SMOKE AND MIRRORS?

Time to meet the challenge of equality in the fire and rescue service.

A JOINT PUBLICATION IN WITH
SMOKE & MIRRORS
Time to meet the challenge of equality in the fire and rescue service
This report is, in part, a response to the challenge laid down by the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Theresa May MP, as the Home Secretary in May 2016, and the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service at the time, Rt Hon. Brandon Lewis MP in November 2016, to the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) on the diversity of the national workforce profile. The report secondly considers the 1999, A Thematic Review by HM Fire Service Inspectorate titled ‘Equality and Fairness in the Fire Service’ which contained a recommendation to carry out a future thematic review in 2003, which was never undertaken. This report was commissioned by AFSA in order to address the issues that emerged from the Thematic Review in 1999.

Firstly, we consider the research across blue light services in the UK, and to some extent internationally, about “what works” to promote equality and, the experience of parts of the UK public sector in seeking to address diversity in general, and racial diversity in particular. (See also Appendix C).

Secondly, we have detailed the views from the Fire and Rescue Services.

Thirdly, we recommend what practical steps FRS locally, and the government nationally, should be taking in the light of the challenge from the Minister (See also Appendix A).

Fourthly, we summarise the long history of previous efforts to understand and remedy the lack of diversity in the FRS and the limited impact those efforts have made (See also Appendix B).
Smoke and mirrors? Time to meet the challenge of equality in the Fire and Rescue Service is a joint project between the AFSA, Middlesex University and the Fire Service Research and Training Trust. Initial scoping work and literature review was conducted in 2014/15 but the majority of the interviews and drafting of the report were undertaken in 2016-17. The project has also been supported by five individual FRS services, each contributing £500 toward the costs. We wish to acknowledge that contribution; as well as their clear commitment to exploring what remains an unacceptably homogenised workforce profile across FRSs. The Chief Fire Officers and Chief Executives who have been interviewed by the research team gave their permission to be directly quoted, however, as their sentiments were consistent, we feel this is not necessary and we wish to thank them for their honesty and enormous contributions.

As authors we take responsibility for the content of this report.

Diane Dunlevey
Chair, Asian Fire Service Association (2016-2017)
Equality and Diversity Manager, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Roger Kline
Research Fellow, Middlesex University Business School
RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations outlined below stem from a fundamental re-examination of the relevant literature on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) relating to FRS. In addition we would recommend discussions with the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament accordingly and where applicable. AFSA presented this report to the Home Office and we have responded to their comments accordingly. We will continue to work with them.

1. Engagement and Building a compelling case for equality, diversity and inclusion - this would ensure that the FRS is conscious of the importance of inclusion, that FRS understand and know how to build inclusion into their policies.

1a - Introduce an annual staff survey, recommended also by the Thomas Review, to help the FRS benchmark and demonstrate year on year progress on wellbeing, equality and culture.

1b - Dedicated and appropriately funded internal resource to support equality, diversity and inclusion professionals within each FRS, supported by regional and national networks addressing equality, diversity and inclusion.

1c - Each FRS should set a standard on staff self-reporting rates by ethnicity to a minimum 95% and for all other protected characteristics.

2. Workforce - undertaking positive action to recruit people from underrepresented groups to enter the FRS and develop leaders from underrepresented groups in order for them to be effective in senior roles.

2a - Launch a sustained national recruitment campaign to help support the FRS in recruitment of a more diverse workforce. Review and reissue the ‘Ordinary People Extraordinary Careers Framework (2005)’

2b - The FRS should look at ways of identifying talented staff from underrepresented groups as part of their talent management and positive action activities. Including progression into senior roles.

2c - A further review of the National Firefighter Selection tests to consider whether these are appropriate, role related, and culturally neutral.

3. Performance and systems alignment - ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion within the FRS is built into the architecture of the FRS regulatory and inspection regime. Ensuring evidence for success and the ability to measure performance is available.

3a - All FRSs should develop their own targets and action plans to support the recruitment, retention and progression of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff, and women, based on achievable targets that are reflective of the local community and projected vacancies in the service.

3b - The Home Office should reinstate the national annual report on FRS diversity using the statistical
introduction

- Workforce diversity analysis should feature as part of the new Home Office Inspection Framework criteria to ensure progress is being made across the recruitment cycle in terms of workforce diversity.

- The Home Office should explore adopting a series of metrics to measure progress in line with protected characteristics similar to large employers, such as the NHS, as part of a commitment to extensive benchmarking and sharing data.

- FRS governance structures should consider the introduction of measures for equality, diversity and inclusion for senior staff during appraisals to demonstrate that it has been prioritised and what positive outcomes have been achieved culturally and in service delivery.

- The Home Office should invest in the development and adaptation of good governance principles for equality, diversity and inclusion to help address the challenges of supporting change.

- The Home Office and/or NFCC should commission a review within three years on the progress on the recommendations of this Report on recruitment, promotion, retention, leadership, succession planning, and the talent pipeline, drawing on good practice across the public sector. AFSA should commit to support such a review.

- indicators on ethnicity and gender contained in the Fire and Rescue Service Statistics Bulletin for England: 2009/10. In addition we also recommend that the Bulletin should include a more comprehensive analysis on reasons for leaving. The leavers’ data should be further reported on by protected characteristics. The Home Office to consider the removal of the word ‘operational’ as it may be misleading.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Jagtar Singh MA, BA Hons, MiFireE OBE - National Adviser AFSA - Chair Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust

- Mohamed Jogí Chartered FCIPID, MSc, LLB (Hons) AFSA Strategic Coordinator - NHS Employers

- Wayne McCollin BA Ed, DipHRD

- Fire Service Research and Training Trust

- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

- London Fire Brigade

- Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service

- West Midlands Fire Service

- Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

- AFSA Corporate Members

- National Fire Chiefs Council (formally Chief Fire Officers Association)
SECTION 1: METHODOLOGY

In the first phase of the project, all UK FRS human resource directors, or those with a human resource remit, were contacted with an explanation of the project and requesting them to complete a questionnaire. The results and findings of this quantitative phase of the project can be found in ‘Race Equality in the FRS an Interim Report October 2014’. Some specific sections, and tables from that document, are also repeated in this final report, accompanied by comments made by staff completing the questionnaire.

Fully completed questionnaires were received from 12 services together with copies of requested workforce information and a range of data and reports. Some preliminary interviews took place. The responses to this questionnaire, set alongside current and recent workforce data received from the services, and from central government returns, was the first step in capturing the current culture of the FRS and how employers were, in particular, tackling race equality. Although we were conscious of the 1999 Thematic Review, our focus was on current practice.

The responses to the questionnaires were analysed to support the second phase of the research, which included field work interviews in a limited number of locations. The interviews were semi-structured and were recorded with permission from the interviewees. The locations were a mix of metropolitan services; Fire Authority-led services and County Council-led services.

We have drawn some conclusions about culture and also the effectiveness or otherwise of the strategies adopted in response to key reports from the 1999 Thematic Review to the present day.

NB the Research Team are very conscious that whole-time firefighter recruitment has commenced recently across many FRSS following a considerable lack of specific whole-time recruitment over recent years. We are also very cognisant of the changing role and purpose within the sector including ‘Safe and Well’ and Blue light Collaboration. We see this as a significant opportunity.

We recognise that Services are undertaking Positive Action initiatives and are sharing their practice. At the point of completion there was no data to evaluate outcomes as recruitment is still in progress in the majority of Services. The mechanism to collect the raw data, in a tabular format, has been supported by the NFCC and they have requested all Services except Northern Ireland, but including Wales and Scotland, to provide this raw data. The data will give an overview of the numbers and percentages of Women, BAME, Disability and LGBT applications including the attrition rate at each stage of the recruitment process. To add context to this, the Research Team have assessed the positive action approach taken by London Fire Brigade and West Midland Fire Service. It will be the case that where positive action activity has increased success for underrepresented groups, this can be evaluated at each at stage of the process and lessons can be learnt and shared. These approaches, and that of other Services, will be explored in the wider dissemination of this Report.

Equally, we will be considering this in the round of the NFCC Strategy, Standards Body, Inspectorate Framework and looking at comparable practice/process and outcomes in the NHS, CQC and Police forces.
Countries and societies have been tackling fires for around 1,000 years in some form of structured manner. It was not, however, until 1938 that UK auxiliary fire services had the infrastructure with responsibility to respond to tackle fires in local communities and municipal areas. There were exceptions of a more formalised procedure in London and Scotland but it is safe to say that the majority of the auxiliary fire services were staffed by volunteer firefighters. It may well be that this recent historical reality has contributed to the largely homogenised FRS services we are familiar with today - reflective of the nature of the role, and the social mores at the time, plus the fact that the volunteers were from within a close established community based setting. It was not until 1941 that a National Fire Service was established and this was closely followed by the Fire Service Act of 1947.

The Fire Service Act 1947 remained largely unchanged, notwithstanding that many ‘brigades’ developed into independent fire authorities as a governance structure until 2004, when the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/contents became statute. It was the 2004 Act which nurtured not only the “prevention and protection” agenda; an area which is now so familiar in the operations and activities of FRS services, but also brought under scrutiny the workforce profile of the UK’s FRS services. The importance of equality for the FRS has been recognised for at least two decades. In 1994, the Home Office published the Research and Planning Unit’s paper by Tom Bucke on ‘Equal opportunities and the fire service’ (Home Office, 1994) which examined the extent to which equal opportunities policies had been adopted in the fire service, and how underrepresented groups viewed the organisation, and firefighting as a potential occupation. The paper considered why there was an under representation of women and BAME people as firefighters, and sought to inform future central government and fire authority policy.

In the wake of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (Home Office 1999) by Sir William Macpherson which concluded that there was institutional racism in the Metropolitan Police, subsequent work found this was not exclusive to policing and that institutional racism was apparent in the processes across the public sector. The Equality and Fairness in the Fire Service: A thematic review by HM fire service inspectorate (Home Office 1999) (The Thematic Review) followed.

The terms of reference for the 1999 Thematic Review were to “examine the extent to which all elements of the concept of equality and fairness at work are being embraced by the fire service”. The study examined ten services in detail and made a series of recommendations. It concluded:

“The findings of the review are critical of many aspects of the management of equality and fairness in the fire service. They also point to the contribution to the unsatisfactory situation made by the overriding culture within the service, including relationships and leadership style. The criticisms apply across all the organisations responsible for the fire service,” pg. 7.
In 2000, fire and rescue services were under the governance of the Home Office who published ‘Towards diversity’ and ‘Towards diversity II’ which were the equal opportunities action plans: ‘Towards Diversity – promoting cultural change’ and ‘Towards diversity II – commitment to cultural change”, both drawn from the recommendations of the 1999 Thematic Review.

The publication of Managing a Modernised Fire Service: Bridging the Gap (Home Office 2001) set out the expectations of modernisation of the fire service. It stated:

“...the modernisation of the fire service is the delivery of improved community safety - the ability to influence positively a reduction in the number of fires, injuries at fires and fire deaths and to work with other agencies to reduce these and improve the quality of life. This changing role will require new thinking, new approaches and new ways of managing people and situations. Firefighters throughout the service will need to develop new skills.” Pg1.

The document refers repeatedly to the Thematic Review.

It proposed: “We also recommend that a further full thematic review should be planned, to report during the fourth year (2003), following publication of this report”pg.58. This recommendation was not implemented and is, therefore, long overdue. Due to the considerable time lapse and the significant changes within the sector and also across public bodies, it was determined by the researchers that to undertake a direct comparison would be inappropriate due to significant structural political and societal changes into account. We therefore sought to identify more narrowly what followed the 1999 Thematic Review and the extent to which these efforts were successful.

“There is an overriding imperative for the service to move forward to recognise the importance of diversity in every context and welcome the opportunities and benefits that diversity brings.” pg. 8.

“.... The strong message is that the failings are those of omission rather than commission. This means that great progress could be made, and quickly. We are sure it will be. Failure is not an option.” (emphasis in original) pg. 82.
“Whilst there was significant evidence that the most senior managers of the service (uniformed and non-uniformed) understood and could articulate the value of diversity in the workforce, and there was evidence of resources and intellect being applied to achieving this, there was clear evidence that at watch and station level the position was not universally understood or owned.” Pg.1.

The report references the Thematic Review when Bain says: “The watch system is one of the barriers to progress in increasing diversity. The watch is a closed culture which, as the Inspectorate says in its report Equality and Fairness in the Fire Service (HMFSI, 1999) “takes on the character of a family rather than a team. The watch eats, sleeps and works together. The emphasis in the culture is on fitting in, not on tolerating diversity”. Pg. 66.

To supplement current context, and notwithstanding the address on fire reform made by the then Home Secretary, Theresa May, on 26 May 2016, and the speech by the Policing and the Fire Service Minister Brandon Lewis on 24 November 2016, this report comes directly in the shadow of three other recently published reports: the ‘Independent Cultural Review of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service 2015’ (Irene Lucas for Essex County Fire and Rescue Authority); ‘NJC/6/16 Circular - Inclusive Fire Service Group’; and the Conditions of service for fire and rescue staff: independent review (Home Office 2016) - the Adrian Thomas report.

We would concur with substantial sections of the findings and opinions in these publications and their interpretation of the evidence of inequality operating in some parts of the sector and will reference as appropriate.
SECTION 3: THE EMPLOYMENT OF A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

OVERALL STAFFING

The FRS workforce in England has steadily declined since 2009 which registered the highest employment for total FRS staff. The decline has been largely experienced by whole-time staff, however Fire Control as a percentage remains almost constant. The impact on overall staffing in England is summarised in Chart 1 and Table 1 (see Appendix).

Chart 1: Whole-time equivalent (WTE) of fire and rescue authority staff England. 31 March 2008-2016. Full Time Equivalent² 

² Accounts for those working part time. Retained Duty Firefighters are in 24 hour units of cover.
Data prior to 2002 not comparable.
BAME FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE STAFF

The percentage of firefighters from BAME backgrounds across all staff groups in FRS authorities in England increased from 1.5% in 2002 to 3.8% in 2016. As Chart 2a and Table 2 (see Appendix) show, there was a significant rate of increase between 2002 and 2010, but the rate of increase then slowed almost to a standstill. The numbers almost doubled in just four years by 2006 and more than doubled from 1.50% in 2002 to 3.83% in 2016. Of those firefighters who stated an ethnicity, 3.8 per cent (approximately 1,270) were from an ethnic minority group in England in 2016. This proportion is unchanged from the previous year and compares with 3.5 per cent from five years beforehand (2011)


Chart 2a: Firefighters by ethnicity 2002 - 2016 in England 31 March 2002-2016 (%)
As Chart 2b shows the percentage of firefighters (whole-time and retained) who are women increased from 1.7% in 2002 to 5.0% in 2016 in percentage terms the increase was almost threefold but in numbers 720 in 2002 - 1719 in 2016 the increase was almost 2.4 times Source:


A contributing factor of the increase in the proportion of women firefighters has been the reduction in the number of men firefighters, rather than an increase in the number of women firefighters.


Data prior to 2002 not comparable “White” includes ‘Other White’.


NB from 2011 the ethnicity data refers to ALL staff. This confuses the data and it has been difficult to establish an accurate picture.
Turnover and retirement demographics impact on the opportunities to improve diversity. There was a marked increase in normal retirements in 2008/09 largely due to the addition across England of an extra watch at the end of the 1970s. Many of the people recruited at that time have been reaching retirement age. (Fire statistics table 1112, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562349/fire-statistics-data-tables-fire1112.xlsx)

During 2015/16, some 4,300 staff left FRS services, 10% of staff. In 2014/15, 9% of staff left FRSs (including those who left to join other FRSs or were employed into non-uniformed by the same authority). The main reason(s) for leaving varied by contract type and role of staff. 70.3% of whole-time firefighters left through retirement, compared with only 10.7% of other staff. The most common reason staff left FRSs in 2016/17 was because of a “normal” or “early” retirement, which accounted for 33 per cent (1,446) of those leaving of whom the vast majority were whole-time firefighters (1,106). This was 33 a rate people per thousand members of FRS staff compared to 24 people per thousand five years ago. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/654807/fire-rescue-workforce-pensions-1617-hosp1817.pdf

For the first time FRS Statistical Release 26 August 2016 (Table 1104) data for 2015-16 contains statistics for five ethnic groups. All FRSs collect this information, although 9.1% of staff were recorded as “not stated” for ethnicity in 2016. The proportion of “not stated” varied from year to year. It showed a steady increase from 2.7% in 2002 to 9.1% in 2016, with a peak of 11.5% in 2015. This is a significant problem, raising a concern about confidence in the precise proportion of ethnic minority staff. A drive to restore the “not stated” proportion to below 5% should, therefore, be regarded a sector priority. Such lower levels of self-declaration provide a strategic challenge to a diversity strategy.

Of those who did state an ethnicity, 3.8% (approximately 1,270) firefighters were from an ethnic minority group in England in 2016. This proportion is unchanged from the previous year and compares with 3.5% from five years before (2011).

The actual number of firefighters who stated they were from an ethnic minority group has actually decreased over the past five years. However, the proportion of ethnic minority staff has increased over this time because a greater proportion of white firefighters have left.

In the wake of the Strategy 2008-18, detailed data by gender and ethnicity was to be published annually as follows:

- Job applications, successful applications, and personnel joining and leaving the fire service by duty system
- FRS personnel leaving the fire service by duty system, gender and ethnicity
- FRS staff by gender and duty system
- Ethnic origin of fire service personnel by duty system
- Ethnic origin of whole-time firefighters
- Ethnic origin of retained duty system firefighters
- Ethnic origin of fire control staff
- Ethnic origin of non-uniformed staff
- Percentage of top 5% of earners that are women
- Percentage of top 5% of earners from minority ethnic communities.

These resources were useful as comparators as well as identifying what all the FRSs were doing in relation to the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda. This data offered opportunities to share case studies and best practice to promote learning. Publication of the data was seen as an essential part of understanding the challenges and monitoring progress. Its cessation, in hindsight, contributed to a significant weakness in promoting a national approach to EDI. It is suggested the Format should be restored as presented in the FRS Service Equality reports (last publication 2010) in order that FRSs can benchmark and learn from each other in a central comparable layout.

As Chart 3 and Table 3 (see Appendix) show, to varying extents, all four ethnic minority groups were significantly underrepresented as firefighters in 2016 compared with the population of England. The largest difference was for “Asian or Asian British” which comprised 0.6% of firefighters compared with 7.5% of England’s population. This is a real challenge given the emphasis in the services’ “protect and prevent” approach to community engagement.

**Chart 3: Percentage of firefighters in ethnic minorities, compared with the resident population, England 2016**

The ‘FRS service: Equality and diversity strategy 2008 - 2018’ set targets for England that: “By 2013, recruitment of minority ethnic staff across the whole organisation to be at the same percentage as the minority ethnic representation in the local working population.” As Chart 4 and Table 4 (see Appendix) show, this target was not met across England as a whole.

- In 2016, 6.6% of support and fire control staff were from an ethnic minority group. This is virtually unchanged from 6.5% in the previous year, and compares with 6.0% from five years earlier.

- Overall in 2016, 4.4% of all FRS staff were from an ethnic minority group. This is virtually unchanged from 4.3% in the previous year but is slightly higher than five years previously (4.1%).

- The number and proportion of all FRS staff from an ethnic minority group has slowly increased since 2003 (the first year for which data is available). In 2004 2.2% of uniformed staff were from an ethnic minority, increasing to 4.4% of all FRS staff in 2016.

Chart 4 and Table 4 (see Appendix) show how the increase in the proportion of firefighters from ethnic minority backgrounds was not accompanied by an increase in the proportion of ethnic minority non-uniformed staff, although the percentage of ethnic minority non-uniformed staff has been consistently higher than that of uniformed staff.

**Chart 4:** FRS service BAME staff in England 2002-2016

![Chart showing the percentage of BAME staff in the FRS from 2002 to 2016.](chart_image)

Source: Appendix Table 7 FRS – Operational Statistics Bulletin for England 2009-10 and 2015-16.
Chart 5a: Firefighter: staff headcount by ethnicity

Source: Table 1104 Fire Statistics Home Office Operational Statistics Data Collection

For further detail/clarity for staff headcount excluding white with adjusted scale please see Chart 5b on page 18.
Chart 5b: Firefighter: staff headcount by ethnicity excluding white to enable other ethnicities to be seen on chart by adjusting scale

Source Table 1104 Fire Statistics Home Office Operational Statistics Data Collection
Workforce - undertaking positive action to recruit people from underrepresented groups to enter the FRS and develop leaders from underrepresented groups in order for them to be effective in senior roles.

- Launch a sustained national recruitment campaign to help support the FRS in recruitment of a more diverse workforce. Review and reissue the ‘Ordinary People Extraordinary Careers Framework (2005)’

- The FRS should look at ways of identifying talented staff from underrepresented groups as part of their talent management and positive action activities. Including progression into senior roles.

- A further review of the National Firefighter Selection tests to consider whether these are appropriate, role related, and culturally neutral.

COMPARISON WITH LOCALGOVERNMENT AND AMBULANCE SERVICES

The Local Government Earnings Survey in 2010/11 collected data on the ethnic groups of all local government employees. 8.2% of the local government workforce in England and Wales were from BAME backgrounds.

A more recent but fairly comprehensive survey by UNISON suggested the figure may have risen, although the two data sets are not comparable and the UNISON survey recorded approximately 11% as “not stated”. Chart 6 and Table 6 (see Appendix) show the ethnic breakdown of the local government workforce by types of authority. Unsurprisingly, London boroughs have a significantly higher proportion of BAME staff than other authority types.
SMOKE & MIRRORS
Time to meet the challenge of equality in the fire and rescue service

Although the proportion of the FRS workforce from BAME backgrounds is less than half that of local government the rate of increase of BAME staff as a proportion of the workforce was similar in the FRS in the decade to 2011 (Local Government Earnings Surveys 2002 and 2010/11) (LGA).

RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM FIREFIGHTERS

The issue of diversity in the retained duty system (RDS) which is disproportionately based in (and recruits from) less metropolitan areas was addressed by the AFSA in their response to the Knight Review.

The AFSA pointed out that:

“One of the major proposals in the report is that FRSs should increase the numbers of Retained Duty System (on-call firefighters) personnel by 10%. Whilst we are unconvinced by the data provided to support the increase by 10%, we believe that the type of firefighter should be based on local risk mapping and should also reflect the community they serve.

“There is also a common misconception that retained firefighters are more likely to reflect the local diversity and ethnicity (of the communities) they serve. According to the FRS Services operational statistics bulletin for 2011-12, there is no correlation between the amounts of black and ethnic minority or women on the retained duty system in comparison with whole time. In fact, the reverse is shown.”

This is correct in relation to women, as women as a profile are at a constant. For BAME this is not the case as in some parts of the UK where RDS duty systems are in place there is little and in some areas no ethnic diversity within the call out area of the fire station. Any data to be meaningfully analysed needs to be as a comparator to callout demography if FRSs are to continue with the RDS systems in the manner they have been operating for the past few decades.
Tomorrow’s People: Building a local government workforce for the future (Audit Commission 2008) found that women and staff from BAME backgrounds were less likely to be promoted. Whereas 3.8% of the white men in the operational sector of the service in March 2007 were at station manager level, compared to only 1% of operational women and 1.9% of BAME men. Very small numbers of employees were from BAME backgrounds (3.2% compared to a national average working population of over 12% – among senior staff this falls to 1% as at March 2007). Very small numbers of women were operational firefighters (3.1% dropping to 1% for senior positions as at March 2007).

The data on promotion is minimal despite it being vital to understanding and driving the change required. It is essential that services monitor and, we recommend, report on it. In 2016, it was reported that “promotion processes (10.8%, 192 cases), unfair treatment (8.3%, 150 cases) and disciplinary procedures (8.1%, 143 cases) are the other key areas of grievances, but anecdotal concerns around transfers and personnel coming back to work from maternity leave are difficult to evidence from the results, given use of the generic term ‘management decisions’ used by the FRAs.” (Circular NJC/6/1617 June 2016 Inclusive Fire Service Group).

In terms of transparency and access to the workforce profile data moving forward; it was confirmed in January 2016 that ministerial responsibility for FRS policy would transfer to the Home Office from the Department for Communities and Local Government. The reasoning for this is to support the government’s manifesto pledge to transform how the police and FRS services work together. It is envisaged that this move will deliver better joint working between police and FRS service. The first of these datasets, on the workforce profile of FRS services, was released in October 2016 - FRS authorities: operational statistics bulletin for England 2015 to 2016. The Home Office sought feedback on the bulletin format and variables from Services. ‘Operational’ suggests incident demand and it may be more accurate if the descriptor is presented as FRS Workforce Bulletin. Moreover, the datasets on promotion and leavers should be presented by gender, ethnicity, disability and LGBT, as we believe that this would support an understanding, aid transparency and provide a clearer view of disparities. These diversity datasets are extremely useful, and we would welcome a breakdown by Service to enable comparison/benchmarking.

“Recruitment is the only lever for increasing the diversity of the workforce. In 2007/08, 10% of recruits to whole-time firefighter posts and 9% of recruits to RDS firefighter posts were female; while 6% of recruits to whole-time posts and just 1% of recruits to RDS posts were from minority ethnic communities. Even if these recruitment rates were to improve substantially, recruitment can only work slowly to improve diversity because of the low level of staff turnover in the fire service. In 2007/08, turnover across the fire service was less than 7%. This is half the median level of annual employee turnover in English councils in 2005/06 (14%)”. pg. 74.

The Rising to the challenge improving fire service efficiency (Audit Commission 2008) reported a decade ago:

TURNOVER

"Recruitment is the only lever for increasing the diversity of the workforce. In 2007/08, 10% of recruits to whole-time firefighter posts and 9% of recruits to RDS firefighter posts were female; while 6% of recruits to whole-time posts and just 1% of recruits to RDS posts were from minority ethnic communities. Even if these recruitment rates were to improve substantially, recruitment can only work slowly to improve diversity because of the low level of staff turnover in the fire service. In 2007/08, turnover across the fire service was less than 7%. This is half the median level of annual employee turnover in English councils in 2005/06 (14%)". pg. 74.
SMOKE & MIRRORS
Time to meet the challenge of equality in the fire and rescue service

Chart 7a: Staff leaving fire authorities, by reason and by role¹, England

Source 2016/17 FIRE STATISTICS TABLE 1111:
¹ Includes re-employment as support staff by the same FRS
² Also known as “On-call firefighters”
³ These reasons were introduced in the 2016/17 collection and only an option for Retained Duty System firefighters.
Chart 7b: Comparing the reasons by role without the total (to make the specific reasons clearer)

Source 2016/17 FIRE STATISTICS TABLE 1111:
1 Includes re-employment as support staff by the same FRS
2 Also known as "On-call firefighters"
3 These reasons were introduced in the 2016/17 collection and only an option for Retained Duty System firefighters.
Chart 7c: Comparing role by reason without the total figure

Source 2016/17 FIRE STATISTICS TABLE 1111:
1 Includes re-employment as support staff by the same FRS
2 Also known as "On-call firefighters"
3 These reasons were introduced in the 2016/17 collection and only an option for Retained Duty System firefighters.

- Dismissal on disciplinary grounds
- Dismissal on disciplinary or poor performance grounds/efficiency
- Medical discharge (ill health retirement)
- Resignation due to harassment or discrimination
- Poor performance/efficiency
- Failure to maintain fitness
- Compulsory redundancy
- Voluntary redundancy
- Early retirement
- Normal retirement
- Re-employment by another Fire and Rescue Service
- Re-employment as support personnel within the same Fire and Rescue Service
- Resignation to take other employment outside the Fire and Rescue Service
- Deceased
- Moving out of area
- Dissatisfaction with the number of incidents attended
- Issues with primary employment
- Other reasons
Chart 7d: Total staff leaving by role 2016/17

Source 2016/17 FIRE STATISTICS TABLE 1111
1 Includes re-employment as support staff by the same FRS
2 Also known as “On-call firefighters”

Chart 7 and Table 7 (see Appendix) show 1072 (24%) staff indicating ‘other’ as the reason for leaving out of 4425 leavers for 2016/17. This is too high a percentage not to have a narrative. We suggest it should be broken down by personal characteristics. As is the case for all leavers, we do understand that this is problematic but hope it can be included in order to understand why staff leave. By including a descriptor we would suggest that this would be an indicator of FRS culture as analysed disproportionality by characteristics would an individual FRS to explore reasons, be transparent and develop adjustments.
Chart 8: Total staff leaving by reason 2016/17

- Dismissal on disciplinary grounds
- Dismissal on disciplinary or poor performance grounds (efficiency)
- Medical discharge (ill health retirement)
- Resignation due to harassment or discrimination
- Poor performance (efficiency)
- Failure to maintain fitness
- Compulsory redundancy
- Voluntary redundancy
- Early retirement
- Normal retirement
- Re-employment by another Fire and Rescue Service
- Re-employment as support personnel within the same Fire and Rescue Service
- Re-employment as support staff by the same FRS
- Resignation to take other employment outside the Fire and Rescue Service
- Normal retirement
- Decesed
- Moving out of area
- Issues with primary employment
- Dissatisfaction with the number of incidents attended
- Other reasons

Source: 2016/17 FIRE STATISTICS TABLE 1111:
1. Includes re-employment as support staff by the same FRS
2. Also known as “On-call firefighters”
3. These reasons were introduced in the 2016/17 collection and only an option for Retained Duty System firefighters.
THE FRS SERVICE, POLICE FORCE AND THE AMBULANCE SERVICE

Ministers have regularly made comparisons with the other uniformed public services – the police and ambulance services. The comparisons may be instructive for the recruitment strategy going forward.

Charts 8a and 8b and Table 8 (see Appendix) summarise the overall changes in staffing within the three services over the last 13 years - statistics prior to 2003 are not easily comparable. The most striking difference is the comparison of changes in overall staffing.

The number of firefighters has declined by almost 24% over that period, (and the number of FRS staff overall has also substantially declined).

The number of police officers rose until 2008 and then significantly declined to below its 2003 level - a decline of 6.4%.

The number of qualified ambulance staff rose by 26.7% and the number of ambulance support staff grew by over 70%.

Chart 8a: FRS personnel, NHS qualified ambulance service staff and police officers 2003 - 2016 (head count) England

---

Asian Fire Service Association

SECTION 3

SMOKE & MIRRORS
Time to meet the challenge of equality in the fire and rescue service

Chart 8b: FRS personnel, NHS qualified ambulance service staff and police officers 2003 - 2016 (percentage change) England


Chart 9a: Comparison of changes in BAME representation in FRS whole time and qualified ambulance personnel 2003-2013

“Our whole workforce is predominately white British...... Limited recruitment for the foreseeable future makes changing the age, disability, gender and ethnic balance of our workforce challenging. However, it is vital that we explore how we can address the differences in application and success rates in terms of the protected characteristics to help us move towards a workforce which is more reflective of the communities we serve”.

As Charts 9a and 9b and Table 9 (see Appendix) show, the proportion of ethnic minority staff employed by the FRS, although still far from being representative of local communities and despite the substantial fall in employment (and therefore lack of recruitment) is higher, and has increased faster than that of the NHS ambulance service. The proportion of BAME staff employed doubled between 2003 and 2016 and the FRS should be very proud of this.
There is no doubt, as the Adrian Thomas Review notes, that the absence of any significant level of recruitment has been a major obstacle to creating a more diverse workforce. On the other hand, with a diversity strategy, the ability to recruit (as the ambulance service shows), is no guarantee of improvement in the diversity of the workforce unless leadership, accountability and a convincing business case are present to ensure it happens.

THE POLICE FORCE

As Chart 10 and Table 10 show, police force recruitment of women and BAME police officers significantly increased between 2003-2016, despite a fall in total police officer numbers over the same period.

The London Fire Brigade is among the most successful in implementing its equality goals; although with BAME staff at around 12.18% it is still far below the population numbers for London, whose BAME population is around 40% (Census 2011). This represents 650 BAME operational staff (firefighters) out of about 5,337. Staff reductions during the last two years had marginally reduced the number of both operational (firefighters) and administrative staff. During the same period, the proportion of recruits from BAME backgrounds increased to 26.8% for the July 2016 campaign. (Firefighter Recruitment – Outcome of 2015 and 2016 Campaigns and Proposals for 2017. Resources Committee. 13 January 2017. FEP 2686. http://moderngov.london-fire.gov.uk/mgconvert2pdf.aspx?id=5790

![Chart 10a: Total FTE police officer strength in England and Wales, 31 March](chart10a.png)
During the same period, police forces also contracted in size, though by much less. Overall across England and Wales, the proportion of ethnic minority police officers doubled from 2003 to 2016, the same rate of increase as for firefighters, but the police forces started from a higher baseline. The proportion of police officers from an ethnic minority group (5.9%) is more than one and a half times the proportion of firefighters from an ethnic minority group (3.8%).

THE METROPOLITAN POLICE COMPARISON

The Metropolitan Police has made a determined effort in the very recent past (and currently) to become more diverse. It understands that to police with consent and effectiveness it needs to reflect the population it serves. In 2015-16, the Metropolitan Police passed a milestone of 4,000 BAME officers for the first time. A “targeted recruitment” campaign, including a range of measures including second language and London residency requirements, has seen a 25% rise in ethnic minority officer numbers in just three years since 2013. In just one year this new approach has already seen the number of recruits from minority ethnic backgrounds more than double, and women recruits increase from a quarter to a third. The policy is helping to boost the diversity of talent in London’s police force, making it more resilient and far more reflective of the city it serves. Since August 2014 new police constables have been recruited exclusively from people who have lived in London for three of the last six years, to help create a police force that understands the city’s diversity and is equipped with the skills and cultural competencies necessary to police a global city. Between June-August 2015, 26% of new Metropolitan Police officer recruits came from BAME backgrounds, up from 12% in the same quarter of 2014. The number of women recruits has also risen from 26% to 33% of new recruits in the same periods. https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/london-only-recruitment
CONCLUSION FOR ENGLAND

In the wake of the Thematic Review the proportion of BAME firefighters in England doubled over 15 years, albeit from a low start. The proportion of non-uniformed staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, however, hardly increased at all. The increase in the proportion of ethnic minority firefighters was made in the face of very low overall recruitment levels. Even after the increase, the FRS remained seriously unrepresentative of the communities it serves. Moreover, in recent years much of the proportionate increase for both ethnic minority and women firefighters arose because the proportion of white men retiring increased due to demographic changes. It is difficult to be precise about the trend in employment, because there has been a significant increase in staff not declaring their ethnicity but, as Charts 2a and 2b above and Table 2 (see Appendix) suggest, the growth in actual numbers has come to a standstill or even fallen back nationally.

SCOTLAND

In 2005 the FRS Framework for Scotland stated (Para 13) that:

- “We have previously made clear our intention to open up the service so that it is more representative of the communities it serves. Women and people from ethnic minorities are currently under represented in the service. FRS authorities should therefore take steps to publicise recruitment opportunities with the aim of attracting more applicants from those sections of society”


The 2007 Review of Service reform in Scottish FRS Services (Accounts Commission 2007) reported that:

- The diversity of the workforce in FRAs is not representative of the communities they serve. For FRAs to make significant improvements in this area will require a shift in cultural attitudes.
- FRAs are starting to embrace the equality agenda, and have implemented a variety of initiatives to drive this forward. However, not all FRAs are meeting legislative requirements.
- The delivery of equality and diversity training to staff is progressing well.

It stated that:

- “There is significant work to be done in all FRAs to increase the number of employees from under-represented groups. The FRS service is not representative of the wider community. The majority of the workforce are operational firefighters (88%) but only 3.9% are women. In total, 11.4% of the FRAs’ workforce is female. Only 46 people from black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups are employed by FRAs across the whole of Scotland, accounting for 0.5% of the total workforce, while BAME groups comprise 2% of the national population.”

The Commission reported that:

- All FRAs have run positive action recruitment campaigns in the last two years (with the exception of Highlands and Islands which has not recruited whole time staff recently).
- However, more work is required to assess the effectiveness of these campaigns. Monitoring the profile of applicants and evaluating media advertising will assist in ensuring the campaigns are having an impact and providing value for money.
- Two FRAs, Strathclyde and Tayside, have chosen to set performance targets to help them focus on encouraging underrepresented groups to apply for vacancies. Strathclyde set targets for women to represent 10% of the uniformed
Despite these commitments, almost a decade later (31 March 2016) less than 1% of all SFRS staff were recorded as belonging to an ethnic minority group. This was also the case in each of the seven years that these statistics have been produced and was equivalent to a total of just under 50 staff, as Charts 11 and 12 and Tables 11 and 12 (see Appendix) show.

The percentage of ethnic minority staff has been fairly consistent across the different staff types. The 2011 census found that 4% of the Scottish population reported as being from a minority ethnic background. Although these figures should be treated with some caution as only three in five SFRS staff recorded their ethnicity, there is no evidence that the recorded data substantially misrepresents the ethnicity data.
GENDER

Progress on gender has also been slow. Figures at 31 March 2015 show that 87% of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) staff members were male and 13% women and that this level has not changed for the last six years since this data has been published. As in England there were variations between staff types.

95% of whole-time operational and RDS staff were male (3,692 and 2,778 staff respectively). 83% of control staff were women (192 staff). In the support staff category, (non-uniformed staff ranging from service manager through technical support and administration) the gender split was 55% women and 45% men (480 women staff and 387 men).

The total number of women SFRS staff actually declined by 6% in the year to 31st March 2015, while male staff reduced by 2%, a reduction of 73 women and 149 men. The decrease in women staff was largely due to a reduction of 12% (or 65 staff) in the number of women support staff, the largest area of female employment in the SFRS.
The majority of the decrease in male staff occurred in the whole-time operational category, where the number of male staff reduced by 150. However, the number of male RDS staff increased by 16 (1% increase in male RDS staff) and male control staff increased by 14 (58% increase in male control staff). There were no women in the whole-time operational brigade manager or area manager roles. There were three women group managers and one woman station manager (3% and 1% in the roles, respectively). In the support staff category, there were 2 in 5 of those in the service manager roles were women. In the administrative roles, women formed 89% of the staff. (Table 7. FIRE SAFETY AND ORGANISATIONAL STATISTICS SCOTLAND 2015-16)

WALES
ETHNICITY

The employment of ethnic minority staff in Wales has improved but at a slow pace. The proportion of BAME staff across the Wales FRS workforce has more than doubled over a decade but is still only around 1% for the workforce as a whole and slightly higher amongst whole-time uniformed staff. Note that these figures should be treated with caution as the BAME numbers are very low and have been rounded up or down.

The 2011 Census recorded black and ethnic minority background as constituting over 5% of the Wales population.

Chart 13: Headcount - total FRS staff employed Wales

GENDER

The proportion of women whole-time uniformed staff rose from 2.6% (45 staff) in 2007-8, the first year data was published by gender on the StatsWales website to 4.1% (60 staff) in 2013-14, the last year for which such employment data is currently published by StatsWales. The percentages should be treated with caution as they involve the rounding up (or down) of small numbers. A significant cause of the increased proportion is the reduction in men employed.

For the Wales FRS workforce as a whole, there was a more significant increase in the proportion of women employed which rose from 240 (6%) in 2007-8 to 580 (16%) in 2013-14.

NORTHERN IRELAND

NB the Research Team made comprehensive searches for the Northern Ireland data and also made personal requests. Unfortunately, at this time we are unable to report on the data.
In our questionnaire to services, we asked a series of questions, some of which were open-ended. In this section we report some of the comments from respondents who were open, transparent and articulate in their views on why the service remains predominately white male in its staff profile.

Below is the series of questions that the respondents were asked and a selection of their responses:

- Do you think equality in general and race equality in particular is important for the FRS today?  
  - If so, why?

- Do you think the issue of race equality is one that still needs attention?  
  - If so why, if not, why not?

- Which of these aspects do you think is most important in your service at present in relation to race equality?  
  - Recruitment to firefighter staff  
  - Recruitment to support staff  
  - Opportunities for development and promotion  
  - Treatment, as in bullying or discrimination

- Do you think progress on race equality has improved in the last five years, stayed the same, or got worse?  
  - Reasons for each answer

- What good work do you think has been done in your own FRS around race equality?  
  - Reasons for answer

- What else do you think needs to be done to improve race equality in your FRS?  
  - Reasons for answer

- What important differences, if any, are there between progress within firefighter grades and support staff grades?

- What would you like your union or HR department to do that they are not currently doing on this issue?  
  - Reasons for answer

- Where progress has been made in the past, what do you think was the most important reason for progress made – going back up to 15 years?

- If you were able to tell the minister responsible for the FRS to do one thing to improve race equality, what would it be?

THE RESPONDENTS CONSIDERED EXPLANATIONS FOR THE SLOWDOWN OF PROGRESS

All services continue to report prominently on equality, including on race equality, even those with a very low local BAME populations. Pursuit of progress within the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRSEF) remains a prominent goal in the services that responded.

With one exception, the respondent services reported that the cuts in funding were having an adverse impact on improving representation of ethnic minority staff within their service.
Time to meet the challenge of equality in the fire and rescue service

Responses from the questionnaire included:

- The service is not currently recruiting the last recruitment drive was for Retained Duty System staff in June-July 2014.
- Reservist recruitment also took place this year - 21-28 May 2014. But no positive action was carried out due to the time constraints.
- Our last recruitment campaign was a regional whole-time recruitment campaign which started in autumn/winter 2008, the closing date for completed applications was 19/12/2008.
- We had three trainee courses from this campaign that started on 03/08/2009, 28/09/2009 and 01/03/2010
- The last whole-time campaign was January 2013.
- All underrepresented groups are challenged by the very nature of the FRS being a sector in which few jobs become vacant and there is low turnover. There are mechanisms such as open days, access days, positively targeted images in recruitment campaigns, etc but the practical issue of 20 posts and 3,000 applicants cannot be underestimated, nor can the impact of mismanaging expectations.
- Please note the staffing levels are contracting. We have not recruited WT firefighters in over eight years. We have reduced the number of support staff by 24% over the last couple of years. Our only recruitment has been to the retained service and volunteers.
- While our aim is to be reflective of our population this is difficult given the concentration of the BAME population in the larger cities - where the majority of stations are WT. This limits opportunity for recruitment.
- Lack of recruitment to WT posts [none in last eight years]. Firefighter recruitment has been limited to the retained service in our rural communities - while the BAME population is greatest in our cities - most of which are served by WT stations. The number of non-uniform staff posts has dropped sharply over the last three years with minimal recruitment opportunities.
- We have not recruited firefighters for six years.
- NOT RECRUITED SINCE 2008.
- Recruitment Freeze on WT for a number of years. Prior to that the service used local population data down to ward area to inform recruitment targets. The service has also been downsizing for a number of years for administrative/support staff. For RDS staff, local population data was used to set recruitment targets.
- Progress demonstrated during recruitment for WT in 2008.
- We monitor treatment of discipline/ bullying cases on a regular basis. We did have targets for BAME staff across both WT and support staff groups however we have had a recruitment freeze in operation for the last six years. The disparate nature of the percentage of the ethnic minority working age population across the county means that RDS targets of any significance are only viable in a few stations.
- Since 2008 there has been a recruitment freeze.
- Only RDS recruitment currently. The service has been downsizing since 2004/05 although awareness days for underrepresented groups were held up to 2009.
- No whole-time recruitment since 2009 and this is unlikely to take place before 2019.
- In the one service respondent, where recruitment has continued, there remains a significant focus on improving the diversity of both recruitment and promoted staff with published targets the service seeks to achieve.
- Recruitment and promotion have
shown a steady increase and, yes, we have data to support our assertion.

- Monitoring data demonstrated that BAME staff applying for promotion were less likely to be successful than white staff. In conjunction with staff support groups, pre-assessment centre workshops have been held that target BAME staff and also mentoring, buddying and learning sets have been encouraged to aid familiarisation with process and supportive learning.
- Targeting BAME staff for progression opportunities. Managers are required to demonstrate how they are developing staff.

**INTERVIEWS**

We spoke to a number of senior staff in the FRS. Despite the challenge of trying to improve diversity at a time of little or no recruitment, we found a recognition of the importance of creating a more diverse workforce, an acknowledgement of the scale of the challenge, and enthusiasm in those organisations we spoke to for improvement.

We noted a range of initiatives are already in place, which any national strategy might usefully and systematically share and build on. These included:

- Open days specifically targeting women and BAME potential applicants
- Mentoring and coaching schemes
- An extensive range of community engagement with community organisations and events often targeting underrepresented groups
- Cadet schemes which specifically encourage underrepresented groups
- The development of volunteers schemes and encouraging such individuals to apply
- Positive action recruitment to ensure an FRS has dual language speakers
- Support for careers fairs and careers services
- Production of professionally designed literature emphasising that the FRS is a good career for women and for black and minority ethnic applicants with FRS role models used in in-house and recruitment literature
- The development of senior “champions” to highlight the importance of diversity and support networks for women, LGBT and BAME staff
- Senior leaders directly addressing workplace cultural challenges that might affect how women, LGBT and BAME staff are appropriately integrated into watches, stations and departments.

A number of FRSs have sought to sustain the approach set out by the 2008-18 DCLG Strategy and that was reflected in the initiatives and the commitment to diversity at senior levels in those services we interviewed. We were told that (verbatim):

**THE JOURNEY TO EQUALITY**

“When I joined the service there were not many female firefighters. There were issues with shared facilities. There were even issues with other male officers wives apparently worried about what might be going on within a watch. But I was determined to make a success of it and I was eventually valued fully by my male colleagues. In my role now I work to help make it easier for others - other women and for ethnic minority staff and officers”

“I strongly believe it is important to bring the difference that being a women or being from an ethnic minority can make to how the service runs. I want our service to be an inclusive, empowering service, owned by all staff. We have engaged in a sustained effort to tackle the culture challenges every FRS faces in different ways. The initial proposals for changing how we worked were thrown out by the workforce and I think...”
that showed us staff were starting to speak truth to power”

“I see lots of parallels between my own journey and that of ethnic minority staff thinking of joining the FRS. The recruitment freeze has made it really hard to move as quickly as we want towards a more diverse workforce. But if we are to be successful in changing we need to understand why ethnic minority people often don’t consider applying although I think that might start to change with second and third generation ethnic minority people. When people suggest that maybe the FRS isn’t a career ethnic minority people are attracted to I ask who puts the fires out in Jamaica and India?”

“I think there are things we in the FRS have to do. We have undertaken some positive action to encourage women to join the service. We are trying a similar approach for ethnic minority applicants. It was clear from our work around prevent and protect that we needed some firefighters who could be effective in the homes of some of our harder to reach communities. That is why we decided to take positive action and specifically that we wanted a small number of firefighters who had a dual language. There was some resistance from some staff who didn’t understand this or thought it was just a back door way of favouring ethnic minority staff. In fact the decision was driven by very good strategic need, I met with staff and explained directly, not through an email, why we were going to do what we did and I think everyone was eventually persuaded. And I’m glad we did it.”

“When I started as a firefighter I was never on a watch with a female firefighter. There simply weren’t many women employed in that role. When we did start to recruit women there were all sorts of issues such as toilets, changing and sleeping arrangements, which had simply not been thought about. The watch culture of the time was quite resistant to change”

“When the issue of recruitment of more ethnic minority firefighters was raised there was a defensive response with comment such as “why can’t we just appoint the best people” rather than thinking through why the FRS wasn’t recruiting a cross section of the community and whether that might actually be a good idea”.

“I wouldn’t want to pretend we don’t have some obstacles. We have a physical infrastructure which in some cases is costly to change to ensure adequate toilets and showers for both sexes. There is still pressure on female and ethnic minority firefighters and especially first line managers to “prove themselves”. We’ve found it is really important how we respond to views of white male firefighters who are wary of, or even resistant to, these changes. Our ability to link our approach to diversity to making the service more effective as well as emphasising fairness is important. We have to engage with such views whilst also giving a lead across the senior management team.”

“I’ve been in the FRS service for almost three decades. In 1989 we had 10,000 applicants for 90 jobs a year. I don’t recall any female of ethnic minority recruits at all. Diversity was simply not on our radar. Over the following years there was a small but steady change but the numbers were relatively tiny.”

MAKING THE CASE

“We know that if we are to be inclusive we have a journey to make. I don’t think you change culture by relying on compliance. You have to make it clear where you want the service to go but also carry staff – including middle and senior officers – with you. I want our senior officers to be role models and demonstrate how we want everyone to behave.”

SMOKE & MIRRORS
Time to meet the challenge of equality in the fire and rescue service
“We decided that the most effective way to do this was to ensure everyone understood why we wanted a more diverse and respectful workforce. We linked it to prevent and protect. We have to bear some resemblance to the communities we serve if we are to be as effective as we can be.”

“In response to a defensive response from staff it was really important to not just label critics as “racist” but to try to engage them. We had to ask ourselves as managers why some sections of the community just didn’t seem to want to apply.”

“What made me think was going to a different FRS where the issue was taken seriously in the north west of England. In that service the link between diversity and community safety was taken for granted and inevitably that raised issues about what sort of workforce was needed. In that service they had an equality and diversity strategy which was understood on the ground by the front line staff. It was impressive and ahead of much of the country.”

“When I returned to my original service as a senior manager I have tried to apply what I learnt there. One of the things that struck me about the force I’d left was the importance of being honest about the issue. So when I realised that although we had an award for inclusiveness but actually weren’t as good as we should be I decided we should not renew it until we could hand on heart say we were doing what the award said we were.”

“We set about trying to change the wider culture of the service, building department strategies and agreeing and emphasising our values. Building our Inclusion Forum and our LGBT and BAME networks followed naturally from that work. We worked hard – it took a lot of face to face meetings across the service – to emphasise how inclusion was a core part of prevention. Tackle our culture, especially getting our middle managers on board, was essential. It took a lot of time but eventually we reached a consensus which we think staff own around our core values and have tried to embed these in everything we do.”

“We had to face up to the existence of bullying and harassment as a challenge. We carried out a survey which enabled us to hold a mirror to ourselves.”

“We are very clear. It is essential – not an optional extra – that our staff believe in the narrative and that we are honest about what we are trying to do.”

“Another key part of our attempts this year to be comprehensive in our approach to diversity was by sending 210 staff to the national Pride march where they could see other FRSs represented. One other issue we’re trying to think through on diversity is how we tackle the division between firefighters and non-uniform staff which I think is far too sharp at present.”

NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEADERSHIP

“I think we are now in an opportune moment with a new revision of the FRS framework and an increase in retirement to make the change we have wanted to make. I am not in favour of a national league table, it just encourages the wrong practices. I do think we need to copy the best police practice as some of that seems to be working.”

“I can’t emphasise too much the impact of what has, in effect, been a seven year recruitment freeze within this authority. Prior to that in 2000-2008, the things that worked best were using firefighters to lead the recruitment. If existing female and ethnic minority firefighters were able to be role models that really helped.”

“We have tried to learn from our local police force who have had the same challenge but who have had considerable
success recruiting community support officers from under represented groups.

“I am very keen on developing networks and demonstrating personal leadership. So I chair our FRS Inclusion Group. I think it is essential there is a space for unrepresented groups to be heard. “I’m not a fan of national targets. The last ones were not met. At a time when we weren’t recruiting in most areas they were never going to be reached. I am in favour of being clear where you want to be, setting your own goals, being determined to get there and doing it for the right reasons. Compliance and equality impact assessments are useful as a challenge but they don’t change culture in my view.”

“We have just started to recruit again and, although the numbers are small, one quarter of our most recent cohort of recruits are female and one fifth are from ethnic minorities. We have tried to be imaginative and have used a range of targeted initiatives. We have stressed to our community safety advocates and volunteers that they or their networks should really consider applying. We have a cadet scheme. We have built links with the Prince’s Trust and all these openings will hopefully increase the diversity of our applicants. We have targeted underrepresented groups to become volunteers.”

“I’m clear that if we get recruitment right this time round there can be a “snowball” effect with the new recruits spreading the word. There are other steps we can be using such as apprenticeship type schemes to draw in hard to reach groups so the service becomes more representative.”

“Like some other forces we have just started recruiting three small cohorts of new firefighters. We tried to build our values into our recruitment. The very best recruit was a female firefighter and I can’t forget how she responded – and what a lesson it was for all of us. We’re running awareness days targeting female and ethnic minority potential applicants. We’ve approached some of the biggest local employers to see if we can help make our RDS more diverse too.”

“I do think one aspect of diversity we need to think about is the way we have historically segmented the workforce – especially the way we have such a strict demarcation between uniformed and non-uniformed staff. That’s another remnant of a culture that has had its day in my opinion.”

“Nationally, I can’t see any sense in relatively small services like us trying to design and produce our own materials demonstrating the FRS wants to become more diverse. I think the CFOA was right to want to take a national approach to an advertising campaign to make the FRS welcome to all sections of the community. It made no sense for individual forces to be reinventing the wheel.”

“I said earlier that the national initiatives of a decade ago were important. I think it would be really helpful if we could have some national resources to help raise the profile of the FRS as a diverse service and sharing good practice across different services.

“Ministers need to show leadership if they are serious and put some national resources into raising the profile and brand of the FRS as a diverse service and sharing good practice. We need a better idea of what “good” looks like and I think that has to be done – or at least led – nationally.

I would also say that what gets measured tends to get done, and in that period there was a real emphasis nationally on demonstrating progress with actual numbers recruited.”
1. Engagement and Building a compelling case for equality, diversity and inclusion - this would ensure that the FRS is conscious of the importance of inclusion, that FRS understand and know how to build inclusion into their policies.

- 1a - Introduce an annual staff survey, recommended also by the Thomas Review, to help the FRS benchmark and demonstrate year on year progress on wellbeing, equality and culture.
- 1b - Dedicated and appropriately funded internal resource to support equality, diversity and inclusion professionals within each FRS, supported by regional and national networks addressing equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 1c - Each FRS should set a standard on staff self-reporting rates by ethnicity to a minimum 95% and for all other protected characteristics.
SECTION 5: SOME PRACTICAL STEPS

This section sets out in some detail the sorts of measures that we can have confidence will be effective. The FRS faces a twofold challenge on EDI.

Firstly, if it is to be as successful as possible on prevention and protection, then it will need to continue to change its culture so that it becomes a service where all staff are welcomed, valued and their talent developed. This is a particular challenge for staff with protected characteristics such as gender (women in this context), BAME, LGBT and staff with disability.

Secondly, it must close the gap between the representation of BAME staff in particular, and the communities the FRS represents.

The two imperatives are intimately linked. A service that doesn’t welcome and value staff from all backgrounds and characteristics will fail to recruit and/or retain such staff. Failure to do so will impact on the core objectives of the FRS. This section considers steps around recruitment and progression to improve diversity in effective ways. We then seek to address issues raised in our interviews and previous reports on the FRS. We make suggestions considering relevant examples of good practice that the sector should draw on ensuring, that this time; the opportunity to embed EDI is not lost.

Rt Hon. Brandon Lewis MP, set AFSA a challenge in November 2016:

“I know a common excuse to explain the lack of diversity is that services are not recruiting and so have not had the opportunity to take action to address this. I have also been told that the issue is not that simple.

Recruitment is now underway across a range of services and I hope our fire reform agenda will help you attract a diverse workforce to the service, and that this diverse workforce can in turn help drive our reform agenda.

I have had constructive discussions with the Local Government Association and the Chief Fire Officers’ Association who have both committed to identify what action can be taken to diversify the workforce. Especially as we bear in mind that almost a third of the workforce are due to retire soon and therefore the opportunity for change and reform is there.

But, alongside this, retention, leadership, succession planning and the talent pipeline all need to be considered and I hope this association can input into their thinking to identify workable solutions, whether it be nationally or indeed what we can do locally” (our emphasis).

This section seeks to respond to that challenge.

**CONTEXT**

More than ten years ago in 2004, only 20% of the UK working population was white, male, able-bodied and less than 45. ONS (2016). Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistical bulletins. https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/previousReleases

From 2010 onwards, the number of young people reaching working age in the UK began to fall by 60,000 every year, fundamentally changing the profile of the workforce. Overall, between 2010 and 2020, the UK will need 2.1m new entrants to the adult workforce, and this means making the best use of available labour. How to Conduct Diverse Recruitment toolkit Recruitment Industry Engagement Initiatives. http://www.bitc.org.uk/sites/default/files/how_to_conduct_diverse_recruitment1.pdf

Such changing demographics will necessitate workplace cultures that value diversity.

UK public services as a whole have, until recently, not generally had coherent talent management policies for attracting, appointing, developing and promoting staff. They have primarily relied upon a framework of policies, procedures and training (and custom and practice). At best, these consciously seek to ensure that the best possible applicants are encouraged, that selection processes are fair, that career progression and promotion does not discriminate and that staff can raise concerns if they believe they are unfairly treated. At worst, recruitment and promotion is characterised by openly “appointing people like us”. That approach has not succeeded in bringing about a culture where selection, career progression and promotion are fair and seen to be fair, in the FRS or elsewhere in the public sector.

Furthermore, the evidence from workforce data, staff surveys and research across public services demonstrates conclusively that the current approach has failed to bring about the diverse workforce public services need.

**WHY ARE EVIDENCED POLICIES AND PRACTICES ESSENTIAL?**


“Our study sites emphasised the importance of leadership at all levels of the organisation, including members and non-executive directors, in prioritising race equality, setting the culture, raising expectations, increasing accountability and following through with action. Many officers, members and non-executive directors told us that hearing about the real experiences of black and minority ethnic communities had helped them to understand why race equality mattered. Less senior individuals also made a valuable difference by influencing peers and challenging progress”. pg 30.

A decade later a literature review of the international evidence on effective and sustained interventions on equality came to similar conclusions and suggested that essential elements of effective interventions were characterised by effective leadership with a clear vision of why diversity was important, how accountability was linked to outcomes, not processes, and an absence of reliance on purely voluntary measures. (Priest, N, Esmail, A, Kline, R, Rao, M Coghill, Y and Williams D (2015)

That approach referenced two particular interventions. Firstly, the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) decided to refuse to fund organisations whose departments had not achieved at least a silver level Athena Swan Award (a gender equality policy standard). There followed a very substantial rise in the number of women in leadership positions in those institutions which has since been sustained. Blandford E, Brill C, Neave S, Roberts Allison A. (2011) Equality in higher education: Statistical report. Equality Challenge Unit.

Secondly, a landmark analysis of the corporate diversity policies of 708 US private sector organisations over three decades from 1971 to 2002 found that:

“Attempts to reduce managerial bias through diversity training and diversity evaluations were the least effective methods of increasing the proportion of women in management…… programmes which targeted managerial stereotyping through education and feedback (i.e., diversity training and diversity evaluations) were not followed by increases in diversity.” (Our emphasis). Kalev A, Dobbin F, Kelly E. (2006) Best practices or best guesses? Assessing the efficacy of corporate affirmative action and diversity policies. Am Soc Rev 2006; 71:589-617.

Instead, this research found that providing a legal underpinning to leadership with responsibility for the representation of women and ethnic minorities in management positions was the most effective single factor in making progress on managerial diversity.

These conclusions on how to change organisational behaviours on recruitment and promotion were matched by an ACAS evaluation of international initiatives to reduce bullying (another workforce culture challenge in the FRS ) which summarised the evidence as to why many previous initiatives on tackling bullying culture change may have failed:

“In summary, while policies and training are doubtless essential components of effective strategies for addressing bullying in the workplace, there are significant obstacles to resolution at every stage of the process that such policies typically provide. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that research has generated no evidence that, in isolation, this approach can work to reduce the overall incidence of bullying in Britain’s workplaces”. Evesson, J; Oxenbridge, S; Taylor D. (2015) Seeking better solutions: tackling bullying and ill-treatment in Britain’s workplaces. Acas.

Research suggests that the establishment of effective policies, practices and training is important but is only one aspect of an effective approach to improving diversity and challenging discrimination.

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Adrian Thomas argues that:

“The root cause of discrimination is not necessarily deliberate action by an individual but rather a level of unconscious bias that results in impact that can be misunderstood or that the individual does not realise the impact of their actions.” pg. 27.

He proposes that the central measure to address this discriminatory culture is:

“Unconscious bias training should be rolled out across the FRS service.

If the culture is right and recruitment and promotion prospects are fair then selection and progression will be on talent and ability alone, and the percentages will eventually change.” pg. 28.
Unfortunately, this proposal misunderstands the research evidence, and will not have the desired impact. As there is a serious risk it will be seen as a key strategy, we summarise the evidence why it should not be.

‘Unconscious bias’ refers to any bias we are unaware of and which happens outside of our control. It happens automatically when our brain makes quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, which may be influenced by our background, cultural environment or personal experience. Such bias need not be conscious. It can lead people to like those who are similar to themselves or someone they know; or cause employers to feel more comfortable to look for candidates who are similar to candidates they have recruited before.

“Stereotypes can influence our perceptions and behaviours without our knowing it is happening, and can do so even when we reject those stereotypes. Such stereotypes may be beliefs about the characteristics or abilities that different categories of people possess or beliefs about what roles or behaviours are appropriate for individuals from those categories.” (Bargh, John A. and Melissa J. Ferguson. (2001). “Beyond behaviorism: On the automaticity of higher mental processes.” Psychological Bulletin 126: 925-945).

“The beliefs that some groups of job applicants or existing staff are more competent than other groups or staff, influence both our expectations for the future performance of such individual, and whether we interpret their past performance as evidence of ability. Such beliefs tend to be self-fulfilling.” (Heilman, Madeline E., Aaron S. Wallen, Daniella Fuchs, and Melinda M. Tamkins. (2004). “Penalties for success: Reactions to women who succeed at male gender-typed tasks.” Journal of Applied Psychology 89: 416-427.)

Unconscious bias is an important factor in both how individuals act, and how organisations make decisions. Understanding unconscious bias, how it works, and what one’s own biases are can be very useful indeed but that does not mean that unconscious bias training is an effective means of preventing biased decision-making, for example, in recruitment. In fact, research suggests that diversity training in general, and unconscious bias training in particular, have limited impact and may even be counterproductive, if those taking part don’t want to reduce their bias. (Devine et al. The Regulation of Explicit and Implicit Race Bias: The Role of Motivations to Respond Without Prejudice (2002); Insisting that most people exhibit unconscious race bias can legitimise bias by presenting it as the norm which may lead people to be less motivated to discover their own biases and change their attitudes and behaviours. (Duguid MM, Thomas-Hunt MC (2014). Condoning stereotyping? How awareness of stereotyping prevalence impacts expression of stereotypes’. Journal of Applied Psychology, vol 100, pp 343-59 https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/puBAMEd/25314368 )

Evidence for the direct effects of conventional diversity training on attitudes and behaviours is limited and its positive impact is primarily on those who are already striving to be egalitarian (King EB, Gulick L, Avery D (2010). ‘The divide between diversity training and diversity education: integrating best practices’. Journal of Management Education, vol 34, pp 891-906 http://jme.sagepub.com/content/34/6/891.abstract.; Kulik CT, Roberson L (2008). ‘Diversity initiative effectiveness: What organisations can (and cannot) expect from diversity recruitment, diversity training, and formal mentoring programs’ in Brief AP (ed), Diversity at work, vol 2, pp 265–317). It is doubtful that any type of training programme would be able to
overcome bias among those who are not motivated to be fair or who are explicitly opposed to hiring women and minorities. Shelley J. Correll and Stephen Benard *Gender and Racial Bias in Hiring* (2006). https://www.gse.upenn.edu/sites/gse.upenn.edu.diversity/files/Correll%20Benard%20Gender%20and%20Racial%20Bias%20in%20Hiring.pdf

Dobbin and Kalev suggest that whether bias training has any impact may also be affected by whether or not it is mandatory or voluntary. They found that mandatory diversity training was associated with a 6% to 9% fall in the share of ethnic minority managers in a company over five years whilst voluntary training was associated with a 9% to 13% increase. What matters is whether white people are buying into the process. https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail

In summary, we agree with another recent report on discrimination in recruitment which stated:

“Despite its prevalence, there is a lot of scepticism as to whether or not it works. Among the experts we spoke to, it was hard to find someone with a good word to say about it. The best we came by was that it could make people aware of their biases without actually being capable of budging them.”


ACCOUNTABILITY IS KEY TO COUNTER THE IMPACT OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

We do not wish to dismiss the impact of unconscious bias and the impact of many factors of social life including the workplace. In fact there is an opportunity for FRSSs to consider where the negative outcomes associated with unconscious bias impact on decision making. Accountability is where FRSSs can best tackle the consequences of unconscious bias without ‘training’ the whole workforce at great expense with limited impact on outcomes. When those involved in selecting, developing, promoting or retaining staff act on their unconscious biases, they take a “cognitive shortcut”. Instead of drawing on the information made available to them, they fall back on stereotypes without realising so, even when these may be contrary to their own beliefs. Moreover, an emphasis on unconscious bias training may individualise the problem and may have the effect of absolving institutions from examining the systematic embedding of discrimination.

We now know, however, that certain types of organisational intervention can minimise the impact of such biases when judging applicants. Crucially, holding those responsible for making decisions to account works. When individuals know they will need to justify their decisions on appointments to a more senior manager they are likely to undertake more complex thought processes before doing so and, in doing that, may undermine bias when making decisions. (Devine, Patricia G., Plant, E; Amodio, D, Eddie Harmon Jones and Stephanie L. Vance. (2002) “The regulation of implicit and explicit race bias: The role of motivations to respond without prejudice.” Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 82: 835-848.; McCracken, Douglas M. (2000). “Winning the talent war for women: Sometimes it takes a revolution.” Harvard Business Review November-December: 159-167; Dovidio, J, F, Thomas Erin L, Moss-Racusin Corinne A. Brescoll Victoria L, Graham Mark J., & Handelsman Jo “Included but not invisible The Benefits and Costs of Inclusion”. Yale University. N.d. http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/conferences/2013-w50-research-symposium/Documents/dovidio.pdf
There are a number of ways in which accountability can be reinforced. One is by requiring interview panel chairs to explain to someone senior in the organisation why individuals from a particular group of candidates facing patterns of discrimination have not been appointed. Another is to supplement the interview panel with a panel member from outside the department of appropriate seniority, whose role is to be “the guardian” of fair process. This person’s role is primarily as a reminder to the panel of their wider accountability and their employer’s commitment to ensuring fair treatment and if the data suggests that is not happening, to be able to explain why. Research suggests that the positive impact of diversity on group performance (including on an interview panel) has less to do with what these additional panel members say, but happens because their presence affects expectations of others. In the case of an interview panel that is likely to reduce the tendency to rely on stereotypes as cognitive shortcuts. (Phillips, Katherine. W., and D. L. Loyd. (2006) “When surface and deep-level diversity collide: The effects on dissenting group members.” Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes 99: 143-160).

To be effective, leadership has to acknowledge and understand the levels and nature of discrimination, including through the honest analysis of recruitment, promotion and turnover data in particular. Visible senior management support for positive diversity and inclusion policies and practices is also essential. (Bilimoria, D., Joy S, Liang XF (2008). ‘Breaking barriers and creating inclusiveness: lessons of organizational transformation to advance women faculty in academic science and engineering’. Human Resource Management, vol 47, pp 423-41.)

That support will not be effective unless it can:

- create and disseminate the narrative explaining why diversity is important for the provider
- respond directly to criticism or avoidance
- model the behaviours and actions they expect of others
- ensure accountability through transparency and appropriate metrics to hold their managers and themselves to account.

When appointment panels know they will have to justify their decisions to a higher authority, they tend to engage in more complex decision making processes (Martha Foschi Double Standards in the Evaluation of Men and Women Social Psychology Quarterly Vol. 59, No. 3, Special Issue: Gender and Social Interaction (Sep., 1996), pp. 237-254 https://www.jstor.org/stable/2787021?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

Holding individuals accountable for their personnel decisions is one way to reduce bias in hiring and promotion (Virginia Valian. Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women (1999) MIT https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/why-so-slow)

Above all, leadership that provides sustained support for positive diversity and inclusion policies and practices and model them themselves is essential. (Bilimoria et al 2008 op cit). Organisations must have in place a convincing narrative with clear goals, underpinned by metrics against which their performance is held accountable.

**REACHING POTENTIAL FRS WOMEN AND BAME APPLICANTS**

FRS service advertisements for firefighter vacancies attract large numbers of applicants but historically only a small proportion of such applicants are from women and ethnic
minorities. Bucke (1994) concluded that a main reason for this is that such groups have not thought of firefighting as a career. He argued that:

“Social networks surrounding firefighting were found to have a degree of influence in attracting certain groups to this occupation. Such networks were found to create an informal recruitment process which preceded the formal one. White men were most likely to be initially drawn to firefighting through knowing a serving firefighter whilst women and ethnic minorities were more likely drawn by advertising or seeing firefighters at work.”

Bucke (1994) and Shuttleworth, A. (2000) Redressing the Balance – Improving the Service: BCC report, The Fire Service College also supported this view. Bucke found that knowledge about firefighter vacancies tend to be learnt about informally from family or other contacts within the service. His findings were supported by Shuttleworth who, like Bucke, emphasised the importance of departing from the traditional reliance on “word of mouth” recruitment as a primary entry.

In “Making a Difference”: A Study Of Under Representation In UK and USA Fire Services (2002), Singh estimated that firefighters currently employed influence over 60% of all new firefighters who join the service in the UK and that:

“When analysing what factors influenced firefighters to join the fire service, not surprisingly, the main influences were not proactive measures taken by the service but friends and family, if the fire service is serious about making a change to the representation of women and black sections of the community then the influence of role models noted in Phoenix should not be overlooked.”

The Audit Commission study on workforce issues, Tomorrow’s People came to similar conclusions:

“Social networks surrounding firefighting were found to have a degree of influence in attracting certain groups to this occupation. Such networks were found to create an informal recruitment process which preceded the formal one. White men were most likely to be initially drawn to firefighting through knowing a serving firefighter whilst women and ethnic minorities were more likely drawn by advertising or seeing firefighters at work.”

In 2010, the DCLG launched its “Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career” national campaign which was “designed to raise awareness, and change attitudes to a career in the fire and rescue service amongst currently underrepresented groups”. The campaign focussed on 14-16 year old girls and people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. It was preceded by research on the perceptions of older and younger people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. It was preceded by research on the perceptions of older and younger people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and a national quantitative survey looking at views on careers in the FRS in February 2009 which was to be repeated annually for a couple of years to measure progress. http://fireofficers.org.uk/downloads/fireservicecirculars/england_wales/2009/FRSC67_2009.pdf

The first part of the campaign (2009-2010) looked to change perceptions about a career in the FRS amongst those who were found to have an influence on the careers chosen by young people, notably parents and religious leaders. The second part (2010-2011) was intended to raise the profile and change perceptions about an FRS career amongst people from those communities who might be future recruits.
Section 5

Positive Action

Many FRS services have already used a range of “positive action” measures to address the disproportionately few numbers of women and BAME staff. Evidence suggests significantly more use can (and should) be made of this provision as a legitimate way of improving the diversity and effectiveness of the FRS.

The Equality Act 2010 is the main equality legislation in England, Wales and Scotland enabling positive action. It provides for general and specific duties for authorities and bodies carrying out public functions and makes provisions for positive action (sections 158 and 159) and for genuine occupational requirements (schedule 9). The general equality duty is set out in section 149 of the Act whilst the specific duties are set out in secondary legislation. Section 149 of the Act requires public authorities, including the FRS service, when exercising their functions, to have “due regard” of the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people which are connected to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Positive action initiatives are permitted when their use can be demonstrated to assist, for example, in improving staff numbers or progression from underrepresented groups. Where that is done the steps and initiatives taken need to be recorded, and can demonstrate that proportionate measures have been objectively justified in tackling under-representation.

Positive action does not mean people will be employed or promoted simply because they share a protected characteristic. Its aim is to encourage and assist people from disproportionately underrepresented groups to help them overcome disadvantages associated with the protected characteristic when competing with other applicants, or to enable them to participate in the activity.

Positive action can help create a level playing field to enable people to compete on equal terms and promote equality of opportunity. This ensures that all applicants are treated in an equal way or treated differently, depending on their needs, to preserve equal treatment and recruitment based on merit. In Police diversity: Government Response to the Committee’s First Report of Session 2016-17 https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/612/61204.htm the Home Office expressed its strong support for a systematic use of positive action around recruitment.

Section 159 of the Equality Act permits positive action in recruitment or promotion. In recruitment, the Equality
Act 2010 allows positive action before or at the application stage. The steps could include encouraging particular groups to apply, or helping people who share particular protected characteristics to perform to the best of their ability (for example, by giving training or support not available to other applicants before the actual official application or recruitment phase).

Section 159(3) of the Equality Act states that an employer is not prohibited from treating a person more favourably than another because they have a protected characteristic which the other person does not have. However, that favourable treatment has to have an aim of enabling or encouraging persons who share a protected characteristic to overcome or minimise the disadvantage or to participate in that activity.

Section 159 (3) does not allow employers to have a policy or practice of automatically treating people who share a protected characteristic more favourably than those who do not have it and each case must be considered on its merits.

Positive action is not the same as positive discrimination, which is prohibited in employment with some exceptions, notably in regard to disabled persons. Positive discrimination is treating a person more favourably solely because they have a relevant protected characteristic. Positive action, on the other hand, is lawful as are policies that attempt to promote equal opportunity by taking into account protected characteristics in order to positively improve outcomes for those who are disproportionately under represented. The focus of positive action might be to redress systemic, historical, or institutional discrimination, or to promote diversity in business and public sector organisations.

**WHY IS THIS RELEVANT TO THE FRS?**

The current data on the recruitment and promotion of BAME people into and within the FRS services demonstrates a serious gap between current staffing and government policy, and the needs of the FRS to be broadly representative of the communities served.

We know from research that:

- The data on the likelihood of being selected at application stage for recruitment and progression thereafter is seriously skewed against BAME applicants and staff.

- Role models are crucial in encouraging applications and career development, and that public services can find themselves in a vicious circle, where the absence of senior women, LGBT or ethnic minority staff can deter others from joining or moving upwards – or even staying.

- A critical mass of “different” staff is important in signalling change.

We also know that:

- It has been very difficult for many FRS to become more diverse, because a shrinking workforce and little, if any, recruitment makes change difficult.

- This is about to change as a demographic “bulge” of firefighters retire.

- Demographic change - less than one in five of 20-45 people in the job market are white and male - means recruitment opportunities are imminent.

A number of imaginative initiatives by individual services to change the demographics of the service have been tried. Many of these are forms of positive
action. The challenges that the FRS faces in creating a diverse workforce and ensuring that BAME talent is represented are shared by many organisations within the public and private sectors. Increasingly, positive action is being adopted to ensure workforces, and leadership at every level, are representative of the communities they serve.

Research strongly suggests that the most effective means of “levelling the playing field” in recruitment, promotion and staff development is to ensure that those making decisions and implementing policies:

- Understand the business case for doing so which includes a recognition that not all staff and job applicants will have had equal opportunities to develop and learn in their current roles

- Understand that bias – conscious or unconscious - can be a crucial factor in decision making, often operating in subtle and not easily recognisable ways

- Hold themselves and those they manage to account by putting in place accountability measures focused on outcomes, by using metrics to check this is happening.

Positive action can play a significant role in such activity. Unconscious bias matrices may be useful where those responsible for recruitment, development and promotion are committed to creating a more diverse workforce. In addition to ensuring that all such staff, whether uniformed or non-uniformed, attend recruitment and selection training which focuses on fair and open recruitment and specifically addresses unconscious bias, a range of positive action initiatives could be adopted to attract and recruit a diverse and talented workforce.

For staff development, it is crucial that the organisation works proactively to ensure that all activities which might assist, support and develop staff are fairly offered, disseminated and actively monitored. These would include:

- Access to coaching
- Access to mentoring
- Access to staff development courses and activities
- Opportunities to act up
- Secondments into departments, between departments and to external opportunities
- Leading or joining specific projects and other “stretch opportunities”
- Opportunities to shadow more senior staff.

If monitoring shows access to such opportunities are not fairly distributed then senior leadership should insist on knowing why and take mitigating action, which can include ensuring staff who are disproportionately under represented are able to access them.
POSITIVE ACTION: THE EXAMPLE OF THE POLICE FORCE

EXAMPLE: a police force has a disproportionate under representation of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds in a department for which a role is being advertised. As part of its recruitment activities, the police force states in its advertisements that applications from individuals from ethnic minority background groups are particularly welcomed.

EXAMPLE: a police force with a disproportionate under representation of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds targets their recruitment campaigns in specific media which generally attract readers from a particular minority ethnic group.

EXAMPLE: a sexual offences unit that currently has only female officers and support staff could use positive action to recruit a male candidate who is as qualified in preference to a female candidate to address the disproportionate under representation of men in the unit.

EXAMPLE: a police force which has disproportionately low numbers of officers and staff from ethnic minority backgrounds identifies a number of candidates who are as qualified as each other for recruitment to a post. This includes a candidate from one particular under represented ethnic minority background. It would be lawful to give preferential treatment to that candidate by appointing them over other candidates, provided they are as qualified as other candidates in the pool for selection.

EXAMPLE: a domestic violence unit could not use positive action to recruit more female police officers where women already make up 80% of the department, since the steps taken are not to overcome a disadvantage associated with a protected characteristic or under representation and would amount to unlawful direct discrimination. The department could, however, consider using positive action to allow a preference to be given to male officers when recruiting new roles as they are disproportionately underrepresented in the department and this action would be a proportionate means of addressing the under representation.

EXAMPLE: a firearms department identifies from its monitoring data that women and BAME groups are under represented as firearms officers. During its next recruitment campaign, the department makes it clear that it welcomes applications from women and those from BAME groups. The department holds an open day for potential officers where they can meet candidates. However, the department must not guarantee that all female or BAME candidates will get through all the initial stages of the application process.

EXAMPLE: a front desk enquiry office at a local police station offering advice has no Muslim employees, even though it is located in an area where there is a high Muslim population. When a vacancy arises, there are two candidates of equal merit. One candidate is Muslim and the other is not and they are as qualified as one another to be appointed to the role. The police force could choose to give a preference to the Muslim candidate under the positive action provisions.

LEVEllING THE PLAYING FIELD AT THE RECRuITMENT STAGE

Recruitment processes can discriminate without those leading them realising so. We tend to hire people like ourselves: employers seek candidates who are similar to themselves in terms of leisure activities and life experiences. (42) Rivera, L.A. (2012) Hiring as cultural matching: the case of elite professional service firms. American Sociological Review Vol 77, No 6 Research suggests a number of ways that judgements can be biased at every stage of each of these processes. Given the widespread evidence of the impact of bias on decision making in hiring and promotion, it is essential to ensure all employees are held to the same standards and that criteria used within the processes are as objective and explicit as possible.

PERSON SPECIFICATION AND RECRuITMENT PROCESS

Clarifying explicitly which characteristics are the most important for an organisation’s culture is an essential first step. These might include aspirational values and behaviours that are contrary to, or different to, an organisation’s existing culture. If values are a central feature of culture then avoiding a “tick box” question at interview and using more creative ways to understand shortlisted interviewees’ values is important. Some organisations use increasingly sophisticated and effective values-based interviews such as a facilitated group discussion over an extended period of time with interviewees.

WHAT SUPPORT, OPPORTUNITIES, ENCOURAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IS PROVIDED TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD?

Recruitment should be based on potential for the future, not just opportunities to learn or experience accrued in the past. Given the discrimination, which may prevent BAME staff having equal access to career development support and opportunities such as courses, acting up, involvement in projects, secondments, shadowing and good quality coaching and mentoring, they may not be able to demonstrate equal past achievement but may well have great potential if given the chance.

Coaching, mentoring, additional training and access to development courses can certainly be useful and there is evidence that some, in particular, can assist BAME staff. However, employers should beware of reliance on a “deficit” model for aspirant women or ethnic minority staff which may assume the prime problem is giving support for such staff when, for many of those whose careers have stalled or slowed, more development and confidence is only part of the answer.

Bias can be self-fulfilling and extend to access to development opportunities. Historically, white men as a group, have been believed to be more competent, on the whole, than women or ethnic minority staff. As a result they may be given more opportunities to go on development courses, receive secondments, be invited to “act into” more senior temporary posts, and be invited to lead projects. Research suggests that white men who benefit in this way will also be more likely to be given credit for their ideas, and have their performances evaluated more positively compared with women and BAME employees (Correll, Shelley J. and Cecilia L. Ridgeway. (2003). “Expectation states theory.” in Handbook of Social Psychology, ed. John Delamater. New York).

Acting up, secondments, project leadership, shadowing, sustained mentoring and coaching are all precisely the sort of opportunities that provide development and promotion.
opportunities. Although many ethnic minority staff try to compensate for lack of such opportunities by gaining additional qualifications, when it comes to interviews they may then be at a substantial disadvantage. Unless all such opportunities are open to all staff and ethnic minority staff are specifically encouraged to apply, they will be at a considerable disadvantage in any interview process. It is essential that all such opportunities are seen as an integral part of talent management, with each organisation’s leadership making clear its expectations that where such staff have been disadvantaged in any part of the appointment process in the past, or are underrepresented, then positive action allows that they be specifically encouraged to take up such opportunities. The increasingly influential 70/20/10 Model for Learning and Development, (increasingly adopted in the NHS for example, assumes that:

“Development generally begins with a realisation of current or future need and the motivation to do something about it. This might come from feedback, a mistake, watching other people’s reactions, failing or not being up to a task – in other words, from experience. The odds are that development will be about 70% from on-the-job experiences - working on tasks and problems; about 20% from feedback and working around good and bad examples of the need; and 10% from courses and reading.” Lombardo, M. Eichinger, R (1996). The Career Architect Development Planner. Minneapolis.

HOW AND WHERE THE JOB IS ADVERTISED

We referred above to the importance of social networks in FRS recruitment. There is a wealth of evidence that in many (if not all) aspects of employment, from application to redundancy, ethnic minority staff face discrimination. Such patterns of discrimination were found in studies in the UK and in the USA where it was estimated that up to 38% of the difference in employment between black and white youth can be attributed to differences in the effectiveness of job referrals from social networks. (Department for Work and Pensions (2009) Research Report No 607. A test for racial discrimination in recruitment practice in British cities Martin Wood, Jon Hales, Susan Purdon, Tanja Sejersen and Oliver Hayllar. See also Anthony Heath and Sin Yi Cheung. (2011). Ethnic penalties in the labour market: Employers and discrimination; Bertrand, M and Mullainathan, S (2003) Informal job search and black youth unemployment. NBER Working Paper No 1860. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.)

Whether personality tests in recruitment and selection processes are fair and/or effective is also contested. Thompson, P and McHugh, D (2009) *Work organisations: a critical approach* argue that they are ineffective, other researchers suggest that such tests are predictive, whilst still others argue the tests may well be biased. (Ones, D,S et al (2007) *In support of personality assessment in organizational settings.* Personnel Psychology. Vol 60, No 4.) Some employers use alternatives to such tests. Linos, E and Reinhard, J. (2015) op cit report a growth in work sample tests (evidenced as being good predictors) or even actual work day auditions.

Beirnat and Kobrynowicz (1997) (55) found that African–American job applicants were held to stricter standards of competence than white applicants. (Biernat, Monica and Diane D. Kobrynowicz. (1997). “Gender and race-based standards of competence: Lower minimum standards but higher ability standards for devalued groups.” Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 72: 544-557 (1997).) Similarly, the performance of women and BAME staff and applicants was less likely to be judged as demonstrating task ability or competence than white staff even when this is not objectively true. (Correll, Shelley J (2004) “Constraints into preferences: Gender, status and emerging career aspirations.” American Sociological Review 69: 93-133. (2004).

One study found that the achievements of black managers were less likely to be attributed to ability or effort and more likely to be attributed to help from others than were the achievements of white managers. (Greenhaus, Jeffrey H. and Saroj Parasuraman. (2000). “Job performance attributions and career advancement prospects: An examination of gender and race effects.” Organisational Behavior and Human Decision Processes 55: 273–297. (1993).

A recent 2016 Health Education England assessment of the effectiveness, validity, cost and diversity impact of various forms of values-based recruitment concluded that situational judgement tests are best at promoting diversity and also meet other criteria employers would wish to have met. UK employers increasingly anonymise application forms and remove evidence of ethnicity or gender. (Health Education England (March 2016): *Values Based Recruitment Framework.* https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/attracting-recruiting/values-based-recruitment ).

**THE STRUCTURE THE INTERVIEW PROCESS TAKES, AND ITS COMPONENTS INCLUDING WHAT QUESTIONS ARE ASKED, AND WHO IS ON THE PANEL**

How effective interviews are is a contested area, but despite the mixed evidence of their effectiveness, they remain the cornerstone of most recruitment practices. There is extensive evidence of the biases that may affect decision making within interviews. Unstructured interviews are especially prone to bias (Judge, T, Higgins, C and Cable D. (2000) *The employment interview: a review of recent research and recommendations for future research.* Human Resource Management Review. Vol 10, No 4. (2000) but structured interviews may also be biased: there is a strong correlation between initial impressions on a job interview (based on demographic or other characteristics) and how structured questions are marked afterwards (Barrick, M. Schaffer, J and Degressi, W (2009). What you see may not be what you get: relationships

How the interview is conducted - running late, under time pressure, questions that do not obviously relate to the ability required for the job applied for, tests that assume some degree of prior inside knowledge - are all likely to disadvantage ethnic minority groups due to negative stereotypes and the sense of being an outsider. That may be exacerbated if the interview panel and all those associated with the interview are white. That may be further exacerbated if a small proportion of the existing workforce or department is from an ethnic minority background. (Fiske, Susan T. Bersoff, Donald N. Borgida Eugene, Deaux Kay, and Heilman Madeline E. (1991) “Social science research on trial: Use of sex stereotyping research in Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins.” American Psychologist: 46:1049-1060. (1991)) Understanding that feelings of stress and anxiety can be a symptom of stereotype threat can help reduce the gap in performance between men and women Johns M, Schmader, T. and Martens, (2005) Knowing is half the battle: teaching stereotype threat as a means of improving women's math performance. Psychological Science. Vol 16, No 3. (2005).

As Linos, E and Reinhardt, J (2015) note: "Candidates from disadvantaged or minority groups may be particularly prone to experiencing pressure, due to negative stereotypes and the sense of being an outsider. The research here is clear: when someone’s identity as being from a disadvantaged or minority group is highlighted to them, this may negatively impact their performance in the assessment process.” Linos, E and Reinhardt, J (2015) op cit.

A number of organisations have sought to create more diverse panels in order to create a more level playing field for more diverse candidates. A number of employers use staff who are not closely connected to the other panel members. These additional panel members are intended to act as guardians of fair process. However, evidence suggests that such interventions are unlikely to be effective unless linked to systems of accountability of panel decisions to more senior management as discussed above.

**HOW DECISIONS ARE TAKEN AFTER THE INTERVIEW PROCESS**

Interview panels should beware of confusing competence with confidence, a particular concern in gender discrimination but also potentially a factor for some BAME candidates. Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2013) Why Do So Many Incompetent Men Become Leaders? Harvard Business Review. August 22 2013. Similarly, there is no reason to believe that, were decisions to be scrutinised, organisations would not find as Deloitte Touche found, that women were more likely to be evaluated on their performance, men on their potential. There may be a risk that BAME candidates are similarly discriminated against. (McCracken, Douglas M. (2000). “Winning the talent war for women: Sometimes it takes a revolution.” Harvard Business Review November-December: 159-167. (2000).

Linos, E and Reinhardt, J (2015) op cit suggest each member of the interview panel committee first privately express
her or his preferences in terms of candidates and describe clearly the criteria they are using to arrive at their preferences. This may avoid the common scenario where the most “senior” person on a panel expresses their view and others fear to challenge them. They also suggest that including people in recruitment decisions who have not been involved in assessing candidates will help decision making to be more objective. Google even goes so far as to make a rule that managers cannot interview for their own team (Bock, L. (2015) Work rules! Insights from inside Google that will transform how you live and lead. London). This loss of control is not popular with many managers but signifies a commitment to reducing bias and hiring the best possible talent across the firm.

Linos, E and Reinhardt, J (2015) op cit suggest that in making final decisions:

“All forms of assessment should follow structured processes and hiring decisions should be based firmly on the aggregated scores or data, rather than gut feeling. …”the more data driven recruiting managers can be, the better. For this reason, we recommend making a conscious effort not to make a decision within a job interview, and involving colleagues who have not assessed candidates in taking a balanced overview of all the relevant data to make the final decision”.

HOW NEW APPOINTEES ARE WELCOMED INTO THE WORKPLACE: SUSTAINING INCLUSION

Once recruited, staff performance will depend not only on whether the best candidates have been appointed, but on the support employers give their staff. Given the evidence on the FRS watch culture this is particularly important. (Pfeffer J and Sutton R (2006). Hard facts, dangerous half-truths, and total nonsense: profiting from evidence-based management. Boston, MA. (2006)). Even successful applicants may still be discriminated against due to stereotyping about their current or future potential. (Heilman, Madeline E. (2001). “Description and prescription: How gender stereotypes prevent women’s ascent up the organizational ladder.” Journal of Social Issues 57:657-674. (2001).) There is little point in changing the demographics of a workplace and creating a more diverse team, if the change is not sustainable or the increase in diversity is poorly managed, such that the advantages do not accrue to the organisations, the staff and those to whom services are provided. (What induction, support, encouragement, and opportunities they are given).

EFFECTIVE DIVERSE ORGANISATIONS

We know “the key elements necessary for cultures of inclusion, respect and kindness, which also are associated with high quality health care”. (Guillaume, Y.R.; Dawson, J. F. Woods S.A; Sacramento C.A. and West, M. A. (2013). Getting diversity to work: what we know and what we still don’t know. Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology 86(2), 123-141.10.1111/joop.12009. See also Guillaume Y.R; Dawson, J. F., Otaye-Ebede, L., Woods, S. A., & West, M. A. (2015) Harnessing demographic differences in organisations: what moderates the effects of workforce diversity? Journal of Organizational Behavior.10.1002/job.2040). Creating and sustaining those cultures is essential if specific measures to tackle workforce discrimination, and in particular improve talent management, are to be effective and sustainable. Without them there will be a serious risk of changing the demographic profile of teams, occupations or boards, but without the means of sustaining those changes or drawing on the effective impact such changes can make.

Creating an inclusive organisation with sustainable diversity needs more than
good HR policies and compliance with equality procedures. It requires a proactive approach to both supporting individual recruits and existing teams and to change the leadership of organisations. West, Dawson and Kaur report that in healthcare it is crucial that there is:

“A clear, compelling shared vision focused on the delivery of high-quality, continually improving and compassionate care, staff are likely to demonstrate high levels of commitment and identification with their organisations. This is because such shared identification can counter discrimination and exclusion......Sustained effective leadership at every level of the organisation around inclusion, with every team and department in every organisation involved and held accountable to that vision.” West, Dawson and Kaur. (2015) op cit.

Successful organisations are likely to be proactive in working with newly appointed staff to identify their career choices and the support needed to achieve are likely to be successful. That might mean, for example, a focused “onboarding” approach whereby new starters’ skills gaps and career intentions are identified and supported in ways that are tracked methodically, and in which managers are held responsible for helping staff develop and meet those career goals. That is likely to feel rather differently to staff than the currently dominant approach, which places the prime responsibility on individual members of staff to take advantage of opportunities, and in which there is no methodical reaching out to staff. In a culture where the employer is proactive and takes responsibility for every staff member’s development, the failure to ensure equal access to development training, and opportunities to act up, be seconded, shadow senior staff, lead projects, be mentored or coached by senior staff would not be possible.

All such decisions should be analysed, with mitigating action taken should patterns of different access emerge. Such work needs board leadership and is not something to be left only to HR, equality or OD staff.

Those FRS who have sought to take their workforces with them on a sustained process of reflecting on, and changing, their service values to be inclusive and respectful are more likely to be successful than those who have not done so to the same extent.

3. Performance and systems alignment - ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion within the FRS is built into the architecture of the FRS regulatory and inspection regime. Ensuring evidence for success and the ability to measure performance is available.

3a - All FRSs should develop their own targets and action plans to support the recruitment, retention and progression of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff, and women, based on achievable targets that are reflective of the local community and projected vacancies in the service.

3b - The Home Office should reinstate the national annual report on FRS diversity using the statistical indicators on ethnicity and gender contained in the Fire and Rescue Service Statistics Bulletin for England: 2009/10. In addition we also recommend that the Bulletin should include a more comprehensive analysis on reasons for leaving. The leavers’ data should be further reported on by protected characteristics.

3c - Workforce diversity analysis should feature as part of the new Home Office Inspection Framework criteria to ensure progress is being
made across the recruitment cycle in terms of workforce diversity.

- **3d** – The Home Office should explore adopting a series of metrics to measure progress in line with protected characteristics similar to large employers, such as the NHS, as part of a commitment to extensive benchmarking and sharing data.

- **3e** – FRS governance structures should consider the introduction of measures for equality, diversity and inclusion for senior staff during appraisals to demonstrate that it has been prioritised and what positive outcomes have been achieved culturally and in service delivery.

- **3f** – The Home Office should invest in the development and adaptation of good governance principles for equality, diversity and inclusion to help address the challenges of supporting change.

- **3g** - The Home Office and/or NFCC should commission a review within three years on the progress on the recommendations of this Report on recruitment, promotion, retention, leadership, succession planning, and the talent pipeline, drawing on good practice across the public sector. AFSA should commit to support such a review.
SECTION 6: CONCLUSIONS

This Report has examined the trajectory and effectiveness of the numerous reports and reviews which have discussed diversity within the FRS service over the last two decades.

We have considered the data on the movement towards a more diverse workforce meeting the needs of prevent and protect strategically at a time when the communities the FRS serves are more diverse than ever.

There is a consensus that workforce diversity is an indispensable component of the effective engagement with the communities served that a prevent and protect strategy requires.

There are plenty of examples of individual services trying to do their best in circumstances where recruitment was limited or non-existent and when the overall workforce was shrinking.

There has been some progress, not least due to the leadership shown by some services and the CFOA, despite the diminished role of government departments and the retreat from the Equality and Diversity strategy established in the wake of the Thematic Review. As two of the leading members of the AFSA put it during evidence to the Select Committee of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions over a decade ago “we believe the FRS has come a long way since we joined the service in the late ’70s when bullying and harassment were the norm and racist behaviour was openly tolerated. Women were particularly badly treated in the ’70s and ’80s”. Memorandum by Jagtar Singh OBE, MA, BA Hons, MiFireE, and Wayne McCollin BA Ed, DipHRD(FRS49) https://www.publications.parliament.uk/ pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmodpm/43/43.pdf

In our interviews, and in the literature, there is no shortage of positive ideas. But to turn those ideas into effective change on diversity of the sort that consecutive ministers have rightly demanded will need more than just local initiatives. It will require a shared understanding of how best to use positive action to recruit, develop, promote and retain underrepresented groups; how best to avoid the toxic influence of unconscious bias in decision making; how best to share evidence-based good practice; how to raise the profile and promote the brand of the FRS service so it becomes an employer recognised for its positive and inclusive culture that values differences and understands how the insidious nature of inequality has a potential to increase service demand in prevent, protect and respond; and how to hold services to account to deliver this agenda.

This requires resources from ministers, some assurance around recruitment and overall staffing and an insistence on avoiding un-evidenced quick fixes. Our recommendations are a mix of good practice already being developed locally in the best services and a set of further recommendations to the Home Office and the Minister, some drawn from previously commissioned reports. As the FRS service nationally starts to recruit again, there has never been a better time to improve decisively the diversity of our service at every level.
SECTION 7: RECOMMENDATIONS

There are 3 overarching recommendations from the work we have undertaken. They are for consideration by the Home Office, Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament accordingly, and where applicable. Some of these have both National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) and Local Government Association (LGA) relevance. We have included them at the end of the sections we feel they are most applicable to.

To include the recommendations at the commencement of the report, where we have included the subdivisions, and then align them to the context we feel they are most relevant, and finally conclude them at the end, we feel, is appropriate as a number of them flow from the “unfinished business” of previous reports. These are generally proposals which were committed to but which, in our view, should still be seriously considered.

In relation to the subdivisions we have been able to draw on wider evidence about “what works” in recruitment and retention both within the literature, and arising from our interviews. Finally, we have considered the initiatives being undertaken by the police, led by the College of Policing and the Metropolitan Police.

Each of the three recommendations relates to a particular theme which in turn contains a set of recommended actions on what central administrations should either do or support others to do: (see the subdivisions at the beginning of the report.).

1. Engagement and Building a compelling case for equality, diversity and inclusion - this would ensure that the FRS is conscious of the importance of inclusion, that FRS understand and know how to build inclusion into their policies.

2. Workforce - undertaking positive action to recruit people from underrepresented groups to enter the FRS and develop leaders from underrepresented groups in order for them to be effective in senior roles.

3. Performance and systems alignment - ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion within the FRS is built into the architecture of the fire service regulatory and inspection regime. Ensuring evidence for success and the ability to measure performance is available.
APPENDIX A: THE DIVERSITY CHALLENGE TO THE FRS SERVICE?

Brandon Lewis, Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service. Extracts from speech to the Asian Fire Service Association conference 24 November 2016.

"Last month’s (sic) publication of the latest fire operational statistics made unacceptable reading, reporting a continued lack of diversity across the service. The service still remains overwhelmingly white and male: 95% of firefighters in England are male and 96% white. The proportion of women firefighters has slowly increased year on year, from a paltry 1.7% in 2002 to a still too low 5% now. However, this improvement is mainly down in reality to more men leaving the service, than women joining it.

"On ethnic diversity in the FRS services, BAME groups are shockingly under represented compared with the population of England. The largest difference was for ‘Asian or Asian British’ firefighters which comprise 0.6% of firefighters compared with 7.1% of our population in England. I do note that the proportion of all FRS staff from an ethnic minority group has slowly increased since 2003, from a shocking 2.2% to its current level of 4.4%. But these are woeful statistics. They are shockingly embarrassingly bad. And this issue must be addressed by the sector’s leaders and recruiting teams and I want to empower you to stand up and challenge them to make a meaningful difference.

"And talking is not enough. It is time now for effective action. To do that we need to understand why the service is not an attractive profession and what barriers exist for those coming in. You and I both know that a modern FRS needs to be much more reflective of today’s diverse communities and our culture.

"I know a common excuse to explain the lack of diversity is that services are not recruiting and so have not had the opportunity to take action to address this. I have also been told that the issue is not that simple. Recruitment is now underway across a range of services and I hope our fire reform agenda will help you attract a diverse workforce to the service, and that this diverse workforce can in turn help drive our reform agenda.

"I have had constructive discussions with the Local Government Association and the Chief Fire Officers’ Association who have both committed to identify what action can be taken to diversify the workforce. Especially as we bear in mind that almost a third of the workforce are due to retire soon and therefore the opportunity for change and reform is there.

But alongside this, retention, leadership, succession planning and the talent pipeline all need to be considered and I hope this association can input into their thinking to identify workable solutions, whether it be nationally or indeed what we can do locally.

"Where I can, I am happy to tackle and unblock any barriers that exist. I look to you in this room to help identify these barriers and suggest ways to make the service more attractive to all communities.”

APPENDIX B: RECENT HISTORICAL CONTEXT

From 2006, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) oversaw the FRS services nationally. It published ‘Equality and diversity matters: examples of good practice to promote equality and diversity in the FRS service’ (DCLG 2006). This was followed soon after by the ‘FRS’s: Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 - 2018’ (DCLG 2008) setting out equality and diversity objectives for the FRS sector in England, which was launched to assist FRS's in tackling inequalities, promoting equality, diversity and fairness and to help establish a culture of inclusion.

The strategy noted that:

- Very small numbers of employees are from minority ethnic backgrounds (3.2% compared to a national average working population of over 12% - among senior staff this falls to 1% as at March 2007. pg. 11.

- Women and staff from minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely to be promoted (3.8% of the white men in the operational sector of the service in March 2007 were at station manager level compared to only 1% of the operational women and 1.9% of ethnic minority men”. pg. 11.

It stated:

- “This is a 10 year high level strategy which aims to meet the challenge to bring real, radical, lasting change to the FRS in England. Progress will be assessed at least annually. The requirements of the strategy will be kept under regular review.

The strategy sets out a vision for the FRS and the goals which must (our emphasis) be met by 2018 to achieve this vision”. pg. 13.

This strategy set targets for recruitment including:

- By 2013, recruitment of minority ethnic staff across the whole organisation to be at the same percentage as the minority ethnic representation in the local working population.

- FRS authorities with very low minority ethnic working age populations and low recruitment requirements may set a target in terms of individuals recruited over the five year period rather than a percentage of total recruitment.

- By 2013 parity in rates of retention and progression between minority ethnic and white employees, and between men and women. pg. 22.

In addition, funding was made available to those FRSs who wished to adopt ‘stretch targets’ as detailed in 'the FRS workforce diversity targets guidance notes http://www.fireofficers.org.uk/downloads/fireservicecirculars/england_wales/2008/FRSC_55_2008_Annex_A.doc
The strategy also contains provision for FRS authorities to commit to achieving higher recruitment targets:

- By 2013, recruitment of minority ethnic staff across the whole organisation to be at between 2% and 5% above the minority ethnic representation in the local working age population.

- By 2013, recruitment of women into the operational sector to be at least 18%.

Higher targets and funding

- “The Equality and Diversity Strategy encourages FRS authorities to commit to the achievement of higher recruitment targets for both women recruited to the operational sector and for minority ethnic staff across the whole workforce.

- “To support those FRS authorities that commit to the higher targets Communities and Local Government has allocated additional capital grant funding of £2m in total. A minimum grant payment of £42,000 in total will be made to each authority committing to the higher targets, paid in two instalments (April 2009 and April 2010)”. FRS Circular 55/2008 - ANNEX A

The DCLG committed to publishing a FRS Annual Equality and Diversity Report which intended to highlight progress made in achieving recruitment targets and providing information on initiatives rewarded with recognition by the DCLG’s Equality and Diversity Awards which sought to:

- determine where progress has been achieved

- identify good practice

- encourage and nurture change through effective leadership and sound policies

- encourage better performance by each FRS service.


The strategy set out clear lines of accountability for the Minister, each FRS and the Audit Commission. It stated:

- Communities and Local Government will keep the provisions within the National Framework referring to equality and diversity under review

- The Audit Commission will assess performance of all FRS authorities against the requirements of the National Framework

- Communities and Local Government will review progress annually and publish an annual report, including progress against targets by all FRS authorities

- The National Framework will require FRS authorities to implement the Equality and Diversity Strategy. FRS authorities are required to have regard to the National Framework by section 21 of the FRS Services Act 2004.

The strategy set out that the Audit Commission was to:

- “…assess FRS authorities’ performance in implementing the requirements of the strategy through the FRS service performance assessment framework. The Commission’s scored Direction of Travel Assessment will state how well the authority has performed since the last assessment and whether it is considered that it will
continue to improve. Scores will be linked to progress on equality and diversity and achievement of the ESLG.” For example, it stated “FRS authorities will not normally be assessed as improving strongly without reaching Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) Level 3”. ‘FRS service: Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 - 2018’ Pg19.

The Audit Commission’s approach to race equality across the public sector, influenced by the findings of the Macpherson Report, was set out in The Journey to Race Equality Delivering improved services to local communities (Audit Commission 2004) which was a “Public Sector Self-Assessment Tool”. That report was underpinned by research and we return to it later in this report.

Publication of these annual progress reports commenced, but soon after a major change of strategy followed and the promise to publish an annual DCLG report on progress towards the goals set out for 2008 and 2018 was quietly dropped. The targets were, in effect, put on the back burner. Moreover, the absence of significant overall recruitment made it very difficult for local FRAs to significantly improve diversity in recruitment, whilst there was no ministerial intervention to reinstate the targets. Going forward monitoring of both numbers of new recruits and the overall impact on the diversity of the workforce will be important.

Despite the quiet dropping of the strategy, established only two years previously, some FRAs sought to follow the principles set out in the 2008 – 2018 strategy and arguably the services that have been most successful in inclusive cultural transformation and increased diversity in their workforce profile did consciously, or otherwise, continue to work within the values of the 2008-2018 strategy. We outline the workforce profile changes during the time that the strategy was applied in Section 3 of this report.

Additionally, there was a significant change in regulatory focus in 2009. The FRS Operational Assessment Toolkit states:

■ “The Operational Assessment (previously Operational Assessment of Service Delivery). The Toolkit was initially developed in 2006, and was used to assess and score FRAs operational performance for a three year period. The results were provided to the Audit Commission who combined the scores with performance information to provide an overall service assessment score. Since then, the Office of the Chief FRS Adviser led a Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) working group to review and improve the Toolkit in liaison with the Audit Commission, the Local Government Association and the Health and Safety Executive”. FRS Operational Assessment Toolkit Pg2.

There are seven Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) identified in the revised ‘Toolkit’ and “…. there is no separate KLOE for equality and diversity as it should be assessed under each KLOE in respect of strategies, engagement, evaluation, etc.” Pg12.

However, there appears to be limited, or no, evidence that equality and diversity was included in the assessments. Home Secretary Theresa May’s speech on 26 May 2016 made reference to the assessment, stating:

■ “It may serve a purpose as a tool for self-improvement, but in practice it means that chief fire officers handpick their own reviewer, set their own terms of reference, and decide whether or not to publish the results. It is not so much marking your own homework as setting your own exam paper and resolving that
Time to meet the challenge of equality in the fire and rescue service

SMOKE & MIRRORS

The means of assessing all aspects of FRS performance is going to be changing significantly within the fire reform agenda and we anticipate all aspects of equality and diversity to be included.

The LGA facilitates the Equality Peer Challenge to validate self assessments, however this is only at the ‘achieving’ and ‘excellent’ levels, and so the number of FRSs that are at the ‘developing’ level, or services that have self-assessed at one of the other levels, but not had that validated by a peer challenge, is not available. The certification is only given to those that have had the peer challenge, and those currently recorded states that there are 12 FRSs at the ‘excellent’ level. It is of note that as the FRS Ministerial responsibility has moved to the Home Office from the Department of Communities and Local Government, 2016 Her Majesty’s Inspectorate is being re-introduced and it is sincerely hoped that this will be inclusive of assessing, monitoring and reporting on outcomes in relation to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Culture.

In 2013, following the retreat from seeing diversity as a core priority, as detailed above, the report from Sir Ken Knight on Facing the Future: Findings from the review of efficiencies and operations in FRS authorities in England (DCLG 2013) was published. The Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) in its response to the Knight report, felt obliged to preface their response thus:

“As the AFSA we wish to note that we offered our involvement, consultation and advice to the officers that carried out this review but for whatever reason we were not called to attend any focus groups or asked for a written submission.”

The AFSA went on to challenge the paradigm set out in that report which appeared to juxtapose community attachment to local fire services verses efficiency, pointing out a range of
positive initiatives to access some of the excluded communities and drive a change in culture and behaviours on safety whilst delivering year on year improvements on fire deaths and casualties, so that we now have the lowest figures for decades. The AFSA stated “the FRS sector provides access to communities, to other public services and adds values across a range other public services, including the police, NHS and ambulance service.”

The AFSA expressed their:

“Disappointment at the absence of equality, diversity and inclusion being embedded within this review, because of the lack of focus of this in the report we believe that there is a risk that the FRS and its future direction will not have ‘due regard to equality and inclusion’ in the development, local implementation of the key components of this review. We would wish to encourage CFOA and DCLG to ensure that any policy or strategy changes that come about as a result of this review are robustly challenged by giving due regard to equality as required by the Equality Act of 2010.”

The AFSA then referenced the ‘Fair Society, Healthy Lives - The Marmot Review’ - Institute of Health Equity (UCL, 2010) makes reference to firefighters and their ability to engage, communicate and understand risks in his appreciation of Merseyside FRS specifically. In The Health Gap 2015 Marmot talks about West Midlands Fire Service report “Improving Lives to Save Lives” which utilized Marmot objectives from his 2010 review. Marmot says of the Service “..... they opened their hearts to what they could do to help the poor and the needy in the communities they serve and of which they form a vital part. pg328”The change of emphasis in national ministerial leadership may have been a consequence of a rolling back of national stewardship of a range of interventions well beyond equality or it may have signalled a more explicit stepping back from the 2008 strategy”.

What is clear is that the removal of the formal monitoring of the Equality and Diversity Strategy coincided with historically sharp pressures on public finances, and, in particular, on local government finances.

By May 2016 Theresa May commented:

“It is 15 years since the Home Office last oversaw FRS services, and in that time the risk of fire has fallen considerably. Since 2001, the number of fires in England has been reduced by nearly two-thirds. Fire deaths have fallen by almost half and we have seen similar reductions in the number of non-fatal casualties. There are approaching 200,000 fewer false alarms each year, of which malicious incidents have fallen by nearly 90%. Buildings are safer, families and communities are more secure, and firefighters’ time is being wasted far less, freeing them up to focus on more effective activity locally. ..... But what is striking about those achievements is that they were achieved not by change imposed from above, but by reform driven from below.”

In fact, between 2000 and 2010, the changes referred to were driven both by national policy making as well as by sector-driven reform. As well as the reports as referenced above, there were numerous strategies and initiatives specifically on diversity in the FRS:

- Equal Opportunities Task Group (2000)
- Toward Diversity 1 (2000)
- Toward Diversity 2 (2001)
- Equalities and Cultural Change Advisory Board (2001)
- Equality and Diversity Programme Board (2006)
Chief Fire Officers Association Equality Survey (2008)
Equalities and Diversity Report (2009)
National Equality and Diversity Delivery Partnership (2009)
Equalities and Diversity Report (2010)

The most recent national review of the FRS was the 2016 Review by Adrian Thomas. He rightly states:

“Despite an enormous amount of positive activity around equality since 2000 and the creation of multiple task forces, forums, interest groups and strategies there have only been small inroads made in making the FRS representative of the populations it serves.”

In fact, whilst all targets on recruitment and promotion have been missed for the sector as a whole, it is important to understand why, and not to underestimate the extent to which the sector as a whole and some FRSSs in particular have made very significant progress on community safety, resulting in a reduction in response-based demand and a shift to “prevent and protect”. This has largely been due to the commitment from the sector that operational incident demand can be driven down by understanding risk.

In this context, a lack of diversity in the workforce increases risks, costs time and resources and threatens security at all societal levels. The progress made on preventative work has underlined the case for workforce diversity and made the gap between workforce diversity and population diversity even more relevant. Chart 3 (pg. 15) illustrates just how far away the profile of firefighters in England is, by ethnicity, from the general population. To variable degrees, the four ethnic identities recorded, in these broad terms were under represented as firefighters in 2016 compared with the population of England. The largest difference was for “Asian or Asian British” which comprised 0.6% of firefighters (approximately 370) compared with 7.1% of England’s population. (FRS authorities: operational statistics bulletin for England 2015 to 2016 Statistical Bulletin Pg8).

The renewed pressure from ministers to improve diversity across the public sector reflects how in each sector there is a powerful evidenced case linking workforce diversity to service effectiveness. The national steer has driven an emphasis on working towards a police force that is reflective of the local communities on the grounds it is an essential underpinning to “policing by consent”https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/27/27.pdf ). In the NHS the case for a diverse workforce treated, and promoted, fairly is also well evidenced https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/wres-nhs-board-bulletin.pdf. As the then Home Secretary put it last year:

“it is not just professionalism and integrity that underpin the relationship with the public, it is also how representative FRS services are of their communities and the communities they serve. I know this is something the FBU has championed in the past, and I hope we can work together to increase diversity in FRS.”

https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/ethnicityandnationalityinenglandandwales/2012-12-11#ethnicity-in-england-and-wales

However, if the renewed political pressure on the FRS is to substantially improve diverse FRS recruitment and promotion outcomes there needs to be a recognition that:

2017 is a good time to make such an intervention as workforce demographics means there will be a substantial number of existing FRS staff retiring in the near future.
The time to make preparations for improved diverse recruitment is now, before the bulk of the retirement takes place, to put in place the building blocks for effective recruitment.

Those building blocks will need to include evidenced positive action and recruitment interventions on a scale that will need ministerial support and encouragement.

There will need to be a renewed effort to improve the “culture” which has led to repeated allegations of bullying and harassment, particular those of staff with protected characteristics. Changing negative culture to a positive culture is interdependent on whole workforce led activity and changing the “organisational climate”. Segmentation of the workforce by language, through the terminology of ‘back office/frontline’, for instance, impedes the fostering of good relations and the Thematic Review noted that “Where representation was more balanced, it was disappointing to note that these staff were predominantly in the more junior grades. Although some might view non-uniformed staff as being not of such a high profile, this in itself is a questionable attitude.” (HM Fire Service Inspectorate Thematic Report Pg33).

The business case for recruiting a diverse workforce will require energy and coherence involving national support if it is to be effective in convincing the FRS workforce generally of its necessity. Equality is not simply a legislative requirement obliging compliance. It is a positive measure to improve service delivery.

The growth in both the numbers and the proportion of ethnic minority firefighters came to a halt in 2010. None of the national targets set in 2008 were met. That in turn had implications for the modernisation of the FRS as its strategy moved towards prevention.

“While some progress has indeed been made the evidence suggests that it is the failure to attract a diverse workforce and possibly the existence of sexist, racist and possibly homophobic bullying causing some (albeit small numbers) to leave the service that is the root cause behind the lack of growth in the diversity ratios. Indeed as evidence presented to the Fire Minister in late 2014, and presented to me as part of this review, has made clear sexist bullying is still a feature of the service.” Independent review of conditions of service for FRS staff in England February 2015 Adrian Thomas pg. 27.

The current UK political environment, in which positive societal views on race appear to be under pressure, may be an additional challenge. Legislation should be the last available resort when seeking to embed cultural change. However, since “protected characteristics” should be recognised as significant factors that place people at risk it is absolutely essential that the workforce profile of the public service reflects the community it serves. Legislation may follow social change or it may help create it. The Macpherson Inquiry’s finding of institutional racism in the police led to a number of reviews of public services of which the 1999 Thematic Review was one. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 was another consequence.

Adrian Thomas reports the modest improvement in the proportion of women and ethnic minority firefighters since 2002 but then suggests:
Government Ministers have rightly raised concerns about diversity in the FRS as far back as 1999 (Jack Straw as Home Secretary) through to Theresa May and Brandon Lewis (2016). There have been substantial numbers of working parties and initiatives on equality and diversity. Despite this, however, neither “Facing The Future - Findings from the review of efficiencies and operations in FRS authorities in England (2013)” nor “Enabling Closer Working Between the Emergency Services (2016)” make any reference to equality and diversity. The later document had asked a question in the consultation phase but determined that this would be managed at a local level between FRS services and police and crime commissioners.

We know that the 1999 Thematic Review was not the first analysis of diversity in the FRS but it was the most important. Its importance arose partly from the political imperative that followed the findings of the Macpherson Inquiry on how public services addressed racism both in service provision and in the treatment and recruitment of staff. Its continual relevance is confirmed in some of its key points, since 18 years later they remain challenges the FRSs still need to meet, at least in part. http://www.fitting-in.com/reports/thematicreview/themrevue1999.pdf

The Thematic Review made it very clear why diversity is central to meeting the modernisation challenge the FRS has been increasingly meeting. It stated:

- “The changed role of the service towards support of community safety, with a new emphasis on the prevention of fire and other emergencies, through community fire safety, make it essential to be able to work with the public, in their communities, in ways that engender their acceptance and support.”

- “This challenge is a considerable one requiring a new culture within the service as well as the accepted change of priorities and working practice. It is not possible to carry through this mission until the service is, and can be seen to be, aligned to and representative of the society it serves.

- There is therefore an overriding imperative for the service to move forward to recognise the importance of diversity in every context and welcome the opportunities and benefits that diversity brings” (emphasis in original) pg. 81.

The Bain Report, The Future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives, (2002) signalled a decisive shift in the focus of the fire services, by prioritising the saving of lives through protection and prevention. To be successful, such an approach required much greater
emphasise on relationship building, community engagement, cultural knowledge and awareness of risk for the diverse communities served. Inevitably, such a change underpinned the case for a more diverse workforce, more reflective of the communities.

The Conditions of service for FRS staff: independent review Home Office 2015), the Adrian Thomas Review, certainly does reference EDI, but its key policy proposal will not bring about the change it seeks and the review is fundamentally flawed because its recommendations are largely process driven and process alone does not produce a positive cultural shift. There have been in the region of 20 significant, and costly, reviews of the culture and related EDI matters of the FRS in the past two decades. Yet the current workforce profile and documented examples of an intimidating and hierarchical culture, suggests much remains to be done.

We do know that great advancements have been made in the reduction of incident demand to fires. The demand of environmental events, road traffic incidents, not to mention the established Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme is driving change. The FRS is advancing at a tremendous rate in partnering with social care and health. It is therefore vital to understand the relationship between culture, workforce profile and community risk. It might be thought self-evident that where a workforce is providing a service to a whole population and the more the characteristics of the workforce match those of the population served, then the more outcomes focused success it will achieve and sustain.

The Strategy 2008-2018 required action by FRS authorities supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the LGA, the CFOA and other partners in five priority areas: leadership, accountability, workforce diversity, service delivery and evaluation and dissemination of good practice. The strategy’s vision was to create, by 2018, a service which could demonstrate that it serves all communities equally to the highest standards, building on a closer and more effective relationship with the public and creating a more diverse workforce which better reflects the diversity of the local working age population in each area. Although the strategy necessitated some application of process it added outcome-focused objectives that levelled accountability appropriately and encompassed all areas of organisational business. The NFCC newly drafted FRS People Strategy 2017-2022 states “there is currently no national data on the make-up of support staff and we will seek to address as all are valued and make up the diversity of our Services. “Consultation draft pg. 37

The challenges facing other UK public services have similarities with those facing the FRS. The police force’s determination to have a workforce representative of the communities it serves is driven less by legislative requirements and more by the very clear business case that without a diverse police force, policing effectively and with consent is much harder https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/27/27.pdf In the NHS, the business case is buttressed by evidence on the correlations between how BAME staff are treated, organisational effectiveness and the care of (all) patients, and with patient safety https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/wres-nhs-board-bulletin.pdf NHS ambulance services, historically poor performers on workforce diversity, finally have a coherent strategy to address the serious shortcomings in their representativeness, as well as the treatment of their BAME staff. http://www.wired.gov.net/wg/news.nsf/articles/Association+of+Ambulance+Chief+Executives+AACE+sign+up+to+NHS+Englands+Workforce+Race+Equality+Standard+25112016130500?open
As has been acknowledged, the level of demand reduction in operational response in the fire sector, aside from significant changes to building construction and flammable materials regulations, is a consequence of services having the ability to identify risk. Services are learning that there is a correlation between inequality and those most at risk and therefore placing demand on services; this is largely the case for all public services. The focus on prevention and protection is more cost effective in both financial and human terms, but needs a full understanding of how inequality results in high levels of service demand.

A competent team within services, who are not divided by their historical culture of frontline and back office, working to the same purpose, is more likely to maintain and develop a positive culture as a team, all of whom contribute to prevent and protect, and when response is necessary. The divisive segmentation of the workforce is counterproductive to the purpose of the blue light services. Moreover, those communities and individuals placing the highest demand on services are disproportionately faced with structural, societal and economic disadvantage. The omission of this insight is a significant risk since any reform which does not embrace the tenets of the Equality Act 2010 and fosters an inclusive cultural change may be at risk of maintaining the status quo on inequality.

FRS services have had low staff turnover, and limited if not non-existent recruitment of whole-time firefighters over recent years. The FRS includes substantial numbers of part-time/retained duty system firefighters, and the requirement for this cohort to be available from their home or place of work within five minutes of their alerter activating, often results in them being drawn from a demography unrepresentative of national, regional or even local levels, of ethnic minority populations.

Blue light services are in a state of unprecedented change. The fundamental shift towards prevention and protection, not confined to the FRS, is an opportunity to move from a state of process to one of purpose. Moving from being primarily a responsive service to a preventative one may also reduce some areas of perverse incentive where financial reward is related to responding driven by a target culture, rewarding failure to prevent and protect. Constructive cultural changes can better flourish when undertaken in a context where services are driven by outcomes-focused evidence, not output-focused measures.

The opportunity for collaborative working and shared services, adaptive to the multiplicity of needs of the service users, would not only reduce costs but enable the engagement of the public, resulting in a working profile more attractive to the very people we seek to serve. Blue light services work hard to ‘attract’ candidates from ‘under representative’ groups to apply but in a culture which is unified by homogeneity the candidates are then expected to behave like the majority. This process is subtle, difficult to measure, and risks undermining the entire point of creating a more diverse workforce. In an inclusive culture, difference prompts innovation and fresh thinking.

The work of some fire services is directly addressing workplace culture and this is welcome. Blue light services have traditionally had an employment profile of white, able-bodied heterosexual men. The “watch culture” was described by researchers as:

- “The process of socialisation of new firefighters by fitting them in can be positive. However, if managers try to impose changes that threaten the way peer group leaders believe their FRS should be organised - or challenge the current white male identity of firefighters, the informal
The Thematic Review’s description of the culture almost two decades ago continues to resonate in subsequent reports:

“Firefighters’ informal culture hangs onto the past. Male firefighters in particular have much invested in ensuring that this remains so. Many of these male firefighters join the FRS service to be seen in the heroic image that the public have of firefighters—and it is only at emergency incidents that they can prove to themselves equal to this image. It is important not to forget that when called upon, firefighters actually do live up to their heroic (masculine) identity. In so doing they set themselves apart from those “others” that many in the FRS service believe cannot fit-in. It is here that the conundrum lies, because the only reason that some groups cannot fit-in is because firefighters will not let them.”

Such a culture was not conducive to either the recruitment or fair treatment of “minority” groups such as gender, LGBT people or those from ethnic minorities. The extent to which such a culture continues today will have an adverse impact on the recruitment and treatment of new staff. The Thematic Review said:

“The overwhelming collective view of uniformed staff, including many officers interviewed during the inspection, was strong opposition to women being employed in the operational fire service” pg. 23.
As we will suggest later, since then, some progress in the FRS sector compared to some other areas of public service has been made and given the FRS’ historical origins, they were starting from an exceptionally white male workforce composition. One measure of progress has been the promotions of women to Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive as well as the increase in women firefighters.

On racism, the Thematic Review reported:

- “...we rarely encountered open racism, although there were some exceptions. The vast majority of staff expressed no antagonistic views or feelings about people from the black and ethnic communities joining the service. Although there was this spoken acceptance, there was also an inherent proviso that this should not be allowed to let ‘standards’ drop, as if the two issues were directly linked.”

- “There was a marked lack of understanding of the need for diversity in the service, and of the issues that need to be addressed to achieve diversity. As a consequence, it is difficult to believe that those positive opinions would be reflected in the experiences of those in the black and ethnic minority. The difference in the behaviour of some of the black and ethnic minority firefighters when in the company of white colleagues, compared with their responses in private, serves to emphasise that real tensions exist.”

- “Members of the Black and Ethnic Minority Members Group of the Fire Brigades Union, back in 1999, told us of the real difficulty faced by many of their members, as a result of the conscious and unconscious actions of white male colleague’s inappropriate humour and language also caused offence...” pg. 25.

Given the strategic need to change how the service works, and the composition of its workforce, such a culture is under real pressure to change. Notwithstanding the evidence of continuing harassment, for example, there is no doubt that the FRSs have made significant progress from how it was described almost two decades ago. Adrian Thomas points out:

- “As I travelled between fire authorities I was struck by the very different cultures I encountered. I found examples of clear, arguably inspirational, leadership and in other places a management team that seemed to struggle with direction setting and dealing with resistance.” pg. 5.

The test of the extent to which those attitudes have changed may well be the extent to which firefighters as a whole endorse the ministerial, (CFOA) newly inaugurated National Fire Chiefs Council’s initiatives around diversity. The literature on the transition to a more diverse workforce points out the advantages in terms of links with community, innovation and fresh thinking but also warns of the challenges it can create. If those challenges are not anticipated then there must be a risk of increased ethnic minority and female turnover following increased recruitment. Why organisational and community diversity matter: representativeness and the emergence of incivility and organisational performance. Eden King. Jeremy Dawson, Michael West, Veronica Gilbran, Chad Peddie and Lucy Bastin Academy of Management Journal 2011, Vol. 54, No. 6, 1103–1118. http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.0016. Increasingly, the services we interviewed are seeking to change culture without undermining the selfless collaborative teamwork it partly grew from. The FRS remains one that is very highly regarded by the public with an exceptional service delivery ethos. Diversity and these characteristics are not alternatives, they will complement each other.

One test of the extent to which the negative aspects of the culture are in decline may well be the response to the ministerial initiative on diversity as a recruitment round develops.
## Table 1: Whole-time equivalent (WTE) of fire and rescue authority staff England. 31 March 2008-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wholetime</th>
<th>Retained duty system</th>
<th>Total Firefighters</th>
<th>Fire control</th>
<th>Non-uniformed</th>
<th>Total Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>31,761</td>
<td>10,613</td>
<td>42,374</td>
<td>1,379</td>
<td>5,669</td>
<td>49,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>31,699</td>
<td>10,716</td>
<td>42,414</td>
<td>1,388</td>
<td>5,807</td>
<td>49,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>31,826</td>
<td>10,853</td>
<td>42,679</td>
<td>1,435</td>
<td>6,220</td>
<td>50,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>31,097</td>
<td>11,056</td>
<td>42,153</td>
<td>1,448</td>
<td>6,762</td>
<td>50,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>30,596</td>
<td>11,312</td>
<td>41,908</td>
<td>1,470</td>
<td>7,231</td>
<td>50,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>30,558</td>
<td>11,827</td>
<td>42,385</td>
<td>1,491</td>
<td>7,390</td>
<td>51,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>30,580</td>
<td>11,642</td>
<td>42,222</td>
<td>1,522</td>
<td>7,959</td>
<td>51,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>30,088</td>
<td>11,865</td>
<td>41,953</td>
<td>1,543</td>
<td>8,224</td>
<td>51,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>29,735</td>
<td>11,898</td>
<td>41,632</td>
<td>1,510</td>
<td>8,509</td>
<td>51,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>29,018</td>
<td>12,149</td>
<td>41,166</td>
<td>1,478</td>
<td>8,358</td>
<td>51,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>28,166</td>
<td>11,513</td>
<td>39,678</td>
<td>1,371</td>
<td>7,704</td>
<td>48,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>27,209</td>
<td>11,249</td>
<td>38,458</td>
<td>1,320</td>
<td>7,474</td>
<td>47,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>26,178</td>
<td>10,987</td>
<td>37,165</td>
<td>1,240</td>
<td>7,235</td>
<td>45,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>25,130</td>
<td>10,829</td>
<td>35,958</td>
<td>1,085</td>
<td>7,103</td>
<td>44,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>23,926</td>
<td>10,469</td>
<td>34,395</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>6,896</td>
<td>42,347</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The total number of employees
2 Accounts for those working part time. Retained Duty Firefighters are in 24 hour units of cover.
3 Position at 31 March of each year

Table 2: Firefighters by gender and ethnicity in England
31 March 2002–2016 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Ethnic Minority</th>
<th>Not Stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fire statistics tables 1103 and 1104 Fire and Rescue – Operational Statistics Bulletin for England 2012-16
Table Note: Data prior to 2002 not comparable “White” includes ‘Other White’
Fire and Rescue Service – Operational Statistics Bulletin for England 2010-11
NB from 2011 the ethnicity data refers to ALL staff. This confuses the data and it has been difficult to establish an accurate picture.
Table 3: Percentage of firefighters in ethnic minorities, compared with the resident population, England 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Asian or Asian British</th>
<th>Black or Black British</th>
<th>Mixed or</th>
<th>Other Ethnic Minority</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Firefighters</strong></td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4: FRS service BAME staff in England 2002-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Uniformed staff</th>
<th>Non-uniformed staff</th>
<th>Total FRS service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix Table 7 Fire and Rescue – Operational Statistics Bulletin for England 2009-10 and 2015-16.

Table 5: Firefighter: staff headcount by ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Asian or Asian British</th>
<th>Black or Black British</th>
<th>Chinese or other Ethnicity</th>
<th>Ethnic origin not stated</th>
<th>Percentage that are from an ethnic minority</th>
<th>Percentage that are not stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>37,635</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>4,347</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>37,513</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>3,172</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>35,931</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3,495</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>34,477</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3,630</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>32,377</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>4,390</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>32,006</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>3,339</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source Table 1104 Fire Statistics Home Office Operational Statistics Data Collection,

Table 6: Ethnic minority local government workforce England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>England and Wales</th>
<th>White staff</th>
<th>BME staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGA Earnings survey 2000</td>
<td>96.5%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA Earnings survey 2011</td>
<td>91.8%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unison survey 2016</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Staff leaving fire authorities, by reason and by role\(^1\), England

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Wholetime</th>
<th>Retained Duty System (^2)</th>
<th>Fire Control</th>
<th>Support Staff</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dismissal on disciplinary grounds</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissal on disciplinary or poor performance grounds/efficiency</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical discharge (Ill health retirement)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resignation due to harassment or discrimination</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor performance/efficiency</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to maintain fitness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory redundancy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary redundancy</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early retirement</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal retirement</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>1,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-employment by another Fire and Rescue Service</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-employment as support personnel within the same Fire and Rescue Service</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resignation to take other employment outside the Fire and Rescue Service</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>1,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving out of area 3</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues with primary employment 3</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with the number of incidents attended 3</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>1,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,643</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,566</strong></td>
<td><strong>98</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,118</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,425</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source 2016/17 FIRE STATISTICS TABLE 1111:
1 Includes re-employment as support staff by the same FRS
2 Also known as “On-call firefighters”
Table 8: FRS personnel, NHS qualified ambulance service staff and police officers 2003 - 2016 (head count) England

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRS firefighters</td>
<td>31,631</td>
<td>24,065</td>
<td>-23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRS support staff</td>
<td>7,404</td>
<td>8,789</td>
<td>+18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS qualified ambulance staff</td>
<td>15,957</td>
<td>20,219</td>
<td>+26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance support staff</td>
<td>9,684</td>
<td>16,497</td>
<td>+70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police officers</td>
<td>132,509</td>
<td>124,066</td>
<td>-6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police support staff</td>
<td>67,597 (1)</td>
<td>61,668 (2)</td>
<td>-8.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 9: Comparison of changes in BME representation in FRS whole time and qualified ambulance personnel 2003-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Firefighters Wholetime</th>
<th>Qualified ambulance personnel</th>
<th>Police officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>201.6%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>200%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 10: Total FTE police officer strength in England and Wales, 31 March

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Strength</th>
<th>Female Numbers</th>
<th>Female % of total</th>
<th>Ethnic Minority Number</th>
<th>Ethnic Minority % of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>132,509</td>
<td>25,139</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3,868</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>138,468</td>
<td>27,925</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4,594</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>141,059</td>
<td>29,940</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4,971</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>141,523</td>
<td>31,520</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>5,236</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>141,892</td>
<td>33,117</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>5,519</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>141,859</td>
<td>34,332</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>5,793</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>143,770</td>
<td>36,121</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6,290</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>143,734</td>
<td>36,988</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6,642</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>139,110</td>
<td>36,532</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6,615</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>134,100</td>
<td>35,962</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>6,664</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>129,584</td>
<td>35,401</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>6,537</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>127,909</td>
<td>35,653</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>6,715</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>126,818</td>
<td>35,738</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>6,979</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>124,066</td>
<td>35,498</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>7,218</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Police Workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2016 Statistical Bulletins

### Table 11: Percentage of SFRS workforce by ethnicity. 31st March 2010 to 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Ethnic Minority</th>
<th>Not stated</th>
<th>Total operational</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Ethnic Minority</th>
<th>Not stated</th>
<th>Total (excluding volunteers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 12: Percentage of FRS workforce by ethnicity at 31 March 2013 – Scotland (headcount)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total operational</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole time operational</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained Duty System</td>
<td>80.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>89.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support staff</td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer (1)</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All staff total</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All staff (excluding volunteers) total</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Table 13: Headcount - total FRS staff employed Wales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>BME</th>
<th>Not known</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-5</td>
<td>4,095</td>
<td>4,080</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-6</td>
<td>4,215</td>
<td>4,190</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-7</td>
<td>4,280</td>
<td>4,215</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-8</td>
<td>4,340</td>
<td>4,285</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-9</td>
<td>4,420</td>
<td>4,370</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>4,390</td>
<td>4,355</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>4,360</td>
<td>4,330</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>4,195</td>
<td>4,140</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>4,115</td>
<td>4,060</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>4,155</td>
<td>4,100</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 14: Headcount - whole-time uniformed staff in Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>BME</th>
<th>Not known</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>1,715</td>
<td>1,705</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>1,730</td>
<td>1,715</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>1,715</td>
<td>1,695</td>
<td>15*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>1,680</td>
<td>1,660</td>
<td>15*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>1,670</td>
<td>1,655</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>1,660</td>
<td>1,640</td>
<td>15*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>1,580</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>1,535</td>
<td>1,505</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>1,515</td>
<td>1,495</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>1,470</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFERENCES


2. Adrian Thomas Independent review of conditions of service for fire and rescue staff in England 2015


4. Audit Commission study on workforce issues, Tomorrow’s People 2008


12. Bilimoria et al 2008 op cit


30. Equalities and Cultural Change Advisory Board (2001)


34. Evesson, J; Oxenbridge, S; Taylor D. Seeking better solutions: tackling bullying and ill-treatment in Britain’s workplaces. Acas 2015

35. FACING THE FUTURE: Findings from the review of efficiencies and operations in fire and rescue authorities in England Sir Ken Knight CBE QFSM FiFireE 2013

36. Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy DCLG 2008-2018
REFERENCES

37. Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework Key principle CFOA/IDeA - November 2009


39. Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004


42. FRS Circular 55/2008 - ANNEX A FRSWORKFORCE DIVERSITY TARGETS GUIDANCE NOTES

43. FRS Operational Assessment Toolkit


49. Heilman, Madeline E., Aaron S. Wallen, Daniella Fuchs, and Melinda M. Tamkins. 2004


51. Independent Cultural Review of Essex County FRS Service - Irene Lucas for Essex County FRS Authority 2015


53. Johns M, Schmader, T. and Martens, 2005


61. Managing a Modernised Fire Service: Bridging the Gap (Home Office 2001)


65. Memorandum by Jagtar Singh OBE, MA, BA Hons, MiFireE. and Wayne McCollin BA Ed, DipHRD(FRS49


69. Ordinary People Extraordinary Careers Framework 2005


72. Police diversity: Government Response to the Committee’s First Report of Session 2016-17


74. Race Equality in the FRS an Interim Report October 2014

75. Reinhard, J 2015


77. Sociological Review Vol 77, No 6 Research

78. Shelley J. Correll and Stephen Benard Gender and Racial Bias in Hiring 2006

79. Singh Making a Difference”: A Study Of Under Representation In UK and USA Fire Services 2002


81. Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report Sir William Macpherson (Home Office 1999


84. Thompson, P and McHugh, D (2009) Work organisations

85. Tom Bucke on ‘Equal opportunities and the fire service’ (Home Office, 1994)

86. Towards Diversity I Promoting Cultural Change Home Office 2001


SMOKE & MIRRORS
Time to meet the challenge of equality in the fire and rescue service
SMOKE & MIRRORS
Time to meet the challenge of equality in the fire and rescue service

A JOINT PUBLICATION IN WITH

WWW.AFSA.CO.UK