



Equality & Gender Pay Gap Report 2024-25

1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Foreword | 2 |
| The Statutory Context | 3 |
| Our Service Area | 4 |
| Reporting | 5 |
| Our Equality Objectives: Key Highlights 2024-25 | 6 |
| Our Workforce Profile | 10 |
| Our Equality Profile Snapshots | 11 |
| Equality Profile Summary | 16 |
| Disciplinary and Grievances | 18 |
| Gender Pay Gap as at 31 March 2025 | 19 |
| Our Gender Pay Gap Figures | 20 |
| Contributory Factors | 22 |
| Closing the Gap and our Future Equality Work | 22 |
| Conclusion | 23 |
| Appendix | 24 |

OUR CORE CODE OF ETHICS

We follow the [Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services \(FRS\)](#) in England which guides everything we do.

Putting our communities first

We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.

Integrity

We act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.

Dignity and respect

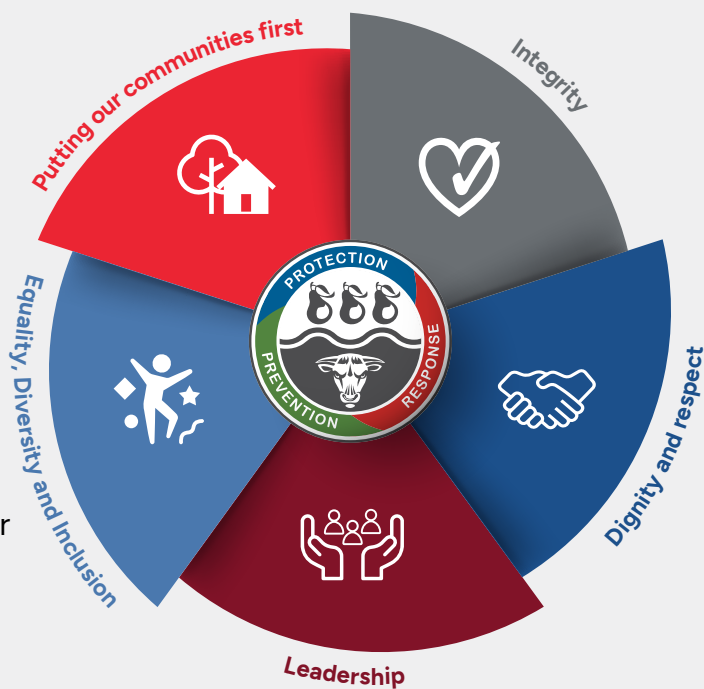
We make decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

Leadership

As positive role models, we are accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations and celebrate difference.



Foreword

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) is committed to meeting the diverse needs of the communities we serve. We also strive to foster a professional, safe and inclusive workplace culture where every member of staff feels respected, valued and empowered to reach their full potential.

Our approach is guided by the Core Code of Ethics, which underpins the values and behaviours we expect everyone to demonstrate in the workplace. We place a strong emphasis on continuous learning and improvement to ensure our environment remains inclusive, equitable and aligned with our organisational principles.

This report outlines the progress made throughout 2024-25 against our equality objectives, including our statutory responsibilities to report on key areas of equality, diversity and inclusion:

Monitoring of Equality Information

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public bodies with 150 or more employees to demonstrate what they have done to help eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people. They also need to publish equality data at least annually about their employees.

WHO WE ARE

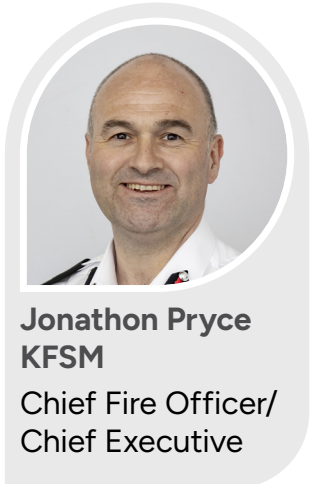
Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service attended 8,213 incidents in 2024-25 ranging from property and countryside fires, road traffic collisions, collapsed structures, water rescues, hazardous materials to animal rescues. We employ over 696 full-time and part-time members of staff in 764 roles, delivering a wide range of prevention, protection and emergency response services across Herefordshire and Worcestershire (an area of 392,000 hectares with a population of over 804,000 people).

Gender Pay Gap

The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 require employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations every year showing the average difference in pay between their male and female employees (known as the gender pay gap). It is important to note that, our gender pay gap does not stem from paying men and women differently for the same or equivalent work, as all staff at the same level are paid the same in all equivalent roles. Our gender pay gap is affected by the roles in which men and women currently work within the Service and the associated salaries that these various roles attract, with more men in senior roles than women.

Declaration

I can confirm that the Gender Pay Gap data included within this Report is accurate and has been calculated according to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.



Jonathon Pryce
KFSM
Chief Fire Officer/
Chief Executive

PURPOSE

Why we are here

Keeping people safe from fire and other risks.
Responding efficiently and effectively to incidents and emergencies.

VISION

What we want to do

Building on our successes to continue to make a difference, improve lives and help secure resilient communities.

MISSION

What we do every day

As one professional team we will work hard every day to deliver high quality, sustainable services to our communities.

The Statutory Context

What is the public sector equality duty?

The Public Sector Equality Duty is a legal requirement for public authorities like Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority to consider the impact of their policies or decisions on people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 ensures that everyone, whether at work or in using a service, has the right to be treated fairly. It protects people from discrimination based on the following nine protected characteristics:



Age



Disability



Gender reassignment



Marriage and civil partnership



Pregnancy and maternity



Race



Religion or belief



Sex



Sexual orientation

Marriage and civil partnership is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act but it's not covered by the public sector equality duty.

What must public authorities do to comply with the duty?

When public authorities carry out their functions, the Equality Act says they must have 'due regard' (or think about the need) to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster or encourage good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Specific duties

Public authorities also have specific duties under the Equality Act to help them comply with the public sector equality duty. Public authorities must:

- Publish equality information at least once a year to show how they have complied with the general duty.
- Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years.

Our Service Area

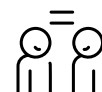
Our Service area extends from the metropolitan borders of the West Midlands to the rural southern borderland between England and Wales and covers two counties; Worcestershire in the east and Herefordshire to the west. The infographic gives a summary of what the population of Herefordshire and Worcestershire looks like. This helps us to see how reflective we are as a workforce, in comparison to the communities we serve.

Population

790,709

total estimated population of
Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Race



10%

belong to an ethnic minority group
(including White minority groups)

Age



176,827

people aged 66+ years

Religion or belief



53%

 Christian

38%

 no religion or belief

Disability



143,322

have a disability or condition which
limits their day to day activities

Sexual Orientation



2%

 of people over 16
identified as LGB+

Sex



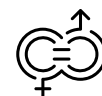
49%

 male

51%

 female

Gender Reassignment



0.5%

of people in England and Wales
identified as a gender different from the
sex they were registered with at birth

Reporting

The information in this report has been compiled from equality information provided voluntarily by our staff or job applicants.

The data reported here is anonymised which means that a person cannot be identified from the information provided. We therefore may only provide percentages in relation to the overall workforce for some data to effectively anonymise, particularly where numbers of people with that characteristic are numerically low, potentially making it easier to identify individuals.

The data in this report covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Where possible, an arrow indicates where there is a change from last year's report 2023-24.



Key Highlights 2024-25

Progress against our current equality objectives for 2021-2025 are shown below:

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

Our leaders will provide visible leadership to ensure our people, our partners and our communities see the personal commitment to inclusion. We will maximise the transparency of our organisation so our activities can be scrutinised and we can be held accountable.

A communication campaign was launched to introduce our new **Culture Statement of Intent**. This statement outlines the kind of workplace culture we are aiming for – shaped by what our staff told us matters most. It is based on feedback from our latest staff survey, an independent culture audit and themes raised through our confidential reporting line. At its heart is a simple concept: culture is everyone's responsibility – Our Culture is You.

The **Culture & Ethics Steering Group** continued to oversee the delivery of **Ethical Dilemma Workshops**. These were based on the Core Code of Ethics which sets out the standards and behaviour we expect from everyone in our organisation. These sessions gave staff the chance to explore real-life situations and talk through how to make the right choices at work in line with the Code.

Senior managers refreshed and deepened their understanding of how to foster a fair and respectful workplace by participating in a

practical and thought-provoking development session on **Inclusive Leadership**. Delivered by an external specialist, the session prompted discussions on inclusive behaviours, challenge bias and creating environments where all staff feel valued and supported.

We updated our **confidential Speaking Up service**, introducing a new independent provider to continue to give staff a safe and confidential way to raise concerns. This improved service builds on our existing internal reporting routes and supports our ongoing commitment to openness, trust and accountability across the Service.

Staff from across the organisation took part in national Fire sector led training on **Equality Impact Assessments**. This training helped our staff think carefully about how policies, practices and decisions might affect different groups of people. This supports our commitment to developing fair and well-informed policies and decisions.



Our Equality Objectives

Key Highlights 2024-25 continued

Our Communities

Understand, engage and build good relationships

We will better understand our communities by ensuring we put in place systems that enable the collection, collation and analysis of community data and information. We will enhance our engagement with our communities to foster good relationships and understand the community priorities.

Our Prevention team continues to make effective use of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Equality of Access documents, which consolidate research, statistics and guidance to support fire services in engaging with community groups who may not typically interact with our sector. The department has developed targeted campaign plans to identify and reach these groups. Prevention Engagement Officers work closely with operational crews to explore and implement ways to improve access to our services across all sections of our communities. As a result of these efforts, the team has attended numerous community events to provide fire safety advice, leading to the generation of [Home Fire Safety Visits](#) (HFSVs), a 55% increase compared to referrals in 2023-24.

Our Prevention team have linked with local partners to **promote accessible services** to communities. The HFSV leaflet is available in a variety of formats including large print, easy read and multiple languages which is reflective of our communities. These are available on our Service website and via hard copy.

Each fire station has an NFCC **Campaign Calendar**, which also includes notable events and key religious and cultural festivals, such as Chinese New Year, Diwali, etc. Key fire safety messages can be promoted at appropriate times for all sections of our communities.

Our **Fire Cadets**, a uniformed youth organisation, launched in 2023 continues to thrive. Welcoming young people aged 13-17 years. Over a quarter of the cadets are girls (29%). Cadets follow a structured training programme that builds practical skills, promotes fire safety awareness and encourages social responsibility.

The **Your Impact** initiative is a multi-agency scheme aimed at reducing death and serious injury amongst young road users in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The aim is to provide Year 10 and 11 students with the education, tools and confidence to make the right choices using the road to first become better passengers. The initiative involves using virtual reality headsets to show scene reconstructions, as a way of delivering key messages. The event is delivered to mainstream schools as well as schools supporting students with particular needs. Alternative media options are available so that as many young people as possible can access the programme, making it very inclusive.

Our Digital and Corporate Communications team use their expertise to support us in **engaging with our communities** via social media platforms and other multimedia methods, promoting safety messages, key Service events or activities, as well as highlighting us as an inclusive employer.



Our Equality Objectives

Key Highlights 2024-25 continued

Our People

Develop, engage and understand

We will develop our people to better understand diversity and inclusion. We will better understand our workforce composition through our workforce data. We will create an inclusive culture where our people feel able to be themselves.

We will put in place effective strategies to enable engagement with our staff and networks to continue to develop an inclusive culture.

We completed a Service-wide **training programme**, delivered by an external specialist provider, with 97% of available staff taking part. The training focused on building fair and respectful workplaces and gave staff practical tools to support positive behaviours. Feedback was excellent with an average rating from participants of 4.5 stars. The training continues to be offered to new starters to make sure everyone receive the same valuable learning.

We improved how we use information from our annual **appraisal process** to better understand who is interested in aspiring to leadership roles in the future. By collecting more detailed data, this allows us to review progression trends and better understand how to support people from all backgrounds to reach their full potential.

Internal online **resource hubs** provide staff with a wide range of materials, guidance and tools that support fair treatment, equal access and a positive working environment. Staff also

have the opportunity to join online Listen and Learn sessions hosted by the NFCC, which offers further insights and encourages open conversations about inclusion and diversity.

Training and guidance have been provided to staff to support them to respond appropriately and with confidence when they see or experience **behaviours that do not align with our professional standards and Code of Ethics**. This helps build a workplace where everyone feels safe, respected and knows how to speak up or act when something is not right.

Staff have engaged in national inclusion **learning and networking** opportunities, including the NFCC Inclusion and Culture conference and Asian Fire Service Association events, including a development session on improving how we engage with people from a wide range of backgrounds.



Our Equality Objectives

Key Highlights 2024-25 continued

Our Partners

Working together

We will work with external partners to develop strategies that enable effective service provision to our communities. We will collaborate across our own business functions and staff networks to better build equality and inclusion into our policies, processes and practices to ensure inclusion and our values are at the heart of everything we do.

Our staff network, **Women@HWFire**, is open to all employees and continues to champion initiatives that support wellbeing and positive workplace experiences. The network has proudly delivered a range of impactful initiatives to empower women and foster a supportive environment across the Service:

- A dynamic and informative **Wellbeing Event** to focus on female fitness in support of our operational Fitness Standards and general health and wellness, offering tailored advice and support to attendees.
- Members attended the **National Women in Fire Service UK Development** event. An inspiring event, designed to build confidence and foster collaboration across UK Fire and Rescue Services.
- In partnership with West Mercia Police, a fantastic '**Accelerate Action**' event was held in support of International Women's Day. This event featured engaging speakers, interactive activities and practical tools to help individuals drive personal and professional development.
- Regular **Menopause Cafes** provide a safe space for sharing experiences, offering peer support and building knowledge around menopause-related topics. Representatives also attended a national menopause conference for the fire sector.
- Support new starters, helping them to feel welcomed and provide access to **informal coaching**.

- A network sub committee was formed to act as **local contacts** and lead on key areas identified by staff, strengthening our inclusive culture.
- Members visited schools and careers events to **inspire future generations** to consider a career with the Fire Service.
- Continued partnership and **collaboration with West Mercia Police** ensures shared resources and consistent support across both organisations.

Our **Neurodiversity (ND) Staff Network** has actively promoted inclusive learning, driving awareness and providing support across the Service:

- Supported the organisation to be more neurodiverse friendly, adopting accessible learning delivery styles and working practices.
- Promoted the network to boost membership, awareness and support available.
- The ND Network Chair continues to represent the group at a corporate level, ensuring neurodiversity remains a key focus.
- Provided learning opportunities for members.
- Based on member feedback the group has evolved its format to be more informal and encourage stronger relationships and better networking.

Our Workforce Profile

As at 31 March 2025, there are 754 total posts occupied. In analysing our workforce data, secondary contracts are included to reflect the workforce data submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as part of our annual Fire Statistics return. Otherwise, the data would disregard secondary contracts which make up a portion of our establishment, that also helps us to identify any potential trends in particular workforce groups. This also helps us to give a more accurate view of how the diversity of our employees reflects that of the communities we serve.

Our Service is made up of four main workforce groups and for the purposes of this report are defined as follows, in line with MHCLG definitions:

31%

Wholetime Firefighters and Officers

Wholetime: A full-time Firefighter, regardless of rank.



4%

Fire Control

A Uniformed member of staff working in our Control Centre to answer emergency calls and deal with mobilising, communications and related activities, regardless of rank.



45%

On-Call Firefighters

On-Call: A Firefighter responding when required during their "on-call" hours, regardless of rank.



20%

Support Staff and Managers

Support: A member of staff who provides a specialist professional, technical or administrative support service. It includes, for example, administrative roles, analytical support, finance, vehicle maintenance, etc.



Our Equality Profile Snapshots

Workforce

30%

of employees are aged 25-36 years –
the largest proportion of the workforce

↓ 2023-24: largest age group 36-45 years

21%

of the workforce are women

↑ 2023-24: 20%

3%

of the workforce declared they are disabled

↑ 2023-24: 2%

10%

of operational staff are women

↔ 2023-24: 10%

5.44%

of employees from an ethnic minority
background (incl White minority groups¹)

↑ 2023-24: 4.58%

36%

of the workforce are Christian – the largest
religious grouping in the workforce

↑ 2023-24: 35%

3%

of employees declared their sexual orientation as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual

↑ 2023-24: 2.5%

Full workforce data is available within the Appendix.

¹ White minority ethnic groups can include groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.
[Writing about ethnicity – GOV.UK](#)

Our Equality Profile Snapshots

Job Applications

671

total number of
applications received

11%

of applicants for On-Call Firefighter
vacancies are women

↓ 2023-24: 22%

20%

of applicants are from an ethnic minority
background (incl White minority groups²)

↑ 2023-24: 14%

16%

of applicants for On-Call Firefighter
vacancies are from an ethnic minority
background (incl White minority groups)

↑ 2023-24: 7%

7%

of applicants for Wholetime promotion processes are from
an ethnic minority background (incl White minority groups)

↓ 2023-24: 9%

² White minority ethnic groups can include groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.
[Writing about ethnicity – GOV.UK](#)

Our Equality Profile Snapshots

Appointments

90

total number of
appointments

11%

of new appointments
declared they are disabled

↑ 2023-24: 3%

20%

of new appointments in
On-Call roles were women

↑ 2023-24: 15%

7%

of new appointments declared
their sexual orientation as
Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual

↑ 2023-24: 4%

9%

of new appointments identified as being from an ethnic
minority background (incl White minority groups³)

↑ 2023-24: 5%

³ White minority ethnic groups can include groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.
[Writing about ethnicity – GOV.UK](#)

Our Equality Profile Snapshots

Retention

In 2024-25, a total of 108⁴ employees left the Service:

21

Wholetime Staff

3

Fire Control Staff

63

On-Call Staff

21

Support Staff

26%

of leavers were women
(13% of operational leavers were women)

↑ 2023-24: 17%

28%

of leavers were aged 25–35 – This was
the highest proportion of leavers

**2023-24: highest proportion
of leavers were aged 25-35**

3%

of leavers declared a disability

↔ 2023-24: 3%

2%

of leavers were from an ethnic minority
background (incl White minority groups⁵)

↓ 2023-24: 5%

3%

leavers declared their sexual orientation
as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual

↓ 2023-24: 7%

⁴ 17 individuals that ended one of their dual contracts but remained in employment with the Service in another role have been included.

⁵ White minority ethnic groups can include groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.

[Writing about ethnicity – GOV.UK](#)

Our Equality Profile Snapshots

Turnover Rates

Wholetime

9%

turnover rate

↑ 2023-24: 6%

| | |
|---|-----|
| Resigned | 33% |
| Retired | 43% |
| Other reasons (e.g. dismissal, end of secondment) | 24% |

Fire Control

11%

turnover rate

↓ 2023-24: 12%

| | |
|---|-----|
| Resigned | 67% |
| Retired | 33% |
| Other reasons (e.g. dismissal, end of secondment) | 0% |

On-Call

18%

turnover rate

↑ 2023-24: 15%

| | |
|---|-----|
| Resigned | 54% |
| Retired | 14% |
| Other reasons (e.g. dismissal, end of secondment) | 32% |

Support Staff

14%

turnover rate

↓ 2023-24: 16%

| | |
|---|-----|
| Resigned | 48% |
| Retired | 38% |
| Other reasons (e.g. dismissal, end of secondment) | 14% |

Equality Profile Summary

Age

The largest age group in the workforce is 25-35 years, representing 30%. The average age of our workforce continues to be 43 years. People in this age group made up the largest share of job applicants (34%), new starters (42%) and leavers (28%) for the overall organisation and within On-Call. The highest proportion of leavers within Support and Wholetime work groups were in older age groups due to retirements.

Disability

The proportion of staff declaring a disability has increased from 2% to 3%, the first rise in five years. This reflects a notable increase in voluntary declarations from new starters, rising from 3% in 2024 to 11% in 2025. This positive shift may be linked to the Service's inclusive recruitment practices and active promotion of the Neurodiverse Staff Network to prospective applicants.

The percentage of staff declaring neurodiversity continues to grow, reaching 9% in 2025, up from 4% in 2022. Dyslexia remains the most reported neurodiverse condition.

While some neurodiverse conditions may meet the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010, individuals with dyslexia or other neurodiverse traits may not personally identify as disabled. This may help explain the difference between disability and neurodiversity declaration rates.

The number of neurodiverse staff seeking workplace support continues to increase, alongside growing awareness and support of the Neurodiverse Staff Network.

Ethnicity

There has been a modest increase in the proportion of the workforce identifying as belonging to an ethnic minority group (including white minority groups⁶), rising from 4.58% to 5.44%. While this marks positive progress, the current workforce profile is still not fully reflective of the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, where approximately 10% of the population identifies as belonging to an ethnic minority group.

Encouragingly, 9% of new appointments in 2025 were from ethnic minority backgrounds – up from 5% the previous year. There has also been a significant rise in the overall proportion of applicants from minority backgrounds, reaching 20%, particularly in Support staff roles and On-Call positions. This demonstrates that our efforts to attract a more diverse range of applicants are having a meaningful impact.

Gender Reassignment

Information in relation to this protected characteristic is highly sensitive and for data protection reasons this data is not currently published.

⁶ White minority ethnic groups can include groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.
[Writing about ethnicity – GOV.UK](#)

Equality Profile Summary continued

Pregnancy or Maternity

We continue to monitor data relating to pregnancy and maternity. During 2024-25, 4% of female employees were on maternity leave. In response to staff feedback and best practice, the Service has reviewed its enhanced maternity pay provision, with an improved offer launched in 2025.

No employees opted to take shared parental leave during this period. We will continue to review and promote all parental leave options to ensure staff are aware of the support available and feel empowered to make choices that suit their personal and professional circumstances.

Religion or Belief

Religious affiliation in the workforce includes 36% Christian and 34% with no religion or belief. The proportion of other faiths when combined accounts for 2% of the workforce, which is a marginal increase from previous years.

Sex

Male employees make up the majority of the workforce, which is reflective of the national fire sector profile. Female representation does, however, continue to increase at a consistent pace on an annual basis, with the proportion of women across the Service at 21% (20% in 2024). 34% of Middle and Strategic leaders are women, and women make up 54% of

Support staff roles. Women are mainly under-represented in operational roles (10%), however female representation within the On-Call workforce has increased to 10% (from 6% in 2022). The proportion of women in operational roles is slightly higher than the national average (9%⁷). The proportion of new female appointments into On-Call roles has increased to 20% (15% in 2024). There has been a decline in the representation of women within the Wholetime workforce, currently 9% from 11% in 2024. This reflects a slight increase in the proportion of women in Wholetime roles who left the Service and a decrease in the proportion of female new starters in Wholetime roles. A Wholetime Firefighter recruitment campaign is taking place in 2025 which provides an opportunity to promote the role to a wide range of prospective applicants.

Sexual Orientation

3% of employees have declared their sexual orientation as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB), which is a very slight increase from last year (2.5%). This protected group continues to have lower levels of disclosure when compared to other groups. Our disclosure rate has continued to increase, with a current declaration rate of 73%, which is slightly higher than the national average for FRS staff in England⁸. Among applicants, 5% identified as LGB, compared to 7% of starters and 3% of leavers.

7 White Home Office (2024) [Fire Statistics data table – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-data-table).

8 White Home Office (2024) [Fire Statistics data table – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-data-table).

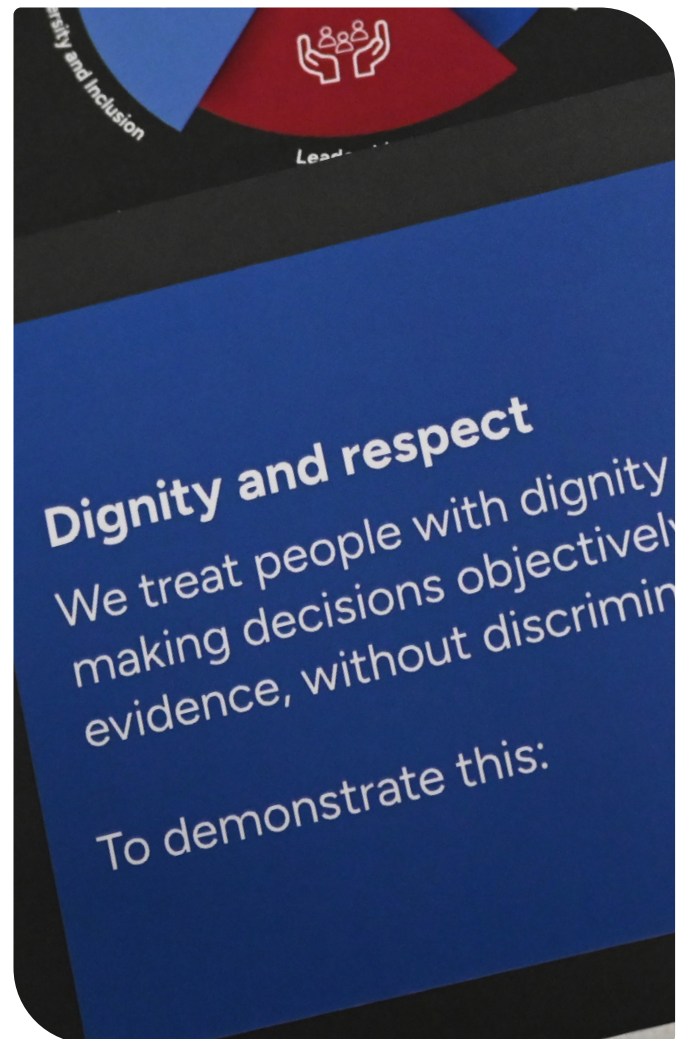
Disciplinary and Grievances

The Service has continued to actively promote its 'speaking up' routes to ensure all staff know how to raise concerns and report poor behaviour, via a range of internal channels and an external, independent reporting service.

There were 8 formal discipline cases during this year, a significant reduction when compared to 19 last year. 75% involved operational staff, all were male and 38% were from the 46-55 age bracket. There were 5 grievances raised during the year compared to 9 last year. 80% of grievances were raised by Wholetime staff and of all staff submitting grievances, 20% were female, 80% were male. Overall, 40% were in the 36-45 age bracket.

Maintaining a respectful workplace

The number of formal cases related to bullying and harassment remains extremely low. Due to the small number, we do not report data by protected characteristics to protect individual confidentiality. Importantly, no concerns or patterns have been identified that suggest any group of staff is being unfairly affected.



Gender Pay Gap

As at 31 March 2025

As an employer with 250 or more employees, we have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 to publish gender pay gap information relating to our employees. We must publish this information on our external website and a dedicated Government website: gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk.

The gender pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between men and women in a workforce. There are six calculations as follows:

1. Mean gender pay in hourly pay – the percentage difference between the mean average hourly rates of men and women's pay.
2. Median gender pay gap in hourly pay – the percentage difference between the midpoints in the ranges of men and women's pay.
3. Mean bonus gender pay gap⁹
4. Median bonus gender pay gap⁹
5. Proportion of men and women receiving a bonus payment⁹
6. Proportion of men and women in each pay quartile – calculated by dividing employees into four even groups according to their pay. The upper quartile with the highest level of pay and the lower quartile with the lowest levels of pay.

All staff who were deemed to be full pay relevant employees at 31 March 2025 are included. The figures are based on established contracted posts within the Service and include Wholetime / On-Call Firefighter dual roles and secondary employment contracts.

The salaries of all operational staff (Wholetime, On-Call and Fire Control) are established within the "Grey Book" (national terms and conditions) and are standard throughout the UK Fire and Rescue Service. Support staff salary levels are based upon a job description formally evaluated for the role. Annual Pay awards are negotiated nationally.

For our On-Call employees, the average weekly working hours can vary significantly across this workforce group and drastically distort the calculations and so the nationally agreed basic fixed hourly rate of pay is used. It should also be noted that other Fire and Rescue Services may choose to calculate the hourly rate of On-Call and other employees differently and this should be taken into consideration if making direct comparisons.



⁹ We do not pay bonuses to staff and therefore do not provide calculations relating to points 3, 4 and 5 above.

Our Gender Pay Gap Figures

Mean Pay Gap

The mean pay gap has increased from last year's figure of 4.3%. Women on average earn 5.1% less than men in our organisation.

5.1%



Female

£18.11



Male

£19.08

Difference: £0.97 per hour

Median Pay Gap

The median pay gap shows the midpoint in the range of women's pay is 2.5% less than the midpoint in the range of pay for men, which is an increase from last year's figure of 2.2%.

2.5%



Female

£17.15



Male

£17.59

Difference: £0.44 per hour

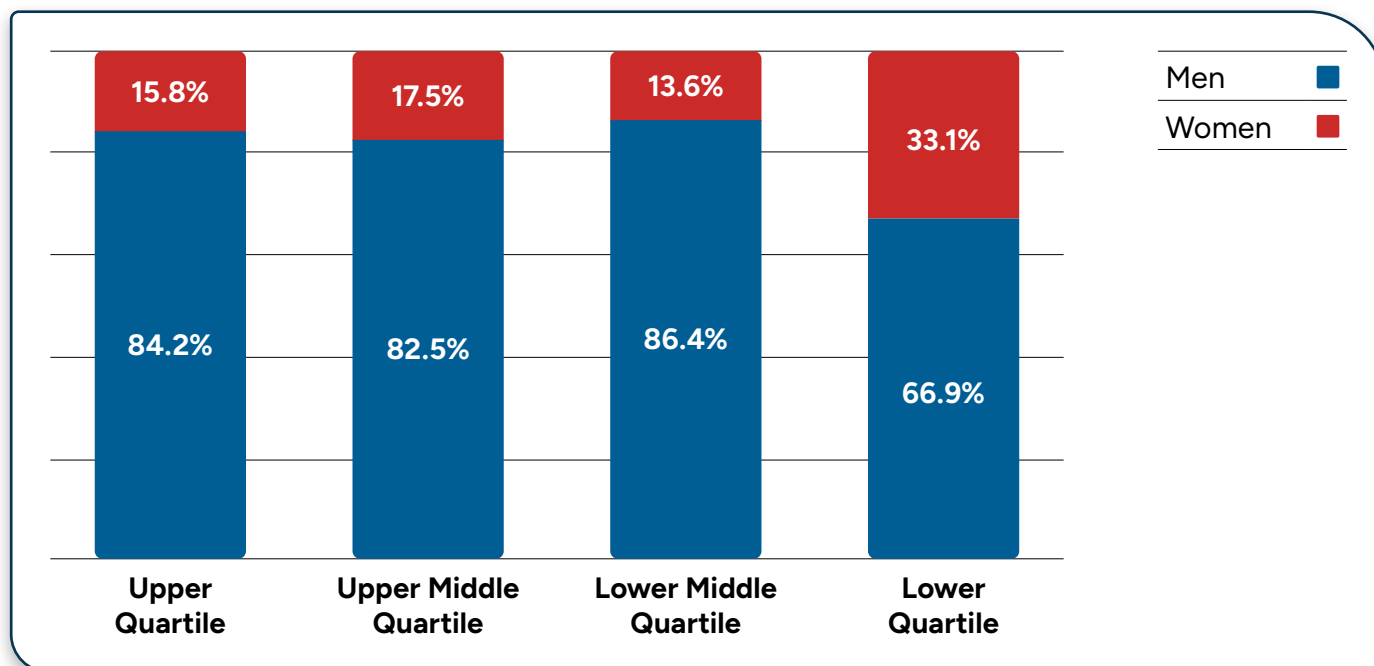
We believe the gender pay gap does not arise from paying men and women differently for the same work but is as a result of the roles in which they work and the salaries these roles attract.

Men and women in our organisation undertaking the same role are paid the same. However, there are more men than women in our workforce and essentially more men occupying higher level positions within the Service.

Our Gender Pay Gap Figures continued

Men and Women by Pay Quartiles

Our pay quartile data reflects our organisation's current workforce profile – there is a higher proportion of men compared to women.



This year, there's been a small drop in the percentage of women in the upper quartile. However, the proportion of women in the upper middle quartile, and in the top two quartiles combined, has increased. Looking at previous years, this continues a positive trend of improving representation in senior pay bands overall, even though progress in the very top quartile has been more variable:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Upper Quartile: | A slight decrease from 16.9% to 15.8% |
| Upper Middle Quartile: | An increase from 15.3% to 17.5% |
| Lower Middle Quartile: | A decrease from 16.4% to 13.6% |
| Lower Quartile: | The proportion of women has increased from 30.1% to 33.1% |

The change to the upper quartile reflects the gender profile of both leavers and new starters within the workforce, with leavers including senior operational female staff. In the 2025-26 financial year, the Service will undertake a significant wholetime recruitment campaign, presenting a valuable opportunity to promote the role to a wide range of applicants.

Our Gender Pay Gap Figures continued

Contributory Factors

There are some factors which may contribute to our gender pay gap:

- There is an ongoing imbalance between the number of men and women across the organisation, particularly in operational management roles where women remain underrepresented. This reflects a wider trend across the Fire and Rescue sector, where women are less likely to be in operational roles.
- In support functions, women are more commonly found in lower-paid roles such as administration. In contrast, specialist support roles that attract higher salaries, such as ICT, are predominantly occupied by men.
- Additionally, women are more likely to take career breaks to raise children or care for dependants. These breaks can impact career progression and contribute to the lower representation of women in senior positions across the organisation.



Closing the Gap and Our Future Equality Work

Over the next year we will focus on:

- **Evolving from the Culture & Ethics Steering Group to a Culture Board** – This will enable stronger leadership and provide enhanced strategic oversight to sustain our positive, inclusive and values-driven organisational culture.
- **Reviewing Progress Against Independent Culture Audit Recommendations** – A comprehensive review will help assess the impact of previous actions, identify areas for improvement and inform future priorities.
- **Launching a Respectful Workplace Training Programme** – Building on the momentum of the Service-wide training, this programme will reinforce positive behaviours and help embed a culture of respect and inclusion across all teams.
- **Developing a Diversity Framework** to set out clear actions to create a more inclusive, equitable and representative organisation by addressing barriers to diversity and embedding inclusive practices throughout the Service.
- **Empowering Staff Networks** – Continued support for staff networks will enable them to thrive and play a key role in shaping a workplace culture where everyone feels valued, heard and supported.

Conclusion

The data presented in this report highlights our ongoing commitment to promoting equality and building a workplace culture that is fair, respectful and inclusive.

We have seen encouraging signs of progress including our workforce becoming more representative of the communities we serve, with an improved balance across different backgrounds and experiences. We have also seen more staff choosing to share their equality information, suggesting greater trust and confidence in our workplace culture.

Whilst there are areas where further progress is needed, we remain focused on identifying and addressing these so people are more likely to want to work with us and, when they do, they will feel empowered to perform at their best and reach their full potential. We remain committed to monitoring our efforts to improve workforce diversity and will continue to build on the positive momentum already achieved.

This report will inform our future actions and help ensure that we continue to meet our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty: to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Further information can be found on our website: www.hwfire.org.uk. The Service can also be contacted at info@hwfire.org.uk.

If you would like a paper copy of the report, or require it in an alternative format, please contact us on the details above.

Appendix

Workforce Equality Data 2024-25

In analysing our workforce data, secondary contracts are included to reflect the workforce data submitted to the MCLG as part of our annual Fire Statistics return.

| Age | Number | % | Comparison to 2024 |
|--|--------|-------|----------------------------|
| 17 – 24 | 55 | 7.3% | Increase (2024 – 6.2%) |
| 25 – 35 | 228 | 30.2% | Increase (2024 – 28.7%) |
| 36 – 45 | 225 | 29.8% | Increase (2024 – 29.7%) |
| 46 – 55 | 183 | 24.3% | Decrease (2024 – 25.8%) |
| 56 – 65 | 59 | 7.8% | Decrease (2024 – 9.3%) |
| 66+ | 4 | 0.5% | Increase (2024 – 0.4%) |
| Disability | Number | % | Comparison to 2024 |
| Disability | 25 | 3.3% | Increase (2024 – 2.0%) |
| No disability declared | 729 | 96.7% | Decrease (2024 – 98.0%) |
| Ethnicity | Number | % | Comparison to 2024 |
| Asian/Asian British: Indian | 2 | 0.3% | Same (2024 – 0.3%) |
| Asian: Other background | 1 | 0.1% | Increase (2024 – 0.0%) |
| Black/Black British: Black African | 1 | 0.1% | Increase (2024 – 0.0%) |
| Black/Black British: Black Caribbean | 1 | 0.1% | Same (2024 – 0.1%) |
| Black: Other background | 2 | 0.3% | Same (2024 – 0.3%) |
| Mixed/Multiple Ethnic: Other | 8 | 1.1% | Increase (2024 – 0.9%) |
| Mixed/Multiple Ethnic: White & Black African | 1 | 0.1% | Same (2024 – 0.1%) |
| Mixed/Multiple Ethnic: White & Black Caribbean | 5 | 0.7% | Same (2024 – 0.7%) |
| White: English/Welsh/Scottish/N. Irish/British | 691 | 91.6% | Decrease (2024 – 92.0%) |
| White: Irish | 1 | 0.1% | Increase (2024 – 0.0%) |
| White: Other | 20 | 2.7% | Increase (2024 – 2.2%) |
| Not disclosed | 21 | 2.8% | Decrease (2024 – 3.4%) |

Appendix

Workforce Equality Data 2024-25 continued

| Ethnicity by Work Group | Fire Control | On-Call | Wholetime | Support | Total 24-25 | Comparison to 2024 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|---------|-----------|---------|-------------|------------------------|
| Asian or Asian British | 0.0% | 0.3% | 0.0% | 1.3% | 0.4% | Increase (2024 – 0.3%) |
| Black or Black British | 0.0% | 0.6% | 0.0% | 1.3% | 0.5% | Increase (2024 – 0.4%) |
| Mixed or Multiple Ethnicities | 3.3% | 1.8% | 2.1% | 1.3% | 1.9% | Increase (2024 – 1.7%) |
| Other Ethnic Groups | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | Same (2024 – 0.0%) |
| White: British and Irish | 96.7% | 89.9% | 95.4% | 89.3% | 92% | Same (2024 – 92%) |
| White: Other White Ethnic Groups | 0.0% | 4.5% | 0.8% | 2.0% | 2.7% | Increase (2024 – 2.2%) |
| Not disclosed (Inc prefer not to say) | 0.0% | 3.0% | 1.7% | 4.7% | 2.8% | Decrease (2024 – 3.4%) |

| Religion or Belief | Number | % | Comparison to 2024 |
|--------------------|--------|-------|-------------------------|
| Buddhism | 0 | 0.0% | Same (2024 – 0.0%) |
| Christian | 268 | 35.5% | Increase (2024 – 34.8%) |
| Hindu | 1 | 0.1% | Same (2024 – 0.1%) |
| Jewish | 0 | 0.0% | Same (2024 – 0.0%) |
| Muslim | 2 | 0.3% | Increase (2024 – 0.1%) |
| No religion | 253 | 33.6% | Increase (2024 – 33.1%) |
| Not disclosed | 209 | 27.7% | Decrease (2024 – 29.3%) |
| Other religion | 8 | 1.1% | Increase (2024 – 1.0%) |
| Prefer not to say | 12 | 1.6% | Increase (2024 – 1.3%) |
| Sikh | 1 | 0.1% | Same (2024 – 0.1%) |

Appendix

Workforce Equality Data 2024-25 continued

| Sex | Number | % | Comparison to 2024 |
|--------|--------|-------|----------------------------|
| Female | 156 | 20.7% | Increase (2024 – 19.9%) |
| Male | 598 | 79.3% | Decrease (2024 – 80.1%) |

| Sex by Work Group | Fire Control | On-Call | Whole time | Support |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Female | 60.0% (2024 – 57.7%) | 10.4% (2024 – 9.2%) | 9.3% (2024 – 11.3%) | 54.0% (2024 – 54.2%) |
| Male | 40.0% (2024 – 42.3%) | 89.6% (2024 – 90.8%) | 90.7% (2024 – 88.7%) | 46.0% (2024 – 45.8%) |

| Sexual Orientation | Number | % | Comparison to 2024 |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|----------------------------|
| Gay / Lesbian / Bisexual | 22 | 2.9% | Increase (2024 – 2.5%) |
| Heterosexual | 532 | 70.6% | Increase (2024 – 69.4%) |
| Not disclosed | 200 | 26.5% | Decrease (2025 – 28.1%) |

