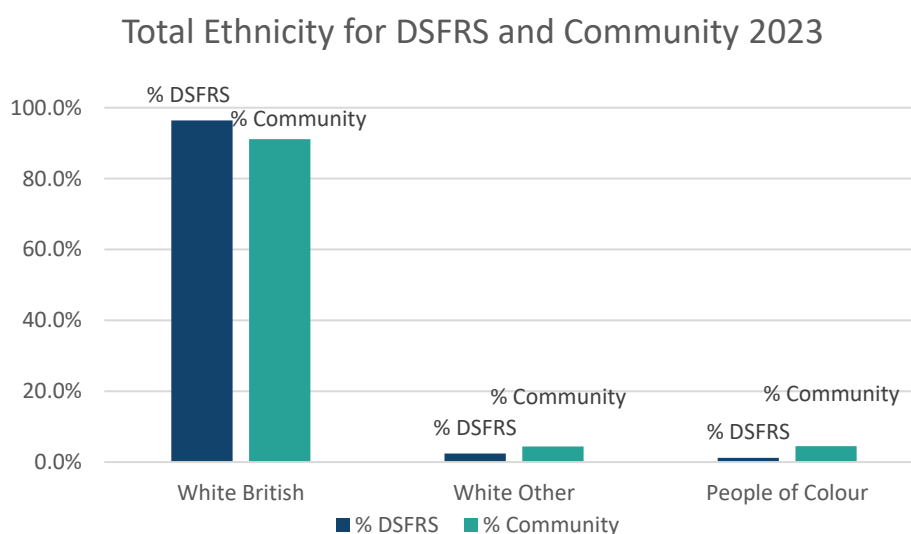
For WT staff, 92.1% of staff are male with 7.7% female and this is a slight increase for female staff from 2022 which was 7%. There has been a reduction in numbers of male staff where they have left the Service and a slight increase in number of female staff which accounts for the increase in 2023.

For our On Call staff, the percentage of male staff is 93.7% and 6.2% is female and this remains the same as 2022. Control staff identify as 23.7% male and 76.3% female while for Support staff 53.4% identify as male and 46.3% as female which is the same as 2022.



Graph displaying percentages of all staff by gender and staff group.

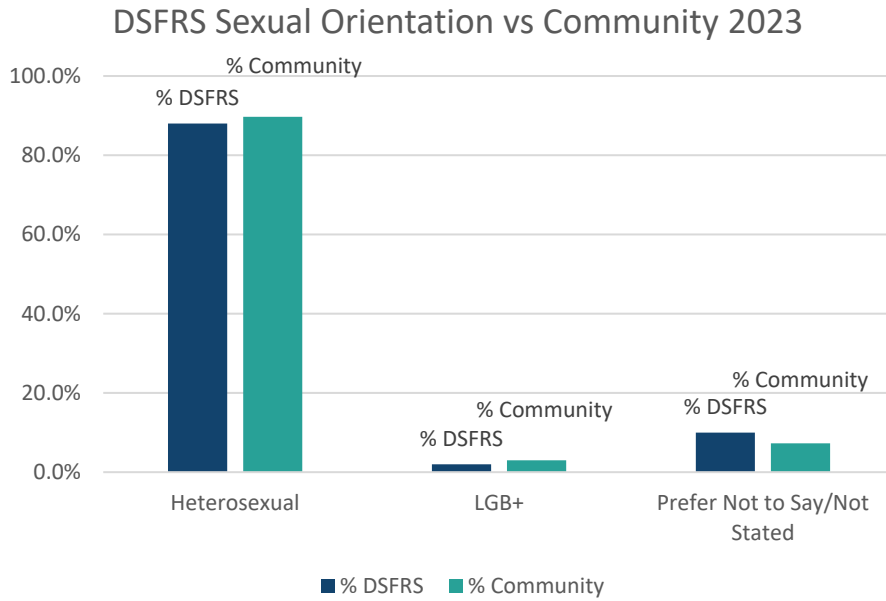
In terms of ethnic background, for WT staff 96.4% of staff identify as White British, 2.5% of staff identified as White Other and 1.5% identifying as People of Colour. For our On Call staff, 97.3% identify as White British, and 2% as White other. The number of staff identifying as People of Colour is too small to disclose for On Call. For our Control staff 92.1% identify as White British, for other ethnicities the number of staff in this group is too small to disclose. Support staff have 94.9% identifying as White British and 3.8% identifying as White other, the number of staff identifying as People of Colour are too small to disclose. The community average in Devon and Somerset for ethnicity is 91.1% White British, 4.4% White Other and 4.5% People of Colour, so for all staff groups we are less than the community average for people from a White Other background and of those who identify as a Person of Colour.



Graph displaying percentages of ethnicity for the Service compared to the community of Devon and Somerset.

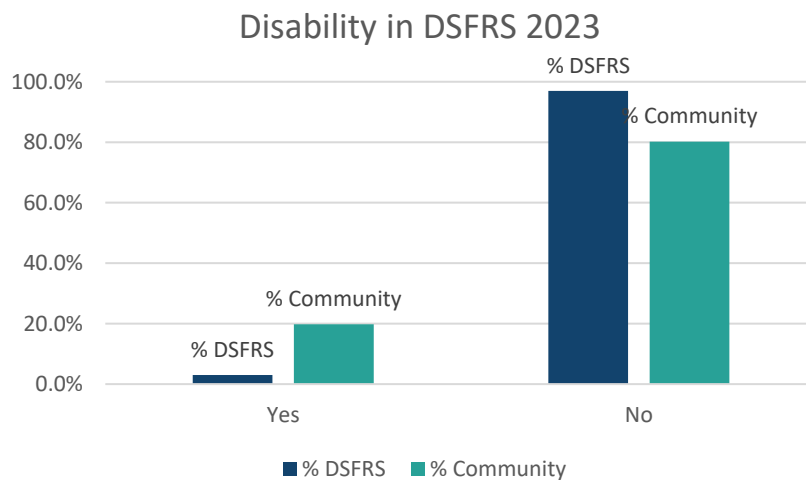
WT staff identifying as LGB+ is 3.2%, with 83.8% of staff identify as heterosexual, however there are 11.2% of staff who have preferred not to say and 2% who did not state at all. For On Call staff, 2.1% identify as LGB+, with 90.6% identifying as heterosexual, 4.6% preferring not to say and 2.8% not stating. In the Control staff group the numbers of LGB+ staff is too small to disclose. 3.4% of Support staff identify as LGB+, 86.3% as heterosexual, with 6.4% preferring not to say and 4% not stating.

The community average for sexual orientation in Devon and Somerset is 89.7% heterosexual, with 3% LGB+, but 7.3% of the community did not answer the question in the census. The percentage of staff preferring not to say their sexuality is much higher when compared to the other characteristics, for example 11.2% of WT preferred not to say their sexual orientation compared to 4.9% for ethnicity, while 1.8% of Support staff preferred not to state their ethnicity compared to 6.4% for sexual orientation. For all staff groups the combined prefer not to say / not stated is higher than the community average who chose not to answer.



Graph displaying percentages of sexual orientation for the Service compared to the community of Devon and Somerset.

There are low numbers of staff identifying as having a disability compared to the 8% community average. 3.1% of WT staff have declared they have a disability with 96.9% stating they do not have a disability which has not changed compared to 2022. 2.2% of On Call staff identify as having a disability with 97.8% identifying as not having a disability. For staff in Control, numbers are too small to disclose. 4.8% of Support staff identify as having a disability, with 95.2% declaring they do not have a disability.



Graph showing Disability in the Service compared to the community of Devon and Somerset.

The individual staff groups identification of religion is comparable with the total staff percentages. As a whole, 65% of staff identify as having no religion, compared to

44.2% of the Devon and Somerset community and 28% as Christian compared to 47.3% of our community; all other religions are too small to report on.

Recruitment

Across 2023 there was a reduction in numbers of staff starting in all staff groups because of fewer vacancies. Due to the time taken for vacancies to become available (particularly in the case of WT roles) some of the data for applicants has become archived; only available data has been analysed and where it is not adequate it has not been considered.

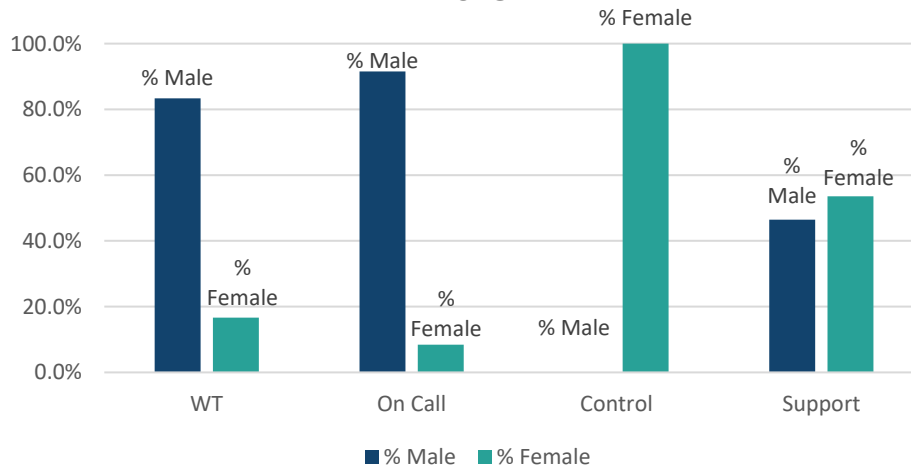
In terms of gender, WT firefighter recruitment has remained comparable to 2022 with 86.4% male and 13.6% female. For Crew Managers / Watch Managers (CM / WM), there has been an increase in new starters who are female, from 12.5% in 2022 to 25% in 2023. Overall, this has meant that WT new starters who are female have increased from 14.8% to 16.7%. Of the applicant data available, 15.8% of applicants were female and 84.2% were male.

For our On Call recruitment, 8.5% of new starters were female which is comparable to 2022 with no change. On Call applicants were 14.4% female and 85.6% male. For Control starters, these were 100% female, the same as in 2022, however applicants for Control were 35.3% male and 64.7% female.

New starters in Support staff roles were 53.6% female and 46.4% male, a slight increase in female starters for 2023 compared with 47.1% in 2022. In terms of applicants for all Support staff in 2023, these were 44.5% female with 55.5% male (transgender applicants were too low to be disclosed). For external vacancies, which internal staff are also able to apply for, these applications were 42.7% female and 57.3% male.

The data shows there is continuing underrepresentation of female applicants and starters within both WT and On Call roles with no improvement for On Call over the past 12 months.

DSFRS New Starters by Staff Group and Gender 2023

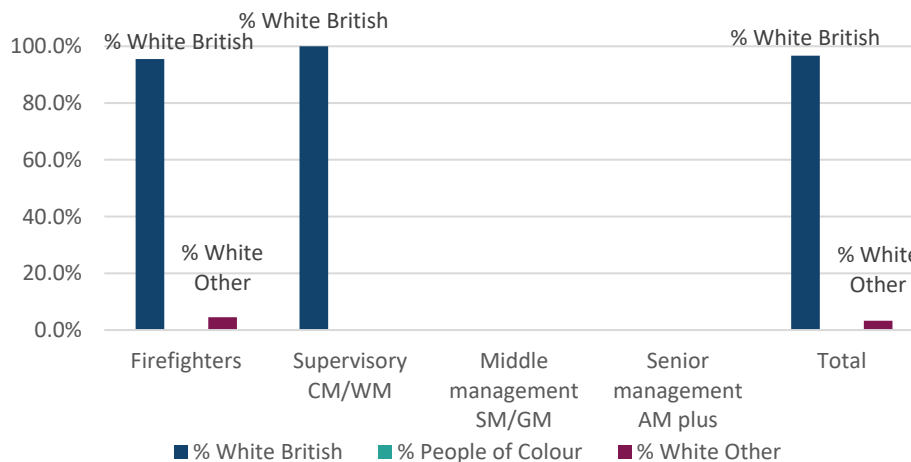


Graph displaying percentages of male and female new starters by staff group.

The ethnic minority background (including People of Colour and those of a White Other background) of our community, is 8.4%, which is 4.5% People of Colour and 4.4% White Other. For new starters in WT roles, no People of Colour were appointed, 96.7% identified as White British, while 3.3% of people identifying as White Other were recruited.

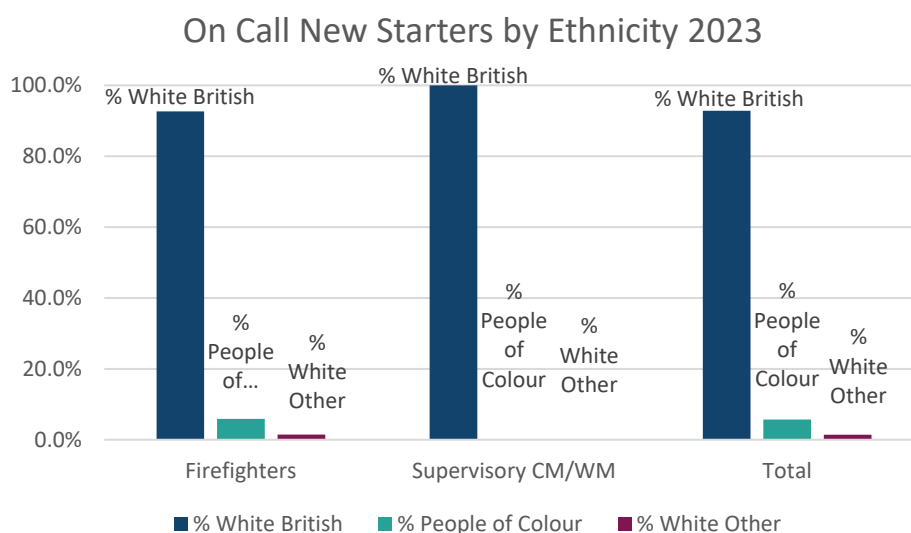
For those that applied for WT roles (from available data), 92.1% were from people who identified as White British, 5.3% were from White Other backgrounds and 2.6% of applications came from those who identified as People of Colour. Applications from people in our community identifying as People of Colour for WT roles are lower than the community, however, applications for people identifying as White Other are higher than the community but with a lower percentage hired.

WT New Starters by Ethnicity 2023



Graph displaying percentages of WT New Starters by ethnicity.

For new On Call staff, 92.9% identified as White British, 5.7% identified as People of Colour (higher than the community average), with 1.4% coming from a White Other background. The data for applications shows that for On Call roles, White British applications were 93%, People of Colour and those identifying as from a White Other background were 3.5% respectively, lower than the community average.



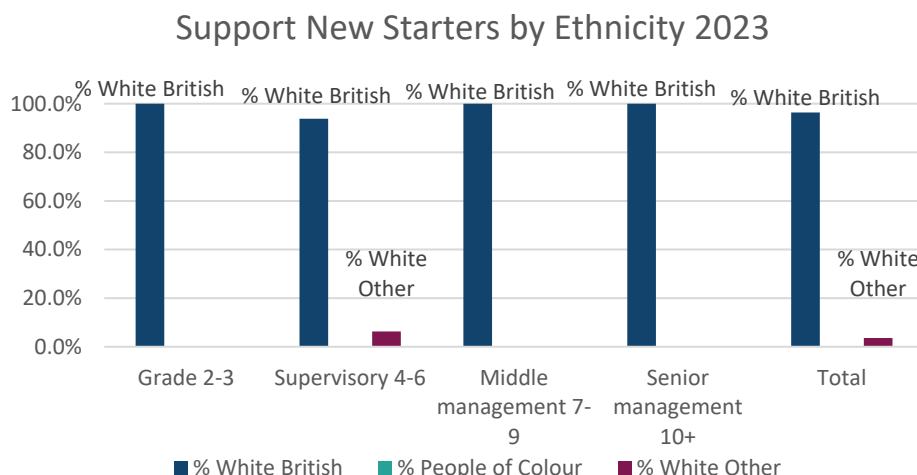
Graph displaying percentages of On Call New Starters by ethnicity.

New starters for the Control staff group were 100% White British, with 88.2% of applicants being from a White British background. Applicants identifying as a Person of Colour or from a White Other background were unsuccessful at the ‘Eligibility Check and Shortlisting’ stage of the recruitment process, but the numbers are too small to disclose.

New starters in the Support staff group all identified as White British (in 2022, 2% of starters identified as White Other and as per the 2022 Annual Report no person of colour was recruited in 2022). Support staff are also able to apply for external vacancies, all external applications have been analysed and this includes those from internal staff (internal only vacancies have not been included as these have been analysed separately under promotions).

Staff who have been successful in an external process have not been counted as a ‘new starter’ but as a successful promotion). Applications for new Support staff roles from those identifying as White British were 73.6% (lower than the population average), 5.3% for people identifying as White Other and People of Colour were 21.1% (for People of Colour this is much higher than the community average of 4.5%). The most common area of the recruitment process where applicants who identified as a Person of Colour dropped out was at the ‘Eligibility and Shortlisting’

stage, with ‘Event Invitation-Interview’ being the next most common stage to drop out of the process.



Graph displaying percentages of Support Staff New Starters by ethnicity.

The number of new starters who identify as LGB+ for each staff group are too small to report on.

For new starters from all staff groups, aside from the 89.6% who identified as heterosexual, 93% who do not have a disability, 84.3% who identify as having no religion and the 11.9% who identify as Christian, the other characteristics are too small to report on.

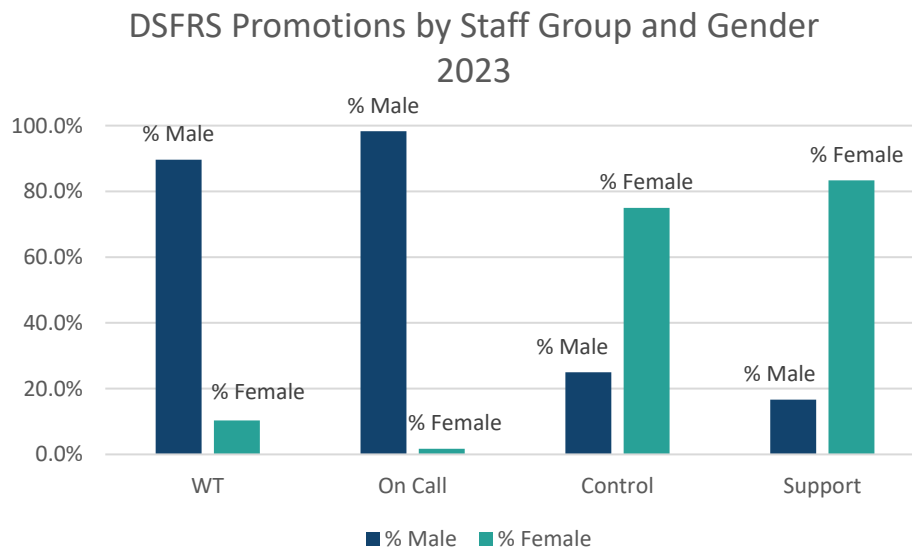
Promotions

10.3% of temporary and permanent WT promotions were from female applicants with 89.7% being from male applicants during 2023. From the available applicant data, there were 202 applications where staff had declared their gender. 4.5% of the total applications were female, and 7.7% of female applicants were promoted. For staff who were rejected in the promotion process, 3.2% were female and 75% of those were at the pre-screening stage. No transgender applications were received.

For On Call promotions (temporary and permanent), 1.7% of the promotions were from female applicants with 98.3% male. From the available applicant data, there were 103 applications where staff declared their gender, 6.8% of the applications were female and of those 4% were promoted. Of the female applicants who were rejected from the process, 60% of those were at the Eligibility Check stage.

The number of Control promotions was low in number during 2023, and so the number of staff in this group is too small to disclose, however of the promotions recorded 75% of these were for female members of staff.

For promotions within the Support staff group, 83.3% of these were female, 60% of these were at grade 7-9 and all promotions at grade 10 and above were for women. The available application data shows that for female staff who did not progress through the promotion process the most common point of dropping out was at Eligibility and Shortlisting stage, followed by Event Invitation-Interview. For male applicants, the most common stage for dropping out of the process was also Eligibility and Shortlisting.



Graph displaying percentages of Promotions by Gender.

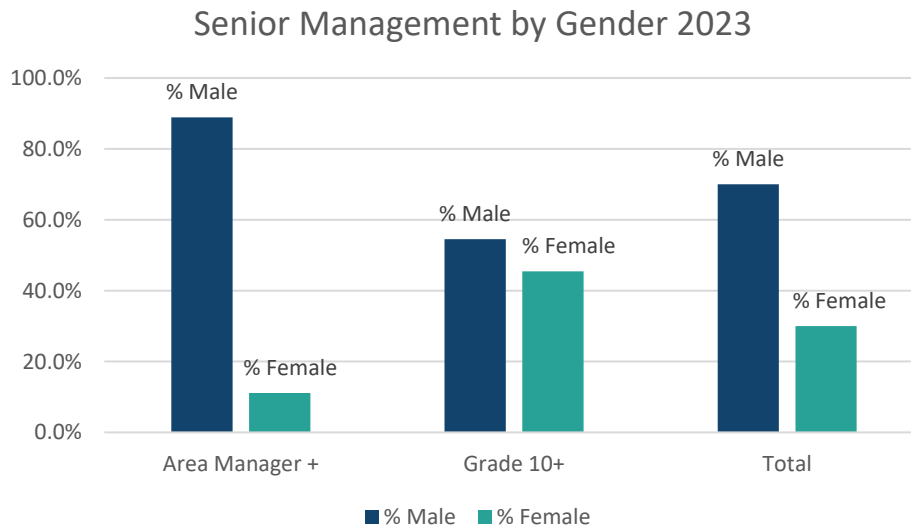
Looking at the ethnicity of staff who were promoted during 2023, for all staff groups, 97% were White British, with 3% identifying as White Other, no People of Colour were promoted in 2023. The application data (excluding Control) shows that 90.4% came from staff who identified as White British, 8% identified as White Other and 1.6% as a Person of Colour. The Support staff group can apply for internal and external vacancies, with this taken into consideration and looked at separately, 90.7% of applications for Support staff roles were from staff who identified as White British, 8% as those from a White other background and 2.7% identifying as a Person of Colour.

For all other characteristics the numbers are too small to report on.

Executive Board and Senior Management

The Executive Board (EB) is comprised of the Chief Fire Officer, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery), Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery Support), the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and the Assistant Director of Corporate Services. The group is too small to disclose characteristic information.

The senior management team consists of EB and managers at an Area Manager (AM) role or Grade 10 and above. For operational roles at AM and above, the gender split was 88.9% male and 11.1% female, with 100% identifying as White British and heterosexual respectively. For Support staff at senior management level the gender split is 54.5% male with 45.5% female, 90.9% White British and 9.1% White Other, 73% heterosexual and 27% LGB+, which for underrepresented staff groups has improved compared to 2022. No staff identify as having a disability.

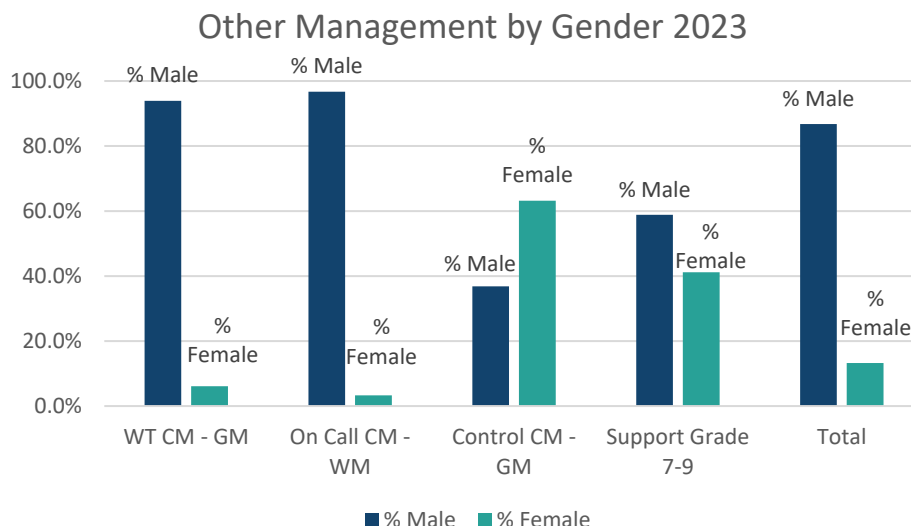


Graph displaying Senior Management by Gender.

Other Management

For operational staff and Control, management is considered at Crew Manager (CM) and Watch Manager (WM), Station Manager (SM) and Group Manager (GM) level. There has been a slight change in percentage of female managers at (CM / WM) level for WT with 6% compared with 4% in 2022.

For Support staff, management level is grades 7 – 9 and the gender split for this group is 58.8% male, 41.2% female which is also a slight increase in the percentage of female staff at this level. For all staff groups at management levels the numbers relating to the other characteristics are too small to be reported on.



Graph displaying other management by Gender.

Leavers

In 2023, 214 people left the organisation, compared with 235 in 2022. 20% of the total leavers were female (the same as 2022), with the highest staff group for women leaving being Support staff at 56%. There were fewer female leavers from operational roles in 2023 compared with 2022.

The most common reason for leaving in operational roles was voluntary retirement, with personal or career progression being the next most common reasons. In the On Call staff group, women were mainly leaving for relocation or work/life balance reasons.

For Control the number of leavers were low but all were due to transferring to another part of the Service. For Support staff, the most common reason for leaving for male leavers was expiration of temporary contracts, while for female leavers it was voluntary retirements, with resignation personal being the next most common for both. All other characteristics are too low to be reported on.

Unpaid Leave

The Service allow staff the opportunity to apply for unpaid leave from their role for up to six months. Unpaid leave is most commonly used by On Call staff who may have a change in circumstances that mean they are unable to fulfil their contracted hours.

In 2023, the On Call staff group had the highest number of occurrences of unpaid leave with 39. Of these 9% were for female staff and 91% for male, with female staff taking an average of 103 days leave compared to 82 for male staff. The rates of unpaid leave occurrences for the other staff groups are too low to be reported on.

Discipline and Grievance

During 2023, there were 25 Discipline cases compared to 21 in 2022 and 20 grievance cases compared to 25 in 2022. Of those disciplines cases 92% were male and of the grievance cases 80% were male. The numbers for other characteristics are too small to be reported on.

Recommendations

Building on the work that we already do, the key recommendations are:

- **Positive action** should be expanded for On-Call and Support staff roles. These are the staff groups the Service consistently recruits for annually. Look for opportunities for the Service to do this. Collecting data for those we are speaking to at engagement events such as recruitment fayres will help us to understand who we are engaging with and where we need to do better.
- **Explore training in engagement** at events where we come into contact with people from diverse backgrounds. This could include how to broach talking about the Service (who we are, what we do, safety and feedback) and then about working for us. Include did you know boards – with statistics about staff diversity and incidents we go to? Collect data of who we are engaging with, whether that is at an event, a home fire safety visit or incident as business as usual. This will enable us to determine who we are engaging with, where our information is coming from and if we are reaching everyone we need to be.
- **Firefighters to engage at events** and to proactively seek opportunities for engagement with those who they do not usually engage with, particularly from our underrepresented groups.
- **Explore setting up a pool of people with language skills** to mentor prospective applicants who have English as an additional language. This will help with confidence and gaining understanding of what we mean with our questions, for example – what do we mean when we talk about ‘culture’? This will also be useful for engaging with particular communities.
- **Investigate why staff do not want to indicate their sexuality?** Provide info about why and how diversity information is collected and used. Increase visibility of Fire Pride and Allies and education about LGBTQ+ issues to progress understanding, experiences and help improve inclusion and positive workplace culture.
- **Compare applications to that of staff promoted.** Investigate if there are reasons so few women or People of Colour were promoted in On Call.
- **Consider** how we can ensure managers are promoting opportunities to under-represented groups within the Service.
- **Undertake the TIDE assessment with enei (Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion) in 2024.** This was not undertaken in 2023 so we will benchmark against what we were marked against in 2022. Use the outcomes to consider where we can make improvements.
- **Consider** a gap analysis in other areas, such as LGBTQ+ so we can try to understand if there are any issues to address why staff are not declaring their sexual orientation.
- **All** Service priorities and department goals to have EDI objectives within them. This enables measurable criteria and accountability.

- **People Strategy** to be created with clear EDI actions, and EDI strategic pillars to enable us to plan where we want to be.
- **Consider updated EDI training.** Involve staff to indicate what topics they need, and this should be delivered in person, not e-learning. Either by EDI staff or external organisations.
- **Relook at EDI categories for collecting personal data** compared to the 2021 census to ensure we are comparable. For example, add a separate category for Roma if that is what is available in the Census. Also, consider making some categories mandatory in line with the 2021 Census for better comparison with the community.
- **Investigate** why so many people of colour are not progressing past the Eligibility Check and Shortlist stage for Support staff which is where 61% of applicants dropped out of the process. Compared to such a high applicant rate per post and for the overall percentage of applications from this group (21.1% compared to 4.5% of the population), it is disproportionate compared to other ethnicities of applicants.
- **Create** a newer version of the Annual EDI Report to include information from staff and what support we have in place for staff, for example staff support networks.
- **Provide** analysis of EDI data on a more regular basis throughout the year to measure progress and consider trends (positive and negative) so we can take action.