

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

12th Annual Report
2023–2024



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY REPORT	4
OUR PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY	5
ABOUT US	6
OUR VALUES & MISSION	7
THE PEOPLE WE SERVE	7
OUR PRACTICE	8
OUR PROGRESS	10
OUR WORKFORCE	16
REPORTING CATEGORIES	17
WORKFORCE PROFILE BY CHARACTERISTICS	19
BFRS WORKFORCE TRENDS BY ROLES	20
AGE.....	21
GENDER.....	21
DISABILITY	22
ETHNICITY.....	22
FAMILY LEAVE.....	23
LEAVERS	24
WORKFORCE PROFILE BY PAY BAND.....	26
JOB APPLICATIONS, RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTIONS	27
JOB APPLICATIONS – SUPPORT STAFF	28
JOB APPLICATIONS – OPERATIONAL STAFF	30
STARTERS	33
PROMOTIONS.....	35
GENDER PAY GAP	38
GRIEVANCES	39
COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS	39
EXTERNAL TRAINING	40
OUR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES	42
NEXT STEPS	43
YOUR VIEWS COUNT	44
CONNECT WITH BFRS	44

WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT
EVERY CONTACT COUNTS
WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK
WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, we have a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion both to our people within the Service and the services that we provide to our communities.

Our initiatives over the year have been to;

- Establish a community partner panel for targeted communication and engagement methods to engage with a wider cross-section of Bedfordshire's local communities, providing them with a voice and opportunity to shape how our services support their needs.
- Review our translation and interpretation service and designing and developing information in different formats to meet the needs of our community such as those who are visually impaired.
- Ensure that as an employer and service provider we are compliant with our equality duties, with Bedfordshire Fire Service Authority taking the lead in scrutinising our performance as an organisation and advancing our pledge to reduce inequality and challenge discrimination within Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Assess the equality impact our policies have on people from different protected characteristics by ensuring our People Impact Assessments are robust.

- Work in partnership with our local partners in health, the Police, local authorities, voluntary sector and the private sector to promote an inclusive Bedfordshire.
- Deliver a collaborative and combined approach to narrowing the equality gaps in Bedfordshire and helping to ensure we collectively champion equality and inclusion in everything that we deliver.

Working through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) action plan, our focus for the coming year will be to ensure that EDI is established as the **'golden thread'** in all we do.



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PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) came in force in April 2011 (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010) and public authorities are required, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- 🔥 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as any other conduct which is forbidden under the Equality Act 2010.
- 🔥 Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 🔥 Build positive relationships between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.



OUR PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

As a service provider, we aim to provide a fair and equal service because we believe it is the right thing to do. However, to comply with the requirement of the Public Sector Equality Duty, we also have a legal duty to do this. The Equality Duty was developed to bring together previous public sector equality duty and extend them across the following nine protected characteristics.

- 🔥 Age
- 🔥 Disability
- 🔥 Gender reassignment
- 🔥 Marriage and civil partnership
- 🔥 Pregnancy and maternity
- 🔥 Race
- 🔥 Religion or belief
- 🔥 Sex
- 🔥 Sexual Orientation

We also have a specific requirement to publish information relating to the protected characteristics of our employees including:

- 🔥 The profile of staff at different grades, levels and rates of pay, including any patterns of occupational segregation and part-time work.
- 🔥 The profile of staff at different stages of the employment relationship, including job applications, recruitment, training, promotion, starters and leavers, and the numbers of complaints of discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

- 🔥 Details of, and feedback from, any engagement exercises with staff or trade unions.
- 🔥 Any records of how it has had due regard in making workforce decisions, including any assessments of impact undertaken and the evidence used.

In this report Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service will share what we did in 2023/24 to fulfil our duty. We will publish information relating to the protected characteristics of our employees, whilst ensuring that the Service has 'due regard' to the aims of the Equality Act with respect to its workforce by using equality monitoring information in decision-making and planning.

Throughout this report, headcounts of staff members in different protected characteristics and workforce subgroups are given, with the aim of anonymising information about individuals by aggregating counts into large groups. Where this has not been possible, and the headcount within a group is small enough to pose a risk of identification for individual staff members, the figure has been redacted (alongside any other figures that would allow the initially redacted figure to be deducted).

ABOUT US

We cover:

- 477 square miles
- 274,645 households*
- 3 unitary authorities

We have:

- 4 Brigade managers or equivalent.
- 292 Wholetime positions
- 140 On-Call positions
- 185 Support positions
- 24 Control positions
- 42 appliances
(22 fire engines, 2 aerial platforms and 18 special appliances)
- 14 stations

Sources: *Households estimates [Census 2021](#)
BFRS Performance Report 2023-2024
BFRS Community Risk Management Plan 2023-2027
BFRS Workforce Data as at 31 March 2024

We've dealt with:

- 7575 incidents
- 1524 fires
- 3003 other non-fire incidents e.g. Road Traffic Collisions
- 3046 false alarms

We undertook:

- 6770 Home Fire Safety Visits
- 2855 audits and inspections of premises to which the Fire Safety Order applies

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OUR VALUES & MISSION

Our Mission is to **provide outstanding fire and rescue services that help to make Bedfordshire safer.**

Our Values have been developed with our staff and our communities to ensure that the values support our mission and priorities.

- We are accountable** - We are transparent, trustworthy, and responsible for our actions.
- We've got your back** - Striving to keep us all safe, while being supportive and inclusive.
- Every contact counts** - Making a positive difference each and every time, with respect and professionalism.
- We dare to be different** - We are bold, we welcome challenge, and we are open to innovative ideas.



THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

The population for Bedfordshire, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Census 2021 as follows:

Bedford

Population of Bedford increased by 27,700 (17.6%) from around 157,500 in 2011 to around 185,200 in 2021. This was followed by an estimated 0.9% percentage change between mid-year 2021 to mid-year 2022 and an estimated 1.3% change in total local authority population from mid-year 2022 to mid-year 2023.

Central Bedfordshire

Population of Central Bedfordshire increased by 15.7% from just under 254,400 in 2011 to 294,300 in 2021. This continued with an estimated 2.1% change in total local authority population from mid-year 2021 to mid-year 2022 and by an estimated 2.1% percentage, same as previous year's change between mid-year 2022 to mid-year 2023.

Luton

Population of Luton was 225,300. The population here increased by 10.9% between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021). This continued with an estimated 1.0% percentage change between mid-year 2021 to mid-year 2022 and an estimated 1.6% percentage change in total local a population from mid-year 2022 to mid-year 2023.

Sources: [Census 2021](#), [Population estimates](#)

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OUR PRACTICE

We collect and monitor our workforce profile to enable us to take equality considerations in our policies and practices and meet our responsibilities under the **Public Sector Equality Duty**.

Our equality objectives are incorporated into our **Corporate Risk Management Plan 2023-2027** embedding the inclusion agenda.

A virtual community panel has been developed to enable the Service to have access to a group of engaged members of the public to survey, consult and ask for opinions on a range of topics.

Our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group** meet regularly to monitor progress and make recommendations to drive our EDI agenda forward.

We have revised our EDI training programme to provide staff with an awareness of their own rights and responsibilities to take equality considerations in the workplace.

We screen all our policies and practices and conduct a full People Impact Assessment on those that impacts directly on staff and service users.

We have established our **Mental Health and Well-being Steering Group** to monitor progress on our Mental Health and well-being programme which is in place to support the well-being of staff. Our in-house occupational health team promote, develop, co-ordinate and manage all aspects of health, fitness and wellbeing to ensure good health for all our employees, as well

as to reduce the risk of cases of occupational ill health. We have a team of **Certified Mental Health First Aiders** to provide guidance and support to those who may be struggling with their mental health. Additionally, our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides help and support with personal problems that might adversely impact work performance, health and wellbeing of our employees.

We publish and report annually on our **Gender Pay Gap** setting out our approach to pay for all roles including the approach to senior pay.

Our **Workplace Support Steering Group** support reasonable adjustments for our neurodivergent colleagues and for those who may need any form of additional support or adjustments to enable them to perform effectively in the workplace. The Group has been instrumental in recommending a number of tools that staff find beneficial, assisting with day-to-day activities. The Service introduced and rolled out TextHelp Read&Write, a 'toolbox' of supportive features, that all staff across the Service find useful in converting text into audio you can listen to, converting speech to text, highlighting and summarising text. The Service has a number of TextHelp trained champions to help colleagues should they need it.

We have introduced a Reasonable Adjustment Passport (RAP) for staff who have long-term health condition, mental health condition, neurodiversity, or disability/learning disability or difficulty, to help them access the support they may need in

OUR PRACTICE

the workplace. This is currently being reviewed with the aim to encourage and support staff to use the RAP to manage their health at work and remove obstacles throughout their careers.

We continue to review and develop initiatives to improve the work-life balance of staff by offering opportunities such as hybrid working, flexible working hours, home-working, part-time, compressed/staggered/ annualised hours. Staff in support roles (where appropriate) can also work a flexitime system between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

Our dedicated and committed **Corporate Management Team, Principal Officers and Senior Managers** continue to ensure EDI is embedded and main-streamed across the Service, with progress monitored by the **Fire and Rescue Authority**.

Our job advertisements include an equal opportunity statement to encourage applications from under-represented groups including people with disabilities. We have **Disability Confident Level 2 status**.

We have an LGBTQ+ Allies Staff Network to promote the interests and issues of LGBTQ+ staff and create an inclusive workplace for LGBTQ+ staff so that they can be themselves at work and increase representation in the workplace.

We are members of key organisations that can support and enhance our work around the EDI agenda such as Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA), Women in the Fire Service (WFS), UK Fire and Rescue Service LGBTQ+ Network (UK FirePRIDE) and Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI).

We work in collaboration with the Fire Fighters Charity Services, Chaplaincy Service and Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes (BLMK) Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) Subgroup and the Regional EDI Network.



OUR PROGRESS

We have worked hard through the many challenges faced during the past year and we are steadily making progress. However, we recognise that we still have a long road ahead to embed and mainstream the EDI fully into all our practices. The following initiatives demonstrate some of our achievements during the year 2023–24.

Preventative and Protection Initiatives

Our Prevention and Protection team have developed diverse fire and safety initiatives that protect people in their homes and businesses. These included:

The launch of the new Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) application along with the associated risk stratification.

This digital HFSV form (PowerApp) applies weighted scores to risks and vulnerabilities identified during a visit, creating an overall total risk score. By applying a scoring methodology to HFSVs we gathered data on a broad range of personal, behavioural, and home factors that is unique to each dwelling. The data captured and recorded during HFSV interventions helps to facilitate a more targeted and efficient approach to delivering our visits to those who require them the most. For example, the most vulnerable/at risk ensuring they receive effective interventions at the earliest opportunity. The data captured also helped us to target subsequent follow up interventions based upon risk. Additionally, the new Home Fire Safety PowerApp captured personal and special category data

to ensure we were reaching people across the entire community, subject to their consent.

We acknowledge that by focusing on individuals who are most at risk, our visits are more comprehensive and take longer to complete. Consequently, the total number HFSVs completed in 2023 / 2024 is slightly less than in 2022 / 2023.

Engaging and collaborating with our partners involved in the development of community partnerships groups in diverse demographical areas helping us to raise our profile and engage with those least likely to access Fire and Rescue Services. All referrals provided face-to-face contact within people's homes.

Additionally, our Prevention and Protection team worked in collaboration with community groups and other organisations where two-way dialogue occurred and then worked in



OUR PROGRESS

Partnerships. The team attended a variety of events including Police and wellbeing service, Big Lunch event with Dunstable Council, the Mall event in Luton, Brew with Crew meeting 65+ at Leighton Buzzard Station, Houghton Regis Health Promotion event with 14 other agencies, Silsoe Funday, Church Fête in Kempston, Luton Afro Fest, Forest Family Fun Day in Marston Moretaine, to name but a few. The team conducted safety talks and public engagements throughout the year which generated 800 Home Fire Safety Visit referrals. During public events we engage with people to educate and pass on fire safety messages.

Our engagement strategies ensured we took account of the diverse needs of people and use interactive ways of communicating. Our operational crews and station administrators continued to provide high-quality fire-safety messaging to children across the county. This scheme was supported by StayWise resources. StayWise is a free online library



packed full of educational resources and activities from the UK's leading emergency services and safety-focused organisations.

BFRS Roads partnership provides killed or seriously injured (KSI) statistical reports on Vulnerable Road Users in Bedfordshire. The [Vision VR](#) van is a mobile Virtual Reality resource with the primary function to provide educational safety awareness to help target, educate and reduce the number of KSIs in the vulnerable young driver group through educational interventions to influence positive behavioural change. The project was jointly funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and BFRS after a successful bid to create an experience to engage young drivers with the aim of making the roads of Bedfordshire safer. The focus was to design and build something that would appeal to young people and the external design adopted was one chosen by BFRS fire cadets.

Our Safeguarding function and community safety officers supported children and young people who were engaged in risk-taking behaviours. Our ongoing Safety Awareness and Fire Education (SAFE) intervention is our in-house intervention for children and young people to address personal issues on a one-to-one basis linked to fire setting and conversations around sexual health, bullying and identity. It aims to provide educational sessions specifically designed for the child or young person to help them understand the dangers involved in misusing fire and the implications of their behaviour and educate the family and those around them to ensure that they are supported and safer in their homes.

OUR PROGRESS

Communication and Engagement

It is important that we consult with the public and attempt to involve all members of the community on any changes we make to our Community Risk Management Plan. Our consultation methods included various means of communication such as explanatory video, online survey and our virtual community panel. We also looked to attend local face-to-face events such as festivals and various community celebrations to ensure we gave communities the chance to engage with us.

Our community fire stations held open days to engage with those attending the event. They raised awareness of our services enhancing our connection with communities and increasing our understanding of their needs.

Our staff engagement activities included regular Senior Leadership Forum, manager briefings, team briefings, stations visits and our weekly news digest to staff every week. Additionally, all BFRS staff were given the opportunity to meet with senior managers for discussions and briefings on the latest developments within the Service. A range of questions were sent in ahead of the session, via online Question and Answer platform Slido, and colleagues were given the opportunity to join in person at headquarters or online to ask questions on the day. Question topics ranged from culture, staffing (changes and turnover), policies, hybrid working, finance and uniform.

Positive Action

Applications for our 2023 Wholetime firefighter campaign opened at the end of June 2023. Various positive action initiatives were implemented between January 1 and 31 March 2023 prior to the vacancy going live. This included two 'Have a go' sessions held at Luton Fire Station and Kempston Fire Station, respectively. These were sessions where females and other under-represented groups took part in operational firefighting activities to try them and gain insight into the role and the selection process. Additionally, females were targeted on a variety of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. Engagement continued with females via a tailored Instagram page called WIRE (Wellbeing, Inclusion, Recruitment and Engagement), where the number of female followers has increased.



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OUR PROGRESS

BFRS is dedicated to maintaining ongoing communication with individuals interested in joining our team. We sent targeted emails to our 'Join Us' list and utilised a variety of recruitment advertising mediums and platforms. These included our website, social media, niche social media pages, Indeed, LinkedIn, Women in Fire Service (WFS), National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Jobs, Bedfordshire Council, Jobcentre, and many more. Through these channels, we aimed to attract potential candidates particularly those from under-represented groups and keep them informed about opportunities within the Service.

Community Engagement and Visibility

During this period, BFRS made significant efforts to interact with and support our diverse, hard-to-reach communities. A highlight was our participation in the Bedford Kite Festival, which attracted thousands of visitors from across the county. Additionally, our recruitment drive at Luton Mall, in collaboration with Bedfordshire Police and Inspire Gym in Luton, provided fitness advice and information about the Wholetime Firefighter recruitment process.

Inspire Eid Event

Eid, a Muslim celebration marking the end of Ramadan, a month of fasting, is a time for family, friends, and community celebration. Inspire Eid offers a safe, friendly environment for families in Bedfordshire to celebrate with no entrance fee, discounted rides, stage performances, exciting activities, and a wide array of world food. BFRS has attended this event annually for several years to represent BFRS and promote the service we provide and career opportunities.



Luton Employability Day

Held twice a year, this event brings together more than 30 professionals including Black role models and leading community groups to help prepare young people to become confident learners. It highlighted opportunities within private, public, and third-sector organisations for students aged 16 and above. BFRS attended this annual event, not only with a recruitment stall but staff provided professional advice and guidance as role models to speak one-on-one with attendees.

Ongoing Recruitment Efforts

In the year 2023/24, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service engaged with approximately 1628 individuals through participation in 31 events across the county. Fifteen of these events took place at various schools and colleges to promote BFRS as an employer of choice. The remaining 16 events were held within the diverse communities of Bedfordshire, ensuring widespread engagement and outreach.

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OUR PROGRESS

Through these efforts, BFRS aligned with the Public Sector Equality Duty requirements, ensuring engagement with our diverse communities while promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in our recruitment and outreach activities.

Empowering Our People

For those who were interested in developing their knowledge, skill, and behaviours to enhance their career development and support their potential growth within BFRS, we introduced a New Development Centre. It was designed to find the individual's strengths and future development needs and find how BFRS can help participating staff achieve their goals and unlock their true potential.

The Centre included a variety of scored activities dependent on participants' existing role level, which included practical exercises, case studies, psychometrics, and group discussions. These were aimed at helping individuals to objectively identify



their personal strengths and development needs and using these as potential areas for growth and opportunities to be included in their personal development plans.

Following attendance at one of the centres, individuals were provided with detailed feedback outlining their findings. Individuals could then use this information to inform their development and support future career opportunities. Areas for development could include leadership and management skills, learning a new skill (i.e., report writing, project management, presentation skills), finding a coach/mentor, observing meetings, or gaining qualifications. That was a great opportunity for staff to actively take part in identifying their own career progression and development opportunities.

At the heart of our commitment to EDI is continual self-learning, and respect. We have designed, developed and implemented initiatives to improve the outcomes for staff. These included:

- Developing and implementing our Culture Action Plan to show our ongoing commitment to establish a safe and inclusive culture across BFRS.
- In line with our Culture Action Plan, we ran a series of cultural awareness workshops face to face and virtually for all staff. We reviewed our EDI awareness training programme to include an interactive video-based learning on Unconscious Bias and a Working Across Cultures module. Following the review the completion rate for EDI training increased to 87% as at March 2024 compared to 65% in the previous year.

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OUR PROGRESS

- Appointing a Professional Standards Investigator to investigate complaints relating to bullying and harassment cases, improving the quality and speed in which disciplinary and grievance investigations are handled.
- Our Values, Professional Behaviours and Code of Ethics are embedded in our Induction programme and EDI modules.
- Following the NFCC People Impact Assessment guidance, reviewed our People Impact Assessment (PIA) process and guidance to understand and ensure we mitigate any adverse impact on groups of people who share and people who do not share the same protected characteristics.
- Developing and implementing a digital PIA template and training in completing the PIA is mandatory for all middle managers, project managers and those involved in developing policies and procedures.
- Monitoring and reporting on our workforce profile to improve representation across the Service by setting targets and through our ongoing Positive Action initiatives to address under-representation of our workforce and improve our reach in the community.
- Introducing a digital exit interview form for employees leaving the Service. This is enabling a better understanding of reasons for leaving and has created an opportunity for improvements to our Service.

- Working nationally, regionally and locally with our counterparts to improve EDI outcomes through sharing good practices and learning to improve representation across the Fire and Rescue Service Sector.
- Health and well-being initiatives to improve awareness of accessible resources to staff. For example, Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health Services, and Fire Fighters Charity services.
- BFRS launched its Speak Up line, a confidential line to report any bullying, harassment, discrimination or inappropriate behaviour. Since its launch in September 2023, there have been seven reports.



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OUR WORKFORCE



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REPORTING CATEGORIES

Our reporting categories are captured on the Service's workforce database which allows for people to self-classify based on their following protected characteristics:

Age

- 16-24
- 25-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 66+
- Prefer not to say

Gender

This is currently recorded as male or female.

Disability

Staff members are asked whether they consider themselves to be categorised as disabled or non-disabled under the definitions of the Equality Act 2010:

Section 6(1) of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if:

- A) that person has a physical or mental impairment, and
- B) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Gay man
- Bisexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say

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REPORTING CATEGORIES

Ethnicity

The list below are the categories recommended by the Home Office for annual statistical return:

- 🔥 White British
- 🔥 English/Welsh/Scottish/Irish/Northern Irish/British
- 🔥 Irish
- 🔥 Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- 🔥 Any other White background, please describe

Mixed/Multiple ethnic

- 🔥 White and Black Caribbean
- 🔥 White and Black African
- 🔥 White and Asian
- 🔥 Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background

Asian/Asian British

- 🔥 Indian
- 🔥 Pakistani
- 🔥 Bangladeshi
- 🔥 Chinese
- 🔥 Any other Asian background

Ethnicity cont...

Other Ethnic Groups

- 🔥 Arab
- 🔥 Any other ethnic groups, please describe
- 🔥 Origin not stated

Religion or Belief

- 🔥 No religion
- 🔥 Buddhist
- 🔥 Christian
- 🔥 Hindu
- 🔥 Jewish
- 🔥 Muslim
- 🔥 Sikh
- 🔥 Any other religion
- 🔥 Prefer not to say

WORKFORCE PROFILE BY CHARACTERISTIC

BFRS carry out equality monitoring, but understand that not everyone chooses to share their personal information. Although there are gaps in our equality data, particularly for disability, we are pleased that more of our colleagues shared their information in the previous years. We will work to promote the benefits of sharing equality data and how this can influence the work of the Service. The table below shows year on year comparison of our workforce diversity profile. These figures are not comparable to national data at this stage. The national data will be published later this year.

Age	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
16-24	6.8%	5.4%	5.6%
25-35	19.1%	19.5%	20.6%
36-45	37.1%	36.6%	34.8%
46-55	22.6%	23.9%	27.0%
56-65	13.2%	12.4%	11.1%
66+	1.2%	2.1%	1.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Disability	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Disabled	4.4%	5.6%	3.1%
Non-disabled	89.7%	87.3%	96.9%
Not declared	5.9%	7.1%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100%	100%

Gender	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Male	73.6%	72.1%	76.0%
Female	26.4%	27.9%	24.0%
Total	100.0%	100%	100%

Religion or belief	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Religion or belief	42.0%	47.8%	46.3%
No Religion or Belief	43.3%	37.0%	40.6%
Not declared	14.7%	15.2%	13.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Ethnicity	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Black and ethnic minority	7.2%	7.1%	6.7%
White	89.2%	86.8%	88.9%
Not declared	3.6%	6.1%	4.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Sexual Orientation	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other	5.3%	3.6%	3.1%
Heterosexual	82.5%	83.7%	85.2%
Not declared	12.2%	12.7%	11.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%

2024 n = 645 2023 n = 662 2022 n = 630
(these figures are by people)

BFRS WORKFORCE TRENDS BY ROLES

Role definitions

- Wholetime positions – a full-time firefighter, regardless of rank.
- On-Call positions – a firefighter responding when required during their ‘on-call out of hours, sometimes called Retained Duty System (including those on dual contracts).
- Support positions – a member of staff employed by the Fire and Rescue Service who is not a firefighter or in fire control. It includes administrative roles, clerical support, analytical support, finance, vehicle maintenance and property management.
- Control positions – a uniformed member of staff working in a Fire and Rescue Service control centre to answer emergency calls and deal with mobilising communications, and related activities, regardless of rank.
- Gold Book staff – the ‘Gold Book’ classification includes brigade managers or the equivalent.

Sources: [Government Statistics](#)

The table on the next page illustrates that almost half of BFRS Wholetime firefighters are aged between 36–45. The On-Call figures demonstrate BFRS has a wider age distribution than Wholetime. Looking at the average age column, BFRS’s has a higher average age amongst support and control, this reflects the age demographic across local government, which has an aging workforce.



AGE

Age	16-24	25-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66+	Average age
Wholetime	4.8%	24.3%	45.5%	23.4%	2.1%	0%	49
On-Call	15.1%	18.7%	38.1%	21.6%	6.5%	0%	42
Manager	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	50
Support	3.8%	11.4%	24.9%	20%	35.7%	4.3%	42
Control	4.2%	20.8%	29.2%	29.2%	16.7%	0%	42
Total Staff	6.8%	19.1%	37.1%	22.6%	13.2%	1.2%	43

GENDER

The table below shows the percentage of staff by gender and roles. Percentage of female staff in 2023/24 was 26.4%. Although on call female fighters increased by 2.1% compared to previous year, percentage of wholetime female fighters increased slightly by 0.3%. Percentage for overall female staff dropped by 1.5% from the year 2022/23 when it was 27.9% at BFRS. This indicates that BFRS needs to continue with its efforts to attract and recruit more female staff in operational roles, although the national average for female fighters was 8.7% as at 31st March 2023.

Gender	Wholetime Firefighters	On-call Firefighters	Total Firefighters	Brigade Manager	Control Staff	Support Staff	All Staff
Female	6.8%	13.7%	9%	0%	87.5%	59.5%	26.4%
Male	93.2%	86.3%	91%	100%	12.5%	40.5%	73.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

DISABILITY

As of 31 March 2024, 4.0% of all staff were recorded as disabled compared to 5.5% the previous year. This indicates a drop in the number of staff who provided the disability data, although 4.7% was recorded as 'not stated' this year compared to 7% in the previous year. This indicates BFRS staff need more encouragement in providing disability data for them to receive appropriate support in the workplace.

Disability	Wholetime Fire Fighters	On-call Fire Firefighters	Total Fire Fighters	Brigade Manager	Control Staff	Support Staff	All Staff
Disabled	3.6%	5.7%	4.2%	0%	4.3%	5.2%	4%
Non-disabled	92.8%	87.5%	91.3%	0%	95.7%	90.2%	91.3%
Not declared	3.6%	6.8%	4.5%	100%	0%	4.6%	4.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

ETHNICITY

The Service records ethnicity based on categories recommended by the Home Office. This data looks at a comparison with the White group, including white minorities such as Gypsy and Irish Traveller groups and people with nationalities other than British. Therefore, Ethnicity in this report refer to all ethnic groups combined except the White groups. The data includes all those self-defining as Black, Asian, Mixed or Other ethnic groups.

In 2023/24 the percentage of minority ethnic staff was 5.1% Wholetime, 3.6% On-Call, 8.3% Control and 12.5% Support. BFRS overall ethnic minority staff was 7.2%. The table below indicates an increase in the number of minority ethnic staff in control and support roles. This indicates that BFRS must continue with its efforts to attract and recruit more minority ethnic staff in operational roles.

Ethnicity	Wholetime Firefighters	On-call Firefighters	Total Firefighters	Brigade Manager	Control Staff	Support Staff	All Staff
White	91.8%	92.1%	91.8%	50%	91.7%	83.2%	88.2%
Minority Ethnic	5.1%	3.6%	5.1%	50%	8.3%	12.5%	7.2%
Not declared	3.1%	4.3%	3.1%	0%	0%	4.3%	3.6 %
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

FAMILY LEAVE

As part of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's commitment to diversity, we support employee's balance between home and work through offering flexible employment policies and provide enhanced pay and leave for adoption, maternity and paternity. In 2023/24, one member of staff was on maternity leave and two staff members returned from maternity leave. 17 members of staff returned from paternity leave.

Year	Staff starting Maternity Leave	Staff returning to work from Maternity Leave	Staff on Paternity Leave	Staff returning to work from Paternity Leave	Staff starting Shared Parental Leave	Staff returning to work from Shared Parental Leave
2023/24	0	2	1	17	0	0
2022/23	7	5	14	13	0	0
2021/22	5	4	17	17	0	0

LEAVERS

During 2023/24, 65 employees left the Service compared with 64 in 2022/23. The percentage for those aged between 16 –24 and aged between 36 – 45 leaving the Service increased respectively. The number of disabled leavers increased from 4.2% to 9.2%. 2023/24 saw an increase in male leavers compared to the previous year. Leavers from ethnic minority background decreased from 6.3% to 4.6%. Those declaring religion or belief increased compared to the previous year. There has been a decrease of people leaving from LGBTQ+ backgrounds. The data shows that BFRS needs to continue with its efforts to encourage staff to declare their diversity data.

The Service conducts exit interviews to gather the reason(s) people are choosing to leave. This identifies any pattern, ensuring data is provided to enable research to focus attention on any areas that can be improved, for example training, support or any employee relations issues.

These figures are based on anyone who has left BFRS completely. They do not include individuals who left one of multiple contracts.

Age	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
16-24	6.1%	1.6%	3.3%
25-35	15.4%	21.9%	8.3%
36-45	26.2%	12.5%	31.7%
46-55	26.2%	25%	28.3%
56-65	18.5%	26.6%	28.3%
66+	7.6%	12.4%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Disability	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Disabled	9.2%	4.7%	6.7%
Non-disabled	78.5%	71.9%	83.3%
Not declared	12.3%	23.4%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%



WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT
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LEAVERS

Gender	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Male	72.3%	59.4%	76.7%
Female	27.7%	40.6%	23.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Ethnicity	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Black and ethnic minority	4.6%	6.3%	3.3%
White	83.1%	73.4%	90%
Not declared	12.3%	21.7%	25%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Religion or belief	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Religion or belief	49.2%	45.3%	48.3%
No Religion or Belief	13.8%	26.6%	30%
Not declared	37.0%	28.1%	21.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Sexual orientation	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other	4.6%	4.7%	1.7%
Heterosexual	83.1%	62.5%	81.7%
Not declared	12.3%	32.8%	16.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

2024 n=65 2023 n=64 2022 n=60



WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT
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WORKFORCE PROFILE BY PAY BAND

The table below shows, on 31 March 2024, the age profile of BFRS staff by pay band. Staff of age range 16 –24 were relatively low across all pay bands, while staff in the age range 44– 55 range were relatively higher in support role (37.3%) at grade 14 –20 and (57.1%) in senior management tier. The gender profile indicates 86.3% crew and watch managers, 89.0% station manager and group managers and 100% senior managers are male. 50.7% male staff and 49.3% female staff are in support roles at grade 14 –20. A higher percentage of female staff, 64.7% are in support role at grade 13.

Percentages of staff from ethnic minority background were 16.4% in support roles at pay band 13, 18.0% in support roles at grade 14–20, 8.8% in crew and watch manager roles, 7.4% in station manager and group manager roles, and 28.6% in senior management roles.

Age	Support: Apprentice - Grade 13	Support: Grade 14 - Grade 20	Uniformed: Fire-fighter, Crew Manager & Watch Manager	Uniformed: Station Manager & Group Manager	Senior Management Tier	31/03/24 BFRS Profile
16-24	5.2%	1.5%	7.2%	3.7%	0.0%	6.8%
25-35	13.8%	6.0%	24.1%	51.9%	0.0%	19.1%
36-45	20.7%	31.3%	40.5%	40.7%	28.6%	37.1%
46-55	20.7%	37.3%	24%	3.7%	57.1%	22.6%
56-65	35.3	19.4%	4.2%	0%	14.2%	13.2%
66+	4.3%	4.5%	0%	0%	0%	1.2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Gender	Support: Apprentice - Grade 13	Support: Grade 14 - Grade 18	Uniformed: Fire-fighter, Crew Manager & Watch Manager	Uniformed: Station Manager & Group Manager	Senior Management Tier	31/03/24 BFRS Profile
Male	35.3%	50.7%	86.3%	89.0%	100%	73.6%
Female	64.7%	49.3%	13.7%	11.0%	0%	26.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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WORKFORCE PROFILE BY PAY BAND

Ethnicity	Support: Apprentice - Grade 13	Support: Grade 14 - Grade 18	Uniformed: Fire-fighter, Crew Manager & Watch Manager	Uniformed: Station Manager & Group Manager	Senior Management Tier	31/03/24 BFRS Profile
Black and ethnic minority	16.4%	18.0%	8.8%	7.4%	28.6%	7.2%
White	83.6%	82.0%	91.2%	92.6%	71.40%	89.2%
Not declared	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

n = 590 (these figures are by positions)

JOB APPLICATIONS, RECRUITMENT, STARTERS AND PROMOTIONS

Recruitment to BFRS is through fair and open competition based on merit, with individuals assessed for their ability to demonstrate the required competences, knowledge and skills for the role.

BFRS is committed to ensure that all recruitment is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. Reasonable adjustments for disabled people are made at all stages of the recruitment process, as required.

In 2023/24, 158 people aged 25–35 applied for support posts within BFRS, an increase of 3.4% from 2022/23. 117 people aged 36–45 also applied for support posts. This indicates another increase by 2% when compared to 2022/23. There was a significant increase of 11.7% in the number of people from ethnic minority groups who applied for support roles in BFRS in 2023/24. This shows that positive action initiatives may have helped to encourage applications at BFRS.

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JOB APPLICATIONS, RECRUITMENT, STARTERS AND PROMOTIONS

Job Applications – Support Staff

Age	Support Staff Profile 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22
16-24	3.8%	6.6%	13.1%	10.6%
25-35	11.4%	37.2%	33.8%	33.2%
36-45	24.9%	27.5%	25.7%	21.9%
46-55	20.0%	18.8%	17.0%	21.9%
56-65	35.7%	9.2%	9.4%	11.6%
66+	4.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%
Not declared	0%	0.2%	0.5%	0.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Disability	Support Staff Profile 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22
Disabled	5.2%	6.1%	7.1%	5.3%
Non-disabled	90.2%	92.7%	89.5%	90.4%
Not declared	4.6%	1.2%	3.4%	4.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Gender	Support Staff Profile 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22
Male	40.5%	48.5%	44.5%	36.9%
Female	59.5%	51.0%	54.2%	62.8%
Not declared	0%	0.5%	1.3%	0.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

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JOB APPLICATIONS, RECRUITMENT, STARTERS AND PROMOTIONS

Ethnicity	Support Staff Profile 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22
Black and ethnic minority	12.5%	38.4%	26.7%	31%
White	83.2%	61.4%	72.0%	69.0%
Not declared	4.3%	0.2%	1.3%	0.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Religion or belief	Support Staff Profile 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22
Religion or belief	59.3%	69.4%	63.9%	56.5%
No religion or belief	30.7%	25.2%	29.8%	35.9%
Not declared	10%	5.4%	6.3%	5.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Sexual Orientation	Support Staff Profile 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22
Gay/Lesbian/ Bisexual/Other	2.6%	6.8%	9.4%	5.6%
Heterosexual	90%	85.9%	84%	91.1%
Not declared	7.4%	7.3%	6.5%	3.3%
Not declared	100%	100%	100%	100%

Applications 2024 n = 425

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JOB APPLICATIONS, RECRUITMENT, STARTERS AND PROMOTIONS

Job Applications – Operational Staff

Despite our positive action initiatives during the wholetime campaign, applications from females for uniformed staff posts (Wholetime, On-Call and Control) dropped significantly by 15.8% during 2023/24. Of the 669 applicants in total, 80 were female applicants. This indicates positive action must continue to attract more females to join the Service.

During 2023/24, applications from ethnic minority individuals for operational roles increased to 12.7% compared to 5.9% in 2022/23. Of the 57 starters in 2023/24, 7% were minority ethnic. There was an increase of 3.8% in applications received from people who identified themselves as Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other in year 2023/24.

Age	Operational Staff Profile 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22
16-24	8.1%	33.6%	32.2%	18.4%
25-35	22.4%	46.5%	40.7%	25.8%
36-45	42.3%	16.1%	18.9%	25.8%
44-55	23%	2.5%	5.9%	3.7%
56-65	4.2%	0.7%	1.9%	0.6%
66+	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.6%
Not declared	0%	0.5%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%



JOB APPLICATIONS, RECRUITMENT, STARTERS AND PROMOTIONS

Disability	Operational Staff Profile 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22
Disabled	4.5%	3.7%	5.9%	3.1%
Non-disabled	91%	96%	93%	96.3%
Not declared	4.5%	0.3%	1.1%	0.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Gender	Operational Staff Profile 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22
Male	13.2%	87.6%	72.2%	89.6%
Female	86.8%	12%	27.8%	10.4%
Not declared	0%	0.5%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Ethnicity	Operational Staff Profile 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22
Black and ethnic minority	5.1%	12.7%	5.9%	3.1%
White	91.8%	87%	93%	96.3%
Not declared	3.1%	0.3%	1.1%	0.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

JOB APPLICATIONS, RECRUITMENT, STARTERS AND PROMOTIONS

Religion or belief	Operational Staff Profile 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22
Religion or belief	36%	57.9%	56.7%	48.5%
No Religion or Belief	53%	35.4%	40.7%	48.6%
Not declared	11%	6.7%	48%	2.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Sexual Orientation	Operational Staff Profile 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/24	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22
Gay/Lesbian/ Bisexual/Other	3.3%	10.5%	6.7%	8.6%
Heterosexual	93.5%	84.7%	91.5%	87.1%
Not declared	3.2%	4.8%	1.9%	4.3%
Not declared	100%	100%	100%	100%

2024 n = 669 2023 n = 270 2022 n = 163

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STARTERS

During 2023/24, 57 employees joined Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service compared with 83 in 2022/23. Those in the age 16–24, 25–35 and in the age 46–55 age category increased respectively, however those aged 56–65 decreased. The percentage of those who were 66+ decreased from 7.2% to 3.5%. The percentage of people who declared their disability increased by 4.0% in 2023/24. 42% of our new starters were female in 2023/24 compared to 47.0% in the previous year. There was a decrease in minority ethnic groups joining the Service from 8.4% in 2022/23 to 7.0% in 2023/24. Less starters declared their sexual orientation in 2023/24.

Age	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
16–24	14%	10.8%	28.1%
25–35	33.3%	28.9%	23.4%
36–45	19.4%	30.1%	23.4%
46–55	17.5%	9.6%	18.8%
56–65	12.3%	13.3%	6.3%
66+	3.5%	7.2%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Disability	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Disabled	8.8%	4.8%	17.2%
Non-disabled	77.2%	74.7%	67.2%
Not declared	14%	20.5%	15.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Gender	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Male	58%	53%	71.9%
Female	42%	47%	28.1%
Not declared	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%



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STARTERS

Ethnicity	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Black and ethnic minority	7%	8.4%	10.9%
White	84.2%	69.9%	75%
Not declared	8.8%	21.7%	14.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Religion or belief	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Religion or belief	35%	34.9%	40.6%
No Religion or Belief	44%	34.9%	40.6%
Not declared	21%	30.2%	18.8%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Sexual Orientation	31/03/24	31/03/23	31/03/22
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other	5.3%	10.3%	0%
Heterosexual	82.5%	65.1%	82.8%
Not declared	12.2%	24.1%	17.2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

2024 n = 57 2023 n = 83 2022 n = 64



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PROMOTIONS

The promotion gateway aims to assess the potential of candidates across the range of skills, personal qualities and attributes common to the range of jobs in that role 'family'. Entry to the talent pool does not guarantee a role, however those successful are judged to have shown sufficient potential for either temporary, or substantive promotion to any of the jobs in that role 'family' e.g. Crew Commander. The pool of candidates successful at the gateway may still undergo a further job specific interview before promotion and whilst the gateway will be scored, candidates will not be appointed based solely on their ranking order. Assignment decisions are made by the Service and will be based on a review of skills, knowledge, experience and performance during the selection process.

The Service promoted 22 staff all of which are uniformed employees during 2023/24. The percentage of promotions for female employees was 9.1% and the promotion of employees who declared their disability was also 9.1%. Employees who were promoted and had no disability was at 86.4% during 2022/24. 4.5% of staff who were promoted did not declare their disability status and 4.5% of staff promoted were from a minority ethnic background.

Most promotions occur in the 35-44 age range, which is to be expected taking into consideration the average length of time required for uniformed staff to become fully competent at each role. 50.0% of promoted staff declared their religion as Christian and Roman Catholic and 45.5% declared as having no religion/belief. 4.5% of promoted staff did not declare their religion. 95.5% declared their sexual orientation as heterosexual. A small number of employees have not declared their religion, faith or belief and sexual orientation.

Age	Workforce Profile 31/03/24	Promotions 31/03/24	Promotions 31/03/23	Promotions 31/03/22
16-24	6.8%	0%	0%	0%
25-34	19.1%	9.1%	18.2%	3.1%
35-44	37.1%	59.1%	48.5%	68.8%
45-54	22.6%	27.3%	30.3%	28.1%
55-64	13.2%	4.5%	3%	0%
65+	1.2%	0%	0%	0%
Not declared	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%



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PROMOTIONS

Disability	Workforce Profile 31/03/24	Promotions 31/03/24	Promotions 31/03/23	Promotions 31/03/22
Disabled	4%	9.1%	0%	3.1%
Non-disabled	91.3%	86.4%	90.1%	96.9%
Not declared	4.7%	4.5%	9.1%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Gender	Workforce Profile 31/03/24	Promotions 31/03/24	Promotions 31/03/23	Promotions 31/03/22
Male	72.3%	90.9%	84.8%	90.6%
Female	27.7%	9.1%	0%	9.4%
Not declared	0%	0%	15.2%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Ethnicity	Workforce Profile 31/03/24	Promotions 31/03/24	Promotions 31/03/22	Promotions 31/03/21
Black and ethnic minority	7.2%	4.5%	3%	6.3%
White	89.2%	95.5%	97%	93.3%
Not declared	3.6%	0%	0%	1.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Religion or belief	Workforce Profile 31/03/24	Promotions 31/03/23	Promotions 31/03/22	Promotions 31/03/21
Religion or belief	42%	50%	24.2%	31.3%
No Religion or belief	43.3%	45.5%	60.6%	53.1%
Not declared	14.7%	4.5%	15.2%	15.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT
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Sexual orientation	Workforce Profile 31/03/24	Promotions 31/03/24	Promotions 31/03/23	Promotions 31/03/21
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other	5.3%	0%	0%	4.6%
Heterosexual	82.5%	95.5%	84.4%	90.4%
Not declared	12.2%	4.5%	15.6%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

2024 n = 22 2023 n = 33 2022 n = 32



WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT
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GENDER PAY GAP

Gender Pay Gap reporting was introduced in 2017 to highlight the differences in the average earnings of men and women and encourage society and employees to address the pay inequalities that exist.

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's report for the seventh snapshot was 31 March 2023. The reporting deadline for Gender Pay Gap report is always a year in arrears, therefore the data for 31 March 2024 will be published later this year.

The Service gender median pay gap for 2023 is 5.1%, compared with the UK Gender pay gap of 14.3%, taken from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings survey 2023 conducted by the Office for National Statistics. This is an increase from the previous year's zero percentage and is primarily caused by the TUPE transfer of a group of lower paid female staff into the Service. The positive percentage mean average of 8.3% has been achieved by the recruitment of more females within upper quartile.

The Service has clear policies and pay structure in place to pay employees equally regardless of gender. The gender pay gap reflects the limited number of women in operational firefighting and senior roles. For more information, please see our latest [Gender Pay Gap report](#).

Gender Pay analysis 2023

Comparison between median hourly wages	31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2021
The median hourly wage	5.1%	0%	0%
The mean hourly wage	8.3%	4%	6.2%

Hourly Wages Pay Gap	13 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 21
Top quarter	29.9%	29%	28%
Upper middle quarter	16.3%	12%	15%
Lower middle quarter	14.3%	14%	10%
Lower quarter	52.3%	45%	45%

GRIEVANCES

Four formal grievances were submitted during 2023/24. This compares to six grievances raised the previous year. Of the four formal grievances submitted in 2023/24 one was upheld, two were not upheld, and one was withdrawn.

Of those who raised a grievance, 100% were male, 75% were White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British and 25% preferred not to say their ethnic background. Since the launch of Speak Up line in September 2023, a confidential line to report any bullying, harassment, discrimination or inappropriate behaviour there have been seven reports. Diversity data is not collected during this process.

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS



During 2023/24, the Service received 63 compliments from members of the public by letter, email or through social media this is compared to 51 in 2021/2023 and 36 in 2021/22.

The Service received 19 complaints, compared to 16 in 2022/23 and 28 in 2021/22. Currently the Service does not capture equality information about the person making a complaint or compliment, so we are not able to report on this.

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Compliments	63	51	36
Complaints	19	16	28

EXTERNAL TRAINING

We make a considerable investment in the training and development of our staff giving everyone the opportunity to work towards achieving their career goals. Employees can be nominated or request training relevant to their role or development training.

In 2023–24, 86 of our staff took part in external training programme. Equality monitoring of the 86 colleagues showed that staff at higher age range have accessed more training opportunities. Percentage of staff with disabilities increased from 3.4% last year to 9.5% this year. Percentage of male staff accessing this dropped by 4.3%. More female staff participated in external training in the year 2023–24, 45.2% compared to 35% year in the previous year, showing an increase of 10.2%. Staff from ethnic minority group represented 2.4% of the participants compared to 3.4% in the previous year. A lower percentage of staff declared their religion or belief compared to previous years whereas the percentage for sexual orientation dropped from 3.4% to 1%.

Age	Workforce Profile 31/03/24	Attended 31/03/24	Attended 31/03/23	Attended 31/03/22
16–24	6.8%	3.6%	1%	1%
25–34	19.1%	7.1%	11.6%	12.6%
35–44	37.1%	33.4%	38%	46.7%
45–54	22.6%	34.5%	28.7%	28.1%
55–64	13.2%	19%	19.7%	9.8%
65+	1.2%	2.4%	1%	1.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Disability	Workforce Profile 31/03/24	Attended 31/03/24	Attended 31/03/23	Attended 31/03/22
Disabled	4.4%	9.4%	3.4%	6.6%
Non-disabled	89.7%	78.8%	95.6%	89.5%
Not declared	5.9%	11.8%	1%	3.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

EXTERNAL TRAINING

Gender	Workforce Profile 31/03/24	Attended 31/03/24	Attended 31/03/23	Attended 31/03/22
Male	73.6%	52.3%	56.6%	80.7%
Female	26.4%	45.2%	35%	19.3%
Not declared	0%	2.5%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Ethnicity	Workforce Profile 31/03/24	Attended 31/03/24	Attended 31/03/23	Attended 31/03/22
Black and ethnic minority	7.2%	2.4%	3.4%	8.8%
White	89.2%	83.3%	84.8%	87.9%
Not declared	3.6%	14.3%	5.8%	3.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Religion or belief	Workforce Profile 31/03/24	Attended 31/03/24	Attended 31/03/23	Attended 31/03/22
Religion or belief	42%	41.6%	51%	48.4%
No Religion or Belief	43.3%	31%	36.6%	39.5%
Not declared	14.7%	27.4%	12.4%	12.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Sexual orientation	Workforce Profile 31/03/24	Attended 31/03/24	Attended 31/03/23	Attended 31/03/22
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other	5.3%	1%	3.4%	3.7%
Heterosexual	82.5%	87%	84.4%	84%
Not declared	12.2%	12%	12.2%	12.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

2023 n = 86 2022 n = 80 2021 n = 70

OUR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are integral to delivering inclusive and accessible services to the diverse communities we serve. We continued to build on the improvements and progress made in the Service including actively engaging with the communities and improving on the collation of data to focus our activities on the most vulnerable groups. Some of our key achievements are detailed below:

- 🔥 We participated and celebrated a variety of diversity events including LGBTQ+ month, Black History Month and the International Women's Day.
- 🔥 Attended local face-to-face events such as festivals and various community celebrations to ensure we gave communities the chance to engage with us.
- 🔥 Engaged with individuals through participation at events across the county. Fifteen of these events took place at various schools and colleges to promote BFRS as an employer of choice.
- 🔥 At our recruitment drive in collaboration with Bedfordshire Police and Inspire Gym in Luton, we provided fitness advice and information about the Wholetime Firefighter recruitment process.
- 🔥 Engaged and collaborated with our partners to reach out to community groups in diverse demographical areas, helping us to raise our profile and engage with those least likely to access Fire and Rescue services.
- 🔥 Held Station Open Days to educate parents/carers and children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and children with learning disability to educate on home fire and road safety.
- 🔥 Used social media channels to promote the Service and deliver targeted safety messages.
- 🔥 Delivered safety awareness sessions on fire safety, road safety and water safety and provided learning resources such as the BFRS fire safety leaflets, as well as recommending StayWise resources at various locations.
- 🔥 Wherever possible we continuously made efforts to deliver key messaging, safety awareness sessions and provided learning opportunities in a variety of ways to a very young audience or those with identified special needs and vulnerabilities.

NEXT STEPS

Step 1

Continue to progress the EDI agenda in line with BFRS Community Risk Management Plan objectives, our Culture Action Plan our Human Resources Team Plan including the ongoing Positive Action Plan to improve the recruitment, retention, experience and diversity of the people employed by Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Step 2

Conduct a survey for insights and recommendations for decisions and improvement, seek external review and accreditation of BFRS actions as an employer by actively participating with relevant equalities standard and benchmarks including the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework.

Step 3

Promote and encourage employees and service users to voluntarily declare their diversity data to ensure BFRS' actions as an employer and as a service provider are evidence led and improvement focused.

Step 4

Review our bullying and harassment procedure to ensure that all staff are treated with dignity and respect and have a workplace that is free from harassment and bullying by changing the culture of the workplace to one that is genuinely inclusive.

Step 5

Review our complaints procedure to provide external complainants with the opportunity to declare their protected characteristics to ensure that all sections of our community receive the appropriate support and service.

As an employer and a service provider we will continue to pay our 'Due Regard' to ensure compliance with our Public Sector Equality Duties.

Our People and Culture Steering Group will monitor our progress and performance. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group will co-ordinate and carry out work related to our new objectives. We will provide an update on our progress in our next commitment to Public Sector Equality Duty report.

YOUR VIEWS COUNT

Your views are important to us and you have an opportunity to give feedback on our annual Public Sector Equality Duty Report.

We would welcome your feedback by e-mailing us at: diversity@bedsfire.gov.uk

CONNECT WITH BFRS



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