

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No. 5

MEETING: HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

4th October 2021

**SUBJECT: DIVERSIFICATION OF TRAINEE FIREFIGHTER RECRUITS COURSES
(2018-2021)**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, / CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CLERK TO
THE AUTHORITY), FINANCE DIRECTOR AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides information following a request made by the Chair at July's HR Committee for data outlining the diversification of each firefighter recruits training programme completed since whole time recruitment resumed in 2018.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For a number of years Fire and Rescue Services across the UK have found diversifying the workforce to be a challenge. Whilst Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) has a long-standing commitment to diversifying the workforce through inclusive workforce campaigns, the ability to attract a diverse workforce remains a national challenge. TWFRS has had relative success across the recruitment of all roles, as we strive to recruit people that represent the communities we serve, whilst ensuring we attract the highest quality of candidates as future employees.

3. DIVERSIFICATION OF FIREFIGHTER RECRUITS COURSES

- 3.1 Following a period of approximately ten years after having to defer recruitment activity due to austerity measures, the Service recommenced its whole time firefighter recruitment campaign in 2018. This first campaign was conducted as a collaborative exercise with regional colleagues which included County Durham and Darlington and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Services. The campaign resulted in 22 trainees successfully passing the October 2018 course to commence employment as part of the service's operational workforce. The diversification* breakdown for this cohort is;

	October 2018
Gender	
Male	19
Female	3
Ethnicity	
White – British	21
Mixed - White And Asian	1
Mixed - White And Black African	
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	
Asian Or Asian British – Bangladeshi	
Other White Background	
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	20
Gay	1
Lesbian	
Bisexual	
Prefer Not to Say	1

- 3.2 In September 2019 a further cohort of trainees commenced their training with and passed the course to become operational in January 2020. The diversification* of this cohort is;

	September 2019
Gender	
Male	13
Female	
Ethnicity	
White – British	12
Mixed - White And Asian	
Mixed - White And Black African	1
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	
Asian Or Asian British – Bangladeshi	
Other White Background	
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	12
Gay	
Lesbian	
Bisexual	1
Prefer Not to Say	

- 3.3 In April 2020 another cohort of trainees commenced their training in a Covid secure format to become operational in August 2020. The diversification* of this group of trainees is;

	April 2020
Gender	
Male	22
Female	3
Ethnicity	
White - British	24
Mixed - White And Asian	1
Mixed - White And Black African	
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	
Asian Or Asian British - Bangladeshi	
Other White Background	
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	24
Gay	
Lesbian	
Bisexual	
Prefer Not to Say	
Disability	
Disability declared	1

- 3.4 In September 2020 a second cohort of Trainee Firefighters commenced a Covid19 secure training course and 18 successfully passed the course to become operational in December 2020. The diversification* of this cohort is;

	September 2020
Gender	
Male	17
Female	1
Ethnicity	
White - British	17
Mixed - White And Asian	
Mixed - White And Black African	
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	
Asian Or Asian British - Bangladeshi	
Other White Background	1
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	18
Gay	
Lesbian	
Bisexual	
Prefer Not to Say	

- 3.5 In October 2020 the Service commenced a new campaign to recruit trainee firefighters for a course commencing April 2021. Following a review of previous campaigns the service elected to progress its recruitment campaign in isolation rather than in partnership with regional colleagues. In April 2021 a third cohort of Trainee firefighters commenced a Covid secure training course. A total of 23 recruits successfully completed the course to become operational in August 2021.

The diversification* of this course is;

	April 2021
Gender	
Male	19
Female	4
Ethnicity	
White - British	22
Mixed - White And Asian	
Mixed - White And Black African	
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	
Asian Or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1
Other White Background	
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	22
Gay	
Lesbian	1
Bisexual	
Prefer Not to Say	
Disability	
Disability declared	1

- 3.6 In April the Service commenced a new campaign to recruit trainee firefighters for a course scheduled to commence on 27th September 2021. In line with the lifting of the majority of Covid restrictions the Service has been able to significantly increase course capacity and has made 36 offers of employment with the following diversity*;

	September 2021
Gender	
Male	30
Female	6
Ethnicity	
White - British	31
Mixed - White And Asian	1
Mixed - White And Black African	
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	1
Asian Or Asian British - Bangladeshi	
Other White Background	
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	32
Gay	
Lesbian	
Bisexual	2
Prefer Not to Say	2
Disability	
Disability declared	1

- 3.7 Combining all the statistical diversification* information for each of the courses detailed above can be represented below as a cumulative summary;

	Total
Gender	
Male	120
Female	17
Ethnicity	
White - British	127
Mixed - White And Asian	3
Mixed - White And Black African	1
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	1
Asian Or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1
Other White Background	1
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	128
Gay	1
Lesbian	1
Bisexual	3
Prefer Not to Say	3
Disability	
Disability declared	3

Recruiting for the trainee firefighter courses from 2018 through to 2021 has provided the service with an additional 17 female operational firefighters, 17 individuals who consider their ethnicity to be other than white-British, 5 individuals who consider themselves to have a sexual orientation other than heterosexual and 3 individuals who consider themselves to have a disability.

* The diversification data contained in this report is based solely on the declarations made by candidates. It is not mandatory for candidates to declare every applicable protected characteristic and subsequently this creates disproportion in some of the information the service has recorded about each individual.

4 DIVERSIFICATION ACTIVITIES

- 4.1 The service considers diversification of its workforce to be a continuous and evolving journey and the activities it undertakes will continue to develop and strengthen with each recruitment campaign. This is underpinned by the creation of the new Inclusion Manager post whose objective is to advise the service in its understanding of both workforce experience and community engagement in relation to promoting the service as an employer which directly supports the Inclusion pillar of our TWFRS 2025 Vision.
- 4.2 The information in this report should be considered alongside the Annual Equality Data and gender Pay Gap Report, which appears elsewhere on the Committee's agenda for its meeting on 4 October 2021 and provides a very comprehensive set of data about the composition of the entire workforce.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 Risk management has been adopted throughout the campaign to date and will continue to be monitored throughout.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Ongoing Firefighter recruitment is funded by a specific budget as part of the Service's financial management arrangements.

7 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment and Adverse Impact Assessments have been undertaken at each stage of the current recruitment campaign and will continue to be reviewed throughout.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The HR Committee is requested to:
- a) Note the contents of this report;
 - b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned background papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- N/A