

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Service**
Creating the Safest Community



Annual Equality Data and Gender Pay Gap Report

2020-2021

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Our Equality Commitment

Welcome to Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority's Annual Equality Data and Gender Pay Gap Report for 2020/21

At Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of the services we provide to our communities.

Delivering services that meet the needs of our communities through a workforce that is committed, representative and engaged is paramount to achieving our vision of 'Creating the Safest Community'.

As a team, we strive to ensure equality is embedded across the whole organisation by continuously promoting inclusive principles, through the work of our elected members, our leadership teams, our partners and our exceptional employees and volunteers. We see equality as a fundamental part of each of our core values.

Our aim is to deliver a service that is innovative, a service that is transparent and inclusive, and a service that embraces the diversity of our communities. To achieve these aims, we work hard together to remove inequalities, eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity through positive working relationships between our workforce and our communities.

The Service had to rapidly evolve and adapt to ensure that we protect our staff and volunteers whilst maintaining the service delivery that Partners and the Community of Tyne and Wear expect from us as an Emergency Service in the face of a global pandemic outbreak.

The Service's ability to respond with partners to the pandemic was based on a combination of strong industrial relationships with our representative bodies, and the unequivocal flexibility of our serving and retired staff members, having a resilient 'can do' approach. Added to this, our numerous support departments have worked above and beyond to enable this Service to function effectively in unprecedented times.

We want to continually ensure that the services we provide are accessible to everyone and that we have a workforce that reflects the unique diversity of Tyne and Wear's communities. As a Service we are on a journey of continuous improvement and we would appreciate any comments that you may have in relation to this report.

In writing this report, I can confirm that the published information contained within it is accurate.



Chris Lowther
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Clerk to Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

Introduction

The Annual Equality Data Report and Gender Pay Gap Report provides data and information about our employees and the people who we provide a service to within Tyne and Wear. The findings enable us to identify equality priorities and development areas which inform our equality objectives.

This combined report also helps us to ensure we are meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which require us to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics and
- foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Public authorities are required to publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the PSED annually. Data and information has been collated for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. The Authority is also required to publish Gender Pay Gap data under The Equality Act 2010 (specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 and for this, the data is collated for a snapshot at 31 March 2021.

We actively work towards eliminating inequalities, discrimination, harassment and victimisation by promoting equality of opportunity and fostering positive working relations through our work within equality, diversity and inclusion. We strive to ensure that the service we provide is accessible to everyone and that we have a workforce that reflects the diversity of Tyne and Wear's communities.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) undertakes a regular, formal inspection programme against which our Service is assessed. The programme and framework focuses on three main themes:

- how effective each Fire and Rescue Service is at preventing, protecting against, and responding to fire and other risks;
- whether the Fire and Rescue Service provides value for money; and
- how well the Fire and Rescue Service looks after its people and ensures fairness and diversity.

On our last assessment in 2018-19, we were confirmed as a "Good" service, across each of the three inspection pillars of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People

The HMI also published a national report 'The State of Fire and Rescue in England 2020' summarising the finding from all inspections. The report highlighted that, across England, there continues to be a lack of gender and race diversity in fire and rescue services. Minority groups still feel excluded from entering the sector or progressing due to cultural barriers. Figures from March 2020 show that only 17.3 percent of the 44,595 staff in fire and rescue services were

female. Only 5.1 percent of staff were from a minority ethnic group, and the percentage of black firefighters is even lower, although there has been some slight recent improvement. The HMICFRS will continue to assess what services are doing to improve their diversity and equality. Within this national context, we have developed an action plan to continually review our progress, in preparation for future inspections.

Full report available on this link - [State of Fire and Rescue - The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2020 \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/state-of-fire-and-rescue-2020/)

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Equality Developments in 2020/21

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is central to our culture, behaviours and core values. This is delivered through the Service's strategic plans, specifically the Strategic Community Safety Plan supported through our Leadership Bond.

From March 2020, the Service adapted its service delivery to meet the challenges of the global pandemic and government lockdown rules. We adapted our working practices to enable the Fire Service to continue to provide a service and respond to incidents.

Many of the support services departments continued to deliver their service by the enhanced home/agile working practices. We played a key role in supporting the community of Tyne and Wear and partners, to help the most vulnerable people in our area. We provided support with PPE delivery to medical facilities, supported our NHS colleagues with running the testing and vaccination programme and delivered food parcels to the most vulnerable in our community.

Throughout the challenges posed by the pandemic, our strategies and leadership bond enabled our employees and managers to continue to deliver a service demonstrating the behaviours that supports our core values.

Our elected Fire Authority Members are also supported with understanding the Service's core values. The Service ensures the strategies, plans and processes we use enhance the delivery of our vision and embeds equality, diversity and inclusion within our Service and community.

We have made positive progress to further diversify the workforce, particularly through Operational Firefighters and Corporate Staff recruitment. The Service ensures diversity has continued to enhance our workforce; and by developing talent of existing employees, we have provided development opportunities that benefit both individuals and the Service. Our Community Volunteers support employees in the delivery of fire safety messages and assist our Community Advocates in their work with community groups.

Our positive culture and active promotion has continuously improved, helping to embed equality and diversity in everything we do. The feedback from the previous report has allowed us to focus on our equality outcomes, challenging us to improve upon an already impressive body of achievement in this field and will help to shape our priorities and set the direction of travel going forward.

Following the level 3 Disability Confident Leader Award in August 2019 (insert DATE), the Service has lead the way for employers to think differently about disability and take action on how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people. As a Leader, we have collaborated with our local businesses and have recently validated the application for North East Ambulance Service to undertake the Disability Confident Leader self-assessment.

The Service continues to support communities, creating an inclusive workplace by maintaining our Stonewall Diversity, Women in the Fire Service and the Asian Fire Service Association Champion memberships. Such national membership highlights our consistent and continuous improvement to diversity within our workforce.

Actively leading equality, diversity and inclusion in our workforce and communities highlights a range of benefits and will help us to further improve diversity within our sector.

Our long history of collaboratively working with Partner Organisations is a key aspect of our continuous improvement drive towards all areas. We actively promote and enhance diversity, through supporting and attending events such as Pride, The Girls Network, Diwali and the Mela. The events have been adapted to meet the restrictions, with most events being on line. This, in turn, has made events more accessible to more employees and reaching a wider audience.

The introduction of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 promoted collaborative working with other emergency services sharing best practice in all areas of health and wellbeing.

This year also saw the continued support for employees within our four employee network groups; Disability, LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Gender and BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic). The network groups work to champion our ongoing commitment to greater employee involvement in the decision-making process and further increase personal development opportunities.

We continued to demonstrate our commitment to equality and inclusion with the BAME and LGBT network groups both hosting on line awareness conferences event to promote the group, encourage membership and to gain a greater understanding of underrepresented groups and the protective characteristic they represent.

Building upon this, we continued to develop partnership and collaboration between Emergency Services and stakeholders, creating a multi-agency approach to equality to support shared delivery of key community safety themes at events and initiatives.

We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our employees both physically and mentally. Evidence has shown that providing high quality health promotion to employees leads to positive attitudes about workplace equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Occupational Health Manager and Welfare Manager are trained Mental Health First Aid trainers (MHFA). A series of MHFA courses are being delivered across the Service to develop our managers to support their staff with mental health issues. To aid individuals the Occupational Health and Human Resources functions, work in collaboration to successfully return to and/or remain at work. Wellbeing sessions are delivered to all employees providing a safe and neutral setting for individuals to voice any concerns they may have.

As part of the Better Health at Work Award, Occupational Health organised and delivered campaigns across the workforce. We achieved Gold level and we are working toward obtaining continuing excellence. These campaigns included:

- Every Mind Matters
- Hand, Face, Space
- Alcohol Awareness
- National Walking Month
- One you
- World Mental Health Day – Time to Talk
- Home Working Health

Our Trauma Support Team continues to support our employees via teams, to deal with the difficult and harrowing incidents they encounter during their firefighting activities.

Work Force Data

Throughout the year, the Service has taken a more evolved approach to the collection of equality data to encourage and allow employees to identify themselves with more descriptive and relevant terms.

Our employee management information system enables employees to update their own personal information using a self-service system. All employees have access to the system so enable them to amend their own data whenever they want. All employees have been encouraged to declare and update their characteristics on the self-service system.

In compiling this report, the Fire Service has used the approved head count of 839 employees as the baseline comparator, as of 31 March 2021.

Each characteristic is reported below:

Steve makes in to charts

Gender

Row Labels	Count 2020/21	2019/20
Female	199	23%
Male	634	77%
Grand Total	833	Same %

Age

Row Labels	Count 2020/21	2019/20
17-24	27	22
25-35	129	118
36-45	290	283
46-55	289	325
56-65	95	89
66+	3	3
Grand Total	833	840

Sexual Orientation

Row Labels	Count of Sexual Orientation Description 2020/21	2019/20
Bi	2	1
Gay	6	7
Heterosexual	725	704
Lesbian	6	6
Prefer Not To Say	88	116
Prefer To Use My Own Term (Add To Notes)	5	6
Not stated	1	0
Grand Total	833	

Disability

Row Labels	Count of Disability 2020/21	2019/20
N	510	491
Not Stated	292	314
P	7	7
Y	24	28
Grand Total	833	

Religion

Row Labels	Count of Religion Description 2020/21	2019/20
Athiest	149	152
Buddha	3	2
Christianity	358	350
Hindu	1	1
Islam	3	3
None	132	90
Not Stated	3	45
Other; Please Specify	20	20
Prefer Not To Say	155	167
Spiritual	9	10
Grand Total	833	

Ethnicity

Row Labels	Count of Ethnic Origin Description 2020/21	2019/20
Arab	2	2
Asian Or Asian British - Indian	1	1
Asian Or Asian British - Pakistani	2	2
Black Or Black British - African	1	1
Black Or Black British - Caribbean	1	1
Gypsy Or Traveller	1	1
Mixed - White And Asian	5	3
Mixed - White And Black African	2	2
Mixed - White And Black Caribbean	1	1
Not Known	3	4
Other Asian Background	2	1
Other Mixed Background	2	2
Other White Background	5	5
Prefer Not To Say	26	30
White - British	775	783
White - Other	1	0
Not stated	3	0
Grand Total	833	

Authority Members

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (TWFA) is the democratically accountable body that oversees the activities of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS). The Authority is comprised of 17 members, 16 of which are elected members, nominated by the five constituent councils of Tyne and Wear, the seventeenth being the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria. Fourteen members of the Authority have provided their equality data:

Row Labels	Count of age group	
16-25	1	5.88%
26-35	1	5.88%
36-45	3	17.65%
46-55	4	29.41%
56+	5	29.41%
Not stated	3	17.65%
Grand Total	17	

Row Labels	Count of Sexual Orientation	
Bisexual	1	5.88%
Gay	1	5.88%
Heterosexual	12	70.59%
Not stated	3	17.65%
Grand Total	17	

Row Labels	Count of Ethnicity	
Not stated	3	17.65%
White British	13	76.47%
White Irish	1	5.88%
Grand Total	17	

Row Labels	Count of Religion/Faith	
Atheist	4	23.53%
Christian	6	35.29%
Humanist	1	5.88%
None	2	11.76%
None declared	1	5.88%
Not stated	3	17.65%
(blank)		
Grand Total	17	

Row Labels	Count of Disability	
No	14	82.35%
Not stated	3	17.65%
(blank)		
Grand Total	17	

Row Labels	Count of Gender	
Female	4	23.53%
Male	10	58.82%
Not stated	3	17.65%
(blank)		
Grand Total	17	

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Our approach to Gender Pay Gap Reporting

In addition to the Public Sector Equality Duty reporting requirements, the Authority is also required to publish Gender Pay Gap data under The Equality Act 2010 (specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

The gender pay gap differs from equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. The gender pay gap shows the differences in the average pay between men and women.

For the purposes of gender pay reporting, the definition of who counts as an employee is defined in the Equality Act 2010, in this case all our employees and volunteers. The information is a snapshot on 31 March 2021. Our report includes the following calculations:

- The mean pay gap
- The median pay gap
- The proportion of males and female employee in each salary quartile band
- The mean bonus pay gap
- The median bonus pay gap
- The proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment.

Following a review of the guidance, detachments and over time payment are included. For the purposes of this report, ordinary pay includes the following information before tax and any deductions for employee pension contributions:

- Basic pay (pay attributed to responsibilities of the role of which is applied equally)
- Allowances (additional responsibility over and above the basic responsibilities of the role)
 - Instructors Allowance
 - Continuous Professional Development
 - Flexible Duty Officer Rota Allowance
 - Strategic Rota Allowance
 - Day Crewing Close Call Allowance
 - Essential Car User Allowance
 - Urban Search and Rescue Allowance
 - Detachment and Acting Up Payments.

For the purposes of calculating the hourly rate of our employees the following hours per week have been utilised:

- Employees in roles governed by the 'National Joint Council for local government services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service', (The 'Green Book') - 37 hours
- Firefighter to Watch Manager roles conditioned to Fire Stations - 42 hours
- Firefighter to Area Manager day shift conditioned roles - 42 hours
- Firefighters aligned to the Day Crewing Close Call system - 52.87hrs
- Officers conditioned to the Flexible Duty Rota – 48 hours
- Area Manager roles conditioned to the Executive Rota - 48 hours
- Principal Officers conditioned to the Executive Rota Continuous Cover pattern - 78 hrs.

Mean and Median pay gap

At 31 March 2021, we employed a total of 833 employees however due the reporting requirements, the actual number of employees who were paid in March 2021 was 840; 197 (23%) were female and 643 (77%) were male.

The mean pay gap is 13.11% (*15.36%), equating to an hourly rate difference of £2.08 (*£2.46), and the median pay gap is 1.21% (*10.18%).

To explore the gender pay gap difference, further analysis of the data is required.

Grey Book Employees	No Employees	Mean	Mean Pay Gap
Male	542	£15.93	-1.13% (*0.06%)
Female	55	£16.11	
Grey Book Employees - Control	No Employees	Mean	Mean Pay Gap
Male	8	£14.55	0.27% (*0.18%)
Female	26	£14.52	
Green Book Employees	No Employees	Mean	Mean Pay Gap
Male	93	£15.46	19.20% (*18.26%)
Female	116	£12.49	
Total	No Employees	Mean	Mean Pay Gap
Male	643	£15.85	13.11% (*15.36%)
Female	197	£13.77	

* Figures relate to previous year.

For all of our Green Book roles, a grade structure that uses the National Joint Council Pay Scales. This year has seen a decrease in the mean pay gap for these roles, this can be attributed to amendments to department structures and a number increases in grades for current post holders arising from increased responsibilities.

The Green Book pay gap can be attributed to the number of women employed in lower paid roles. 43% (55%) of our female Green Book employees are paid at the lower end of our pay points (Scale 3 and below), these include administration, cleaning and catering roles. The data has shown that our pay gap is more evident in our Green Book (corporate) employees, which has increased slightly in comparison with the previous year.

The data has shown that our Grey Book (Operational) workforce has a negative gender pay gap employees with our females being paid slightly more than males (1.13%). This is attributed to promotion of females into senior roles and the recruitment of Firefighters who are paid at the development rate during their training and development.

With women occupying only 16% of higher level management posts, compared to 84% occupied by male employees, this helps to explain the gender pay gap with in our Service.

Salary Quartile Bands

The quartile distribution detailed below gives an indication of the proportion of females and males and in each quartile band.

	Female	% Female	Male	% Male
Top	34	16% (*13%)	176	84% (*87%)
Mid Upper	31	15% (*17%)	179	88% (*83%)
Mid Lower	42	20% (*13%)	168	80% (*87%)
Lower	90	43% (*52%)	120	57% (*48%)

* Figures relate to previous year.

The high quartile salary band consists of 84% male employees, indicating they are the highest earners within the organisation. The composite of the salary bands for these employees are disproportionate to non-operational roles due to allowances attributed to Grey Book operational roles, resulting in our operational employees being paid at a higher rate of pay from entry (Firefighter) level through to strategic leaders (Chief Fire Officer).

The lowest quartile has seen a shift in the % between Male and Female compared to the previous report. This can be attributed to a number of Firefighter recently recruited moving from development to competent pay.

Recent recruitment of women into management roles has made positive progress to further diversify our workforce and encouraged others to join the Service from other Fire and Rescue Services.

Our progressive approach to equality and inclusion is not solely measured by equality data, but also in our approach to continually improve our equality, diversity and inclusion activities.

Bonus Payments

We do not offer a bonus scheme and do not make bonus payments; therefore, the following calculations are not applicable:

- The mean bonus pay gap
- The median bonus pay gap
- The proportion of males receiving a bonus payment
- The proportion of females receiving a bonus payment

Retention - creating an inclusive workforce

Our commitment to equality and inclusion is central to our culture, behaviours and core values.

This is delivered through the Service's strategic plans, supported through our Leadership; which supports our employees, managers and Members in understanding the behaviours that enable our core values. The focus of our strategy and plan is to ensure that the process's we use enhance the delivery of our vision and embeds equality, diversity and inclusion within our service and community.

Leadership of equality, diversity and inclusion is set out in our Organisational Development Strategy with our Executive Leadership Team Champions. Our Senior Leadership Team are responsible for different strands of diversity, e.g. Diversifying our Workforce.

Network Groups

2020/21 saw the continued support for employees within our four employee network groups; Disability, LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Gender and BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic). Our network groups work to champion our ongoing commitment to greater employee involvement in the decision making process and further increase personal development opportunities.

The network groups aim to help the Service continue to improve our position with regard to equality and diversity and improve the position as an employer of choice, as it is important to ensure that the services TWFRS provide are reflective of the needs of all staff and of the wider community we serve.

With the introduction of on line meeting facilities, this gave a platform for our network groups to continue to meet with their members, run on line events. Using this different platform allowed more people to attend for different locations. Our fire crews attended the event from their station, therefore increasing the reach to the organisation.



The BAME Network was established in 2015 and was launched to provide advice and support to staff, the organisation and stakeholders on all BAME related matters.

This includes a diverse range of areas including how we support BAME staff, how we engage with our communities and how we strive to improve our understanding of the diverse make-up of Tyne and Wear.

In November 2020, the BAME network group lead on a joint Black History Month Virtual Event in collaboration with Northumbria Police. The guest speakers at the event were Cheron Inko-Tariah – Author of 'The power of staff networks' and Donna Chambers – Professor of Tourism, Sunderland University. Both spoke about their life experiences and how they have overcome bias and discrimination. The event was extremely well attended by emergency services across the North East. As this event was online, it made it more accessible to a large range of people, including 9 of our Stations Operational Crew dialing in to the event.

The group have recently published a visual Fire Safety Booklet, to enable any person of any ethnicity to understand safety in the home. The booklets have also been translated into other languages, including Arabic and French. They have also released fire safety in the home videos during the Chinese New Year in Cantonese and Mandarin.

During Interfaith Month in February 2021, the Network Group launched videos of faith leaders across the community for information and awareness. These included the following faiths; Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jewish, Catholic and Protestant.

Members of the Network group have attended many awareness and celebrations including:

- Faith Communities Virtual Event in collaboration with Northumbria Police
- Black History Month on line event with North East Ambulance Service and Northumbria Police
- BAME Women's Network Organisation
- Anti-slavery Awareness Session ran by International Community Organisation of Sunderland raising awareness of the Polish Community in Sunderland
- Let's Talk Black History Month present by the Asian Fire Service Association
- LGBT History Month Awareness Talk by North East Ambulance Service
- International Women Day Lunch and Learn
- Transgender Day of Visibility lunch and learn

Disability Network Group



TWFRS have a well-established Disability Staff Network Group (DNG) which reports to our wider Equality Committee. The group supports employees and visitors across the Service in respect of disability awareness, education, access, reasonable adjustment and general support as required.

In 2020/21, the DNG have been working closely with HR in assisting the creation of a Policy for Carers in the Service and continuation of encouraging disclosure, promotion of support and broadening our shared experiences through external engagement.

DNG have extended its external network to include the Disability Independent Advisory Group (DIAG) set up by South Tyneside Council (STC) which includes members from STC, Northumbria Police, New Hope North East and now TWFRS. This is a step forward for the group by sharing our joint experiences and understanding to develop a more inclusive and supportive workplace and culture.

DNG are currently working with our Learning and Development Multi-Media Technician and our ICT department to bring software into the Service which will improve the current interactive training packages which are produced by utilising a text-to-speech convertor. In essence, this software will read aloud any text (or alternative text) from the package to make this accessible all, particularly those who suffer visual impairments or reading disabilities. On a larger scale, this software will be able to be utilised outside of training packages and can be used on any digital body of text.

The DNG are committed to promoting a culture of awareness and support to those with disabilities; our HR Department and Occupational Health Unit have facilitated a range of reasonable adjustments which were applied to allow persons with disabilities to demonstrate their skills and attributes through recruitment, promotion and development processes.

Looking forward, DNG are looking to raise awareness of the chronic condition of endometriosis which affects approximately 1 in 10 women. This may include policy changes/creations and becoming an endometriosis friendly employer or even champion. By having this focus and direction, this not only supports active staff members who suffer from the condition (and their managers), this would also support potential female applicants to the Fire Service who may consider this condition as a barrier for employment in the Service. If the policies and status exist, this would potentially include an additional 1 in 10 females who suffer from the condition.

We continue to look for new networks and are hoping to become involved in a digital inclusion project for deafness shortly. This is being led by an Advanced Practitioner for Mental Health and Deafness from the NHS covering the North. This will involve stakeholders from Local Councils, Authorities and Services.

Gender Network Group



The GNG is continuing to contribute to and offer support in the development of the Menopause Guidance and Awareness due to be launched in 2020/21.

The Service continued to support the White Ribbon Campaign in partnership with Northumbria Police and The Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria. Two fire appliances are decorated with the White Ribbon logo, based at Sunderland and Newcastle community fire stations, to show our support for the campaign within the community. In October and November 2020 the service showed their support for the 16 days of action campaign raising awareness about why men must take a stand against violence towards women.

The Service continues to be an accredited organisation, supported by our Senior Leadership Team where the Chief Fire Officer signed the White Ribbon promise on behalf of the Service “a promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women”.

The Network Group ran a lunch and learn session on International Women’s Day, where Assistant Chief Fire Officer Lynsey McVay spoke about her journey from Firefighter through promotion to her current role. This event was in collaboration with Northumbria Police and North East Ambulance Service.

The Gender Network provides both female and male role models for the Service, primarily supporting staff but also acting as agents of positive change that will have lasting benefits to the community of Tyne and Wear.

LGBT+ Network Group



The LGBT+ Network Group aim to create an environment where people can be themselves at work, allowing them to perform at their very best. This means employees feeling able to bring their whole-selves to the workplace. It is recognised that sexual orientation can be a sensitive subject, which may prevent some individuals from 'coming out' at work and fully respect it's a personal choice to disclose such information.

The network group continue to demonstrate commitment to LGBT+ employees and wider community by continuing to be a 'Diversity Champion' member of Stonewall. The Service continues take part in the Workplace Equality Index (WEI) top 100 employers, to measure performance against other organisations and to celebrate achievements.

Over the past year, and the challenges experienced due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the network have ensured continued support to staff and their family members, providing confidential and practical support to a number of individuals and their family around LGBT+ issues. The staff network confidential and secure email address and the growing confidence in the network co-chairs has contributed towards this objective. This essential provision continues to form a significant and crucial part of the work in the coming year. This will also include work around mentoring and supporting our LGBT+ allies, as well as increased cross network working and collaboration both internally and externally. Examples being Black History Month and the NHS Business services authority discussing best practice. Cross network working and support was further cemented by the network chairs development day delivered internally with support from Learning and Organisational Development and staff from cross the service from numerous departments.

The network group works hard to promote the Service as a fully inclusive employer and service provider. Across the Service, the network group takes part in all types of engagement events supported by our LGBT+ Staff Network Group actively support LGBT+ visibility days. To mark IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia), members attended online training with NFCC Lunch and Learn and staff from across the service including Senior Officers made personal pledges of support to build a greater more inclusive organization. Trans awareness week was marked by staff members wearing epaulettes and on Trans day of visibility several members took part in an online learning session with the NFCC. During LGBT+ history month staff produced videos including a Vlog looking at two different LGBT+ journeys, attended online awareness with Report Out (Drew Daltons Organisation) and Newcastle Ravens RFC.

Although Newcastle Pride was a virtual event due to the pandemic the Service, the Network and Northern Pride joined forces to create a virtual 'Bring Your Own Breakfast' event to continue the long held tradition of hosting the Pride Blue Light Breakfast. The breakfast explored our LGBT+ journey and was well attended by both internal and external participants and proved to be incredibly successful. Breakfast was delivered to all operational watches and workshops staff on duty on the day as recognition that sometimes on duty staff are often unable to attend these celebrations due to the nature of their roles, this year has offered us a unique opportunity for our staff to join in the Pride Breakfast.

The network Twitter account has continued to grow and now has more than 700 followers. The use of social media again has been widespread and invaluable during lockdown.

Our LGBT+ Staff Network was also shortlisted in the LGBTQ+ NE awards for 2020, which unfortunately due to the Pandemic did not go ahead. In addition our Co-Chair James McKane has been shortlisted in the National Diversity Award 2021 in the Positive Role Model category.

Recruitment and Promotion

During 2020/21, we have been actively recruiting for permanent, temporary and fixed term posts within the Service. We promote our Service as an Employer of Choice, encouraging applicants from underrepresented groups to apply, across all recruitment campaigns, ranging from Firefighter, managerial roles to a variety of support roles.

Firefighter Recruitment

The recruitment of Firefighters is crucial to ensuring the effective management of operational deployment in line with budget and risk critical activities to support the delivery of the Strategic Community Safety Plan. Fire and Rescue Services from across the United Kingdom continue to face challenges in diversification of their workforce, in particular within operational roles, i.e. Firefighters. Since 2018 when Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service resumed Firefighter recruitment for the first time after a period of 9 years, we have continued to strive towards having a workforce that reflects the communities of which we serve. While we acknowledge that we have some way to go in achieving this aim, we are continue to develop plans on how we can attract candidates from diverse backgrounds.

Building on our successful recruitment of Wholetime Firefighters, the recruitment of people from under-represented groups remained at the forefront of our campaigns. The Communications Teams developed a joint promotional campaign that featured Firefighters from diverse backgrounds and these were widely promoted via social media.

We enabled perspective candidates to pre-register their interest in the roles prior to opening the application stage of the recruitment process. The pre-registration information was used to inform positive action activities.

From these campaigns the diversity of the Trainee Firefighters the diversity break down of under-represent groups are as follows:

- Sexual Orientation: 3.1% of applicants identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or in another way.
- Female: 12.2% were female.
- Ethnicity: 5.2% were from a BME background.

We are launching a further Firefighter recruitment campaign in autumn 2021. Pre-registration for our next campaign commenced in August 2021. 824 Individuals have currently registered their interest in future campaigns. The pre-registration information will be used to inform a positive action programme which is currently being developed.

Appointments and Promotion

Throughout 2020/21 we have recruited for various roles across all departments resulting in 48 new appointments and 62 internal promotions.

Applicant Information

Row Labels	Count of Applicant Gender
Female	442
Male	472
Unknown (blank)	4
Grand Total	918

Row Labels	Count of Age Range
16-24	95
25-35	300
36-45	250
46-55	208
56+	64
N/A	1
(blank)	
Grand Total	918

Row Labels	Count of Sexual Orientation And Desc
1 - Bi	23
2 - Gay	26
3 - Lesbian	17
4 - Heterosexual	813
5 - Prefer Not To Say	38
98 - Prefer To Use My Own Term (Add To Notes)	1
(blank)	
Grand Total	918

Row Labels	Count of Disabled
N	841
P	45
Y	32
(blank)	
Grand Total	918

Row Labels	Count of Religion Description
Athiest	113
Buddha	5
Christianity	407
Hindu	5
Islam	11
None	326
Other; Please Specify	8
Prefer Not To Say	32
Sikh	2
Spiritual	9
(blank)	
Grand Total	918

Row Labels	Count of Ethnic Origin Description
Asian Or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1
Asian Or Asian British - Indian	9
Asian Or Asian British - Pakistani	7
Black Or Black British - African	9
Black Or Black British - Caribbean	1
Chinese	1
Mixed - White And Asian	2
Mixed - White And Black African	2
Mixed - White And Black Caribbean	2
Other Asian Background	2
Other Black Background	2
Other Ethnic Group	1
Other Mixed Background	2
Other White Background	26
Prefer Not To Say	9
White - British	835
White Irish	7
(blank)	
Grand Total	918

Promotion Information

Age Range 2020/21	
Job Title Description	(Multiple Items)
Row Labels	Count of Age Range
16-24	0
25-35	10
36-45	33
46-55	18
56-65	1
66+	0
(blank)	
Grand Total	62

Gender 2020/21	
Row Labels	Count of Gender
Female	4
Male	58
(blank)	
Grand Total	62

Religion 2020/21	
Row Labels	Count of Religion/Belief
Athiest	12
Christian	1
Christianity	24
None	8
Prefer not to say	15
Spiritual	2
(blank)	
Grand Total	62

Ethnicity 2020/21	
Row Labels	Count of Ethnicity
Asian Or Asian British - Pakistani	1
Mixed	1
Mixed White and Asian	1
Not stated	1
Other Mixed Background	1
Prefer not to say	1
White British	56
(blank)	
Grand Total	62

Sexual Orientation 2020/21	
Row Labels	Count of Sexuality
Gay	1
Heterosexual	54
Not stated	1
Prefer not to say	6
(blank)	
Grand Total	62

Disability 2020/21	
Row Labels	Count of Disability
None	52
Not Stated	7
Prefer not to say	2
Yes	1
(blank)	
Grand Total	62

Training and Development Opportunities

The Learning and Development department continues to support all staff, to promote high performance and continuous improvement. Working collaboratively and inclusively, it ensures its people and their performance is the best it can. By supporting staff to acquire, maintain and continuously develop the appropriate technical and professional skills and underpinning knowledge specific to their role.

Key areas of focus for this period (and moving into the rest of 2021 & 2022) are:

Review of trainee course delivery and development of our trainers in the world of adult education.

Implementation of new competency recording system.

Preparation for the autumn HMICFRS inspection.

In our previous report, we explained the refinements made to the design of the PDR, our new approach to employee appraisal. The work will continue to ensure quality in relation to performance objective setting and conversations.

Competency Recording Matrix (CRM). Working in conjunction with an external provider, TWFRS ICT and L&D teams have designed and built a new, bespoke in-house competency recording system that will provide staff with a new way to document their aptitude against their Role Map and additional role related competencies.

We continue to contribute to national working groups, including management development and Incident Command. We look to help shape the approach to development across the fire sector as a whole.

This work has influenced pilot promotion process at Supervisory and Middle Manager levels in our Service; enabling the advancement of a number of personnel at Crew, Watch and Station Manager levels across the Service.

Gender Reassignment

We are unable to publish specific employee data to ensure anonymity. Members of our LGBT+ Network Group have continued to assist us in developing our policies, procedures and training in conjunction with our Gender Network Groups.

We have provided advice and guidance for managers and employees with the publication of our transgender policy and revised guidance.

This supports information in other Service policies such as the Equality and Diversity Policy and Dignity at Work Policy.

We continue to offer transgender awareness training to our employees. We have provided opportunities for employees, including members of the LGBT+ Network Group, to attend specialist transgender training, delivered by the LGBT charity Stonewall, in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of transgender issues.

In addition to this training we have also arranged, and facilitated, a Transgender awareness workshop for internal staff. We also actively supported Trans Awareness week, raising our Trans flag at Service Headquarters, and staff showed their support by displaying their Trans epaulettes.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Feedback from our employees has shown that our flexible approach has enabled them to continue to work in a rewarding career within Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. We currently have 6 employees who have taken maternity leave, 5 of those have returned and 1 who we expect to return to their role.

Shared Parental Leave is available to our employees, this enables eligible mothers, fathers, partners and adopters to choose how to share time off work to care for their child. The policy allows parents more flexibility in how to share the care of their child in the first year following birth or adoption. This provides a wider range of options for women, men and partners in managing the demands of both the workplace and home.

For the tenth consecutive year of compiling this data, 100% of women who have taken maternity leave within the reporting period have returned to their respective roles. This is very positive and can be attributed to our work-life balance policies and flexible working options, available to all employees. Our overall package supports employees to return to work with flexibility and balance.

Flexible working applications and success rates

The scheme of flexible hours for personnel forms part of the Employee Friendly Work/Life Balance policy, integral to the Authority's Diversity and Equality Policy. This is part of a range of areas including formal schemes of flexible working hours, job sharing, part-time working, term time working, seasonal working, home working and, in some instances, combinations of these arrangements, which are kept under constant review.

The ultimate aim of these schemes is to address the needs of personnel and the Authority in providing a service to the community that we serve. Within the period of 2020/21, 2 employees requested flexible working which was successfully implemented. These include 1 Operational and 1 Support Staff employee working various shift patterns and hours across a variety of roles.

Reasonable Adjustments

During 2020/21 our Health and Wellbeing team facilitated 22 alternate duties, phased return to work and/ or reasonable adjustment assessments, enabling employees to be present at work or return to work sooner following an absence or injury. Our experienced Health and Wellbeing team take a proactive approach to reasonable adjustments, with each individual assessed on a case by case basis and bespoke support provided.

To ensure that all employees and a managers have an understanding of reasonable adjustments, a flow chart has been published highlighting each person role. This include how access to work applications are conducted. Our employees have successfully completed these applications and their requirements have been implemented.

Grievances and Dismissals

There were 7 grievances recorded in 2020/21, which is a decrease in comparison to 15 recorded in 2019/20. These grievances included claims of discrimination and unfair treatment. Of these, 3 were upheld, 2 not upheld, 1 was resolved in another way and one which the outcome is not known yet. In September 2021, the Authority Members heard an appeal against a dismissal from March 2020, there was no change to the outcome.

Leavers from the Organisation

The Service collects and monitors leaver information enabling us to continue to address any possible equality imbalances within the workplace and ensures compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty requirements.

Our employee's views are important to us, with suggestions or feedback being considered to continually improve the Service. Leavers are invited to undertake a face to face exit interview with the Chief Fire Officer and to complete an online questionnaire which provide us with feedback reports.

Ethnicity

2020/21

Row Labels	Count of Ethnic Origin Description
	5
Not Known	1
Other White Background	1
Prefer Not To Say	1
White - British	74
(blank)	
Grand Total	82

Sexual Orientation

2020/21

Row Labels	Count of Sexual Orientation Description
	6
Heterosexual	68
Lesbian	1
Prefer Not To Say	6
Prefer To Use My Own Term (Add To Notes)	1
(blank)	
Grand Total	82

Disability Required

2020/21

Age Range

2020/21

Row Labels	Count of Age Range
16-24	2
25-35	10
36-45	6
46-55	47
56+	17
(blank)	

Grand Total	82
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Religion
2020/21

Row Labels	Count of Religion Description
	11
Athiest	11
Christianity	28
None	16
Other; Please Specify	3
Prefer Not To Say	13
(blank)	
Grand Total	82

Gender	
2020/21	
Row Labels	Count of Gender
Female	14
Male	68
(blank)	
Grand Total	82

Service User Data

After The Incident Survey (Domestic)

In 2020/21, 78 After the Incident Surveys (ATIS) were completed. Of those who completed the surveys the following data was recorded:

36% were male, 58% female and 6% provided no answer

Of those who stated their ethnicity 60% were White British, 9.33% British, 6.67% English,

1.33% White other, 2.67% said other and 20% provided no answer.

28.57% of respondents declared a disability, 66.23% didn't have a disability and 5.19% provided no answer.

Of those who stated their sexuality, 81.43% were heterosexual, 2.86% were gay, 7.14% were bisexual, 4.29% in another way, and 4.29% preferred not to say.

Results of our ATIS are fed into our Home Safety Checks (HSC) Targeting Strategy to ensure we are engaging with those who are identified as most vulnerable and at greater risk of fire.

Complaints

Receiving complaints is invaluable as it provides an opportunity for us to hear the views of the public and their experiences of the service. During 2020/21, we received 27 complaints which is a reduction of 2 when compared with 2019/20 and just under half, 48% were upheld following investigation. 2 of the 27 complaints received were anonymous, the same number as 2019/20, and only enough information was provided for 1 of the 2 anonymous complaints to be investigated.

2 appeals were received during 2020/21, as both complainants were dissatisfied with the outcome of their primary investigation and appealed the outcome decision to the Chief Fire Officer. As a result, 2 secondary investigations were conducted and the outcomes of both upheld the original investigation outcome. The appeal stage is the final stage of our complaint process however, a complainant can choose to raise their complaint with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO). During 2020/21 no LGO complaints were received.

The completion of our standard equality monitoring form is not compulsory and with no voluntary information received, analysis cannot be undertaken.

Fire Safety Visits by Ethnicity

The aim of the Fire Safety Department is to undertake a large programme of Engagement with the business community within Tyne and Wear. This engagement focuses on the risks within the built environment and not on the ethnicity of those that operate, own or use a certain premises type.

A large part of the usual ways of working for the department is face to face engagement, however due to the obvious restrictions brought about by the Covid pandemic the department had to embrace and developed new ways of working, which included remote Fire Safety Audits over the telephone, the use of new technology such as Teams and Zoom meetings and updating staff equipment to allow remote working to promote continued engagement.

The engagement we undertake is usually driven by the Services Risk Based Inspection Program, which assesses the known risks within the built environment to ensure our workload is directed to those most at risk or those most likely to be non-compliant. This year our workload was generated differently, we looked to engage with those premises who would be greatly impacted by the pandemic, this meant we focused largely on the care sector, schools and food suppliers.

In addition to this programmed work we also undertook a large program of engagement with those responsible for high rise residential premises to ensure that they were compliant following the Grenfell Tower Inquiry outcomes.

We continued to interact with our community via social media and by other means such as press releases and working closely with regional business groups and forums such as the Federation for Small Businesses, Better Business for All, the Growth Hub and North East Chamber of Commerce. These methods were especially important given the restrictions on visiting premises.

The activities of the Fire Safety Department that are delivered in accordance with the Service Enforcement and Engagement Policy, which is underpinned by the Regulators Code, to ensure that all enforcement action is delivered fairly and in all enforcement action is delivered fairly and in a transparent manner relative to the risk identified.

Community Engagement 2020/21

Prevention and Education Equality Update

Home Safety Check/Safe and Well delivery by TWFRS personnel

The Covid 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our prevention and education work over the reporting period – as a service we responded dynamically to the needs of our most vulnerable occupiers, but constant changes to risk and lockdown status, staff shortages and secondments to vital pandemic work in our vaccination centres, logistics cell and testing stations, has meant that the figures are not reflective of a usual year for TWFRS. During the pandemic, it was paramount to

HSC/S&W Checks carried out 20/21/ by TWFRS Personnel, Face to face or by telephone	4891
of which the household contains at least 1 person with at least 1 vulnerability or risk factor	186
of which the household contains at least 1 person 65+ and one disabled person - can be same person.	121
of which the household contains at least 1 person 65+ but no one classed as disabled	176
of which the household contains at all aged 65+ but at least 1 person classed as disabled	65
of which a member of the household has disclosed a mental health diagnosis	13

ensure frontline operational staff could continue to carry out their duties, shielded where possible from the risks of Covid – as such the crews HSC/S&W activity was minimised to include only post incident visits and high risk threats of arson.

Overall recording and reporting took some time to formalise during the period of the pandemic, and as such, many of our interactions with vulnerable people have been unable to be recorded in the usual way. As such the figures below give an indication of the contact had with some in our community, but there were an additional 3620 equipment issues during the reporting period, where key vulnerability information will not have been able to be recorded. Additionally, due to GDPR restrictions, the service no longer asks occupiers about their

race/ethnicity during the HSC/S&W process, therefore these figures are no longer able to be recorded.

Community Engagement Team update

As lockdown started the community engagement team gave initial support to the logistics cell, as the Service as a whole responded to the needs of the public following the coronavirus pandemic. The team quickly realised that although they were no longer physically able to visit groups that there was still a need to engage with the difficult to reach communities within the service area. People were spending more times in their homes where the potential risk of fire was increasing and there were less opportunities to communicate with them.

To overcome this hurdle the team developed their own set of literature using mainly illustrative pictures to convey fire safety messages. These were designed to target the hard to reach members of the various sectors. The team work with individuals who have limited language skills, for instance, those living with Dementia, those who have learning support needs, and those from ethnic communities where English is not their main language.

The team were able to distribute these electronically via our many partner organisations in all sectors of society, who were more than happy to share the information with their service users. The team have been able to reach many 1000s of people this way and convey the information to those who needed it most. This work continues as we look to translate the material into other languages to benefit the community.

Throughout the reporting period, we have worked with the Angelou Centre in Newcastle to collect food from the local food banks and distribute food and welfare parcels throughout Tyne and Wear to hundreds of vulnerable ladies from various ethnic backgrounds who are living in food poverty. This has been a vital and much needed service and will continue for the foreseeable future.

To support our communications, team the team have produced multiple information videos to convey many general fire safety messages which can be used on our social media platforms. They have also made information videos to coincide with specific multi-cultural celebration events such as Ramadan, Eid and Diwali, Valentine's Day and others. where people are likely to be cooking or lighting candles and where there could generally be an increase to the potential risk of fire in the home.

Engagement with all of our communities and partner organisations has continued through Zoom meetings and online fire safety talks. Where possible the team have been able to visit Mosques and Temples and drop-ins for refugees and asylum seekers. When face to face contact is not an option the team have maintained telephone and email contact. Many of our contacts within these organisations have been more than happy to record messages for us to share via our social media including making a compilation video for Inter Faith week and many other important events

We also worked with the Jack and Josephine project to make a film which was released externally which was aimed at delivering fire safety messages to young people with learning support needs. Throughout the lockdown the team have continued to keep strong contacts with our communities and have found innovative ways to ensure that fire safety messages reach those who need them.

Youth Engagement/Safeguarding updates

Our **Prince's Trust Team Programme** supports unemployed young people aged 16-25 into employment, training, education or volunteering. In 2020/2021 we engaged with young people from across Tyne and Wear for the first time by distilling the full Team Programme into a bespoke 4-week online course to support young people who felt isolated and excluded during the pandemic. We are relaunching the full 12-Week Team Programme in Autumn 2021, to ensure TWFRS remains a key partner in supporting young people across the region. The young people on the Team Programme improved their confidence and employability by engaging in sessions delivered using Microsoft Teams. Through cooperation with firefighters and the Phoenix Project, Prince's Trust students also received education on the consequences of anti-social behaviour, arson and attacks on firefighters.

Our **Juvenile Firesetters Education Programme** was enhanced in 2020/2021, with 13 more staff in P&E being trained to deliver interventions. We hosted Joanna Foster from Fabtic at SHQ in August 2020, to deliver her UK leading training course to TWFRS staff, plus staff from neighbouring fire services and partners in Youth Justice. This increased our capacity and knowledge, allowing us to engage with young people (over 30 interventions in 2020/2021) as quickly as practicable, in Covid-secure environments such as school, church halls, community centres and gardens. We plan to increase the number of JFEP practitioners in 2021/2022, to further increase our capacity and improve partnership working with neighbours Fire and Rescue Services.

We strengthened our **Safeguarding procedures** and partnerships this year to manage the increased number of safeguarding concerns reported during the pandemic. Following consultations with local authority partners, our internal Safeguarding Notification Forms are now accepted by all five local authorities, improving the quality and consistency of reports from the front line. Our firefighters and community engagement activities are critical in identifying vulnerable children, young people and adults, and notifying local authorities of their care and support needs. As other services adapted their delivery since March 2020, we have continued to engage face to face at operational incidents, perform local resilience forum tasks, deliver Safe and Well visits and implement JFEP interventions. This has resulted in improved safeguarding reporting and response over this period.

Fire Cadets: The service currently has 7 cadet units located across the service area, providing a training and development programme for young people aged between 11 and 17 years of age. Through the use of fire service activities young people are encouraged to make the most of their physical and mental capabilities and become more responsible, safe and caring members of their communities. Fire cadets are also encouraged to take part in social action activities in the community for the benefit of their community. During lockdown face to face drill sessions were suspended but weekly virtual sessions were delivered over Teams which were very well attended. These sessions not only gave the young people an opportunity to learn new skills and expand their knowledge of fire service departments but also those of our key partners. In addition the sessions also provided regular contact and support to our cadets during lockdown.

The **Phoenix Project** uses the positive role model of a firefighter to provide a life-changing programme for young people who are the most challenging and disadvantaged in local society. In 2020, we relaunched in the autumn after the first lockdown and the project delivered two courses in November, with four young people on each, before further restrictions came into place. Phoenix staff have since engaged in the Service's community support tasks, supporting vaccine centres, and updating the Phoenix structure and its sessions before we resume in November 2021. We aim to deliver 25-30 sessions throughout year ahead, engaging with 50-70 young community members. We will deliver sessions on subjects such as fire safety, water safety, road safety, CPR, drug and alcohol awareness. We will continue to signpost our young people onto our Fire Cadets, Sunderland Community Hub, Prince's Trust courses, or partner organisation as suitable. Supporting

them to continue to engage with youth organisations helps keeps them out of trouble and are able to meet new people with likeminded interests. This has an impact on the community as it reduces anti-social behaviour, with less young people on the streets.

2020-21 has been a very different year for the Services interactive safety centre, **SafetyWorks!** Due to Covid, the centre had to temporarily close in March 2020. However, the Safetyworks team continued to deliver the important home fire safety and anti-social behaviour messages across tp pupils in KS2 Year 6s; initially this was undertaken by Teams calls, followed by some school visits when restrictions would allow.

The centre reopen fully in September 2021, and with the continued support of partners including Nexus, Local Authority Road Safety Teams, Northumbria Police, the Royal National Lifeboats Institution (RNLI), 2021/22 will see the return of the key safety campaigns with the aim of improving safety and reducing accidents as well as reducing the impact of deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour.

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Conclusion and Objectives

During 2020/21 we have made positive progress to further diversify the workforce, particularly through Operational Firefighters, Corporate Staff and Community Volunteer recruitment. The Service ensures diversity has continued to enhance our workforce; and by developing talent of existing employees, we have provided development opportunities that benefit both individuals and the Service. Our Community Volunteers adapted their roles to support the most vulnerable community members across Tyne and Wear.

We will continue to monitor our recruitment processes to ensure that they assess skill-based selection process, assessing the candidate's suitability for the role. These processes ensure fairness across all candidates, showing transparency throughout the recruitment process with objective and evidence-based decisions.

Senior managers either promoted or appointed into roles within our Service are assigned an experienced manager to provide 'Buddy' support in their role. Our leadership programme aims to develop our managers' skills and self-confidence with a range of training including mentoring and coaching.

Our senior leaders champion flexible working and job sharing, with this benefit being available to all employees, including operational Firefighter roles. We will continue to enable our employees to work more flexibly, creating a better work/life balance for all.

Our core values and Leadership Bond guide all staff to promote and embrace inclusivity and foster positive working relationships. We continue to support our employees with our four employee network groups; Disability, LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender), Gender and BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic).

We continue to support our network groups work to champion our ongoing commitment to greater employee involvement in the decision making process and further increase personal development opportunities. There are currently discussions about a proposal to create a Neurodiversity network, to respond to demand from staff and widening our inclusion journey further.

To help the Service to achieve an inclusive workforce, we are developing a draft Inclusion Policy which includes objects that specifically contribute to equality, diversity and inclusion of our service.

Your views count

Your views are very important to us and having had the opportunity to read our Annual Equality Data Report, we would welcome any comments that you may have. This would assist in our consultation process and evaluation of the document.

Complaints and Compliments

We aim to provide the highest standards of fire, rescue and community safety services. As a recipient of a public service, there may be times when you wish to comment on the fire and rescue service. We encourage complaints and compliments from all members of the community as we value your opinion and it can help us to continually improve our service.

Complaints Procedure

For our part, if you do make a complaint we will ensure that:

- Your complaint is treated confidentially
- You receive an acknowledgement within 7 working days, including the name of the Investigating Officer
- Your complaint is investigated in accordance with the Fire and Rescue Service's standard procedures.

We will also:

- Endeavour to send you a full reply including the results of the investigation within 28 working days
- Ensure that you are informed of the progress, if the above deadline cannot be met.

If you wish to make a complaint or would like to tell us about an area of our work that you have been happy with then please do contact us, details are as follows:

By telephone to **+44 (0)191 444 1500** or complete an online form via our website **www.twfire.gov.uk**

In writing, address your letter to:

Human Resources Department
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Nissan Way
Barmston Mere
Sunderland
SR5 3QY

e-mail **comments@twfire.gov.uk**
Internet **<http://www.twfire.gov.uk/>**

Alternative Formats

We understand that people have different needs. This plan is available in alternative formats upon request. For further details contact **0191 444 1500**

