



COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

13 FEBRUARY 2018

FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES: WORKFORCE STATISTICS BULLETIN FOR ENGLAND 2016-17

Report of Area Manager, Workforce Development

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To present members with a summary of the data on the total workforce, leavers and workforce diversity published in the Fire and Rescue Workforce and Pensions Statistics 2017.

BACKGROUND

2. The Fire and Rescue Workforce and Pensions Statistics: England, April 2016 to March 2017 report which was previously known as the 'Operational Statistics Bulletin for England' is published annually by the Home Office. This publication focuses on trends in workforce, leavers, workforce diversity, firefighters' pensions and firefighter health and safety of fire and rescue services (FRS) in England.
3. This report analyses County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) statistics against the national data published by the Home Office for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.
4. In this report, only the data on total workforce, leavers and workforce diversity from the Fire and Rescue Workforce and Pensions Statistics are included as the firefighter health and safety and firefighters' pension data from the bulletin will be reported separately.

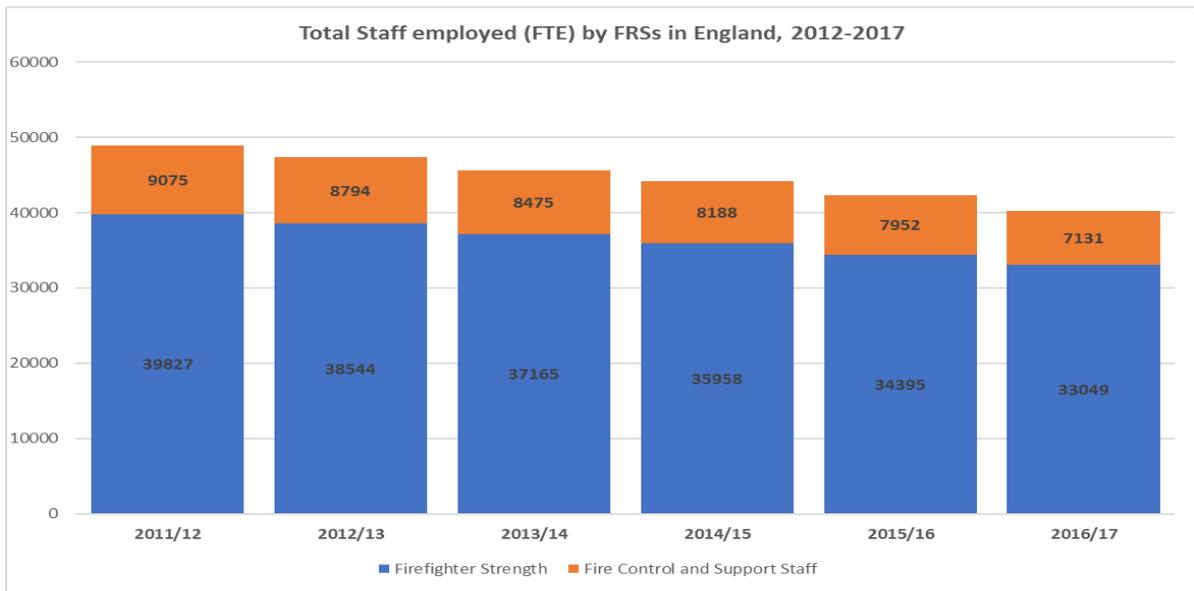
DATA ANALYSIS

5. An overview of 6 data sets that can be analysed against the data within the national reports are presented below.

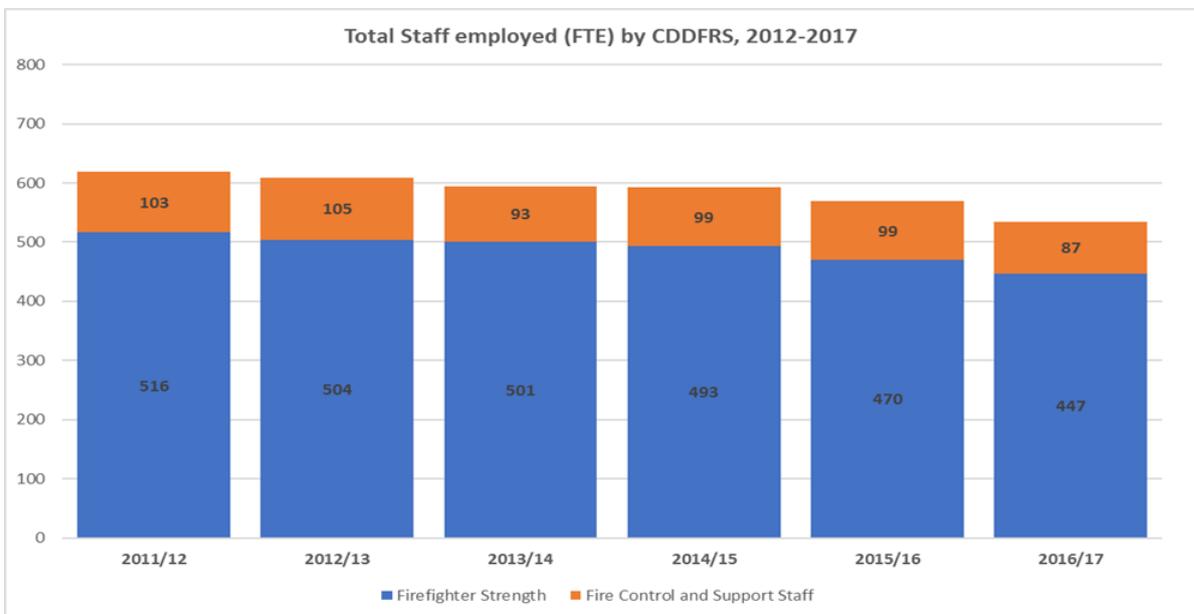
Total Workforce

6. Approximately 40,180 full time equivalent (FTE) Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) staff were employed in England in 2017. This figure is 5% lower than in 2016 and 18% lower than 5 years before.
7. Total firefighter strength was 33,049 FTE. This figure is 4% lower than the previous year and 17% lower than 5 years ago.

8. The total number of support and fire control staff was 7,131 FTE. This figure is 10% lower than the previous year and 21% lower than 5 years beforehand. This reduction can be partly attributed to fire control mergers over those 5 years.



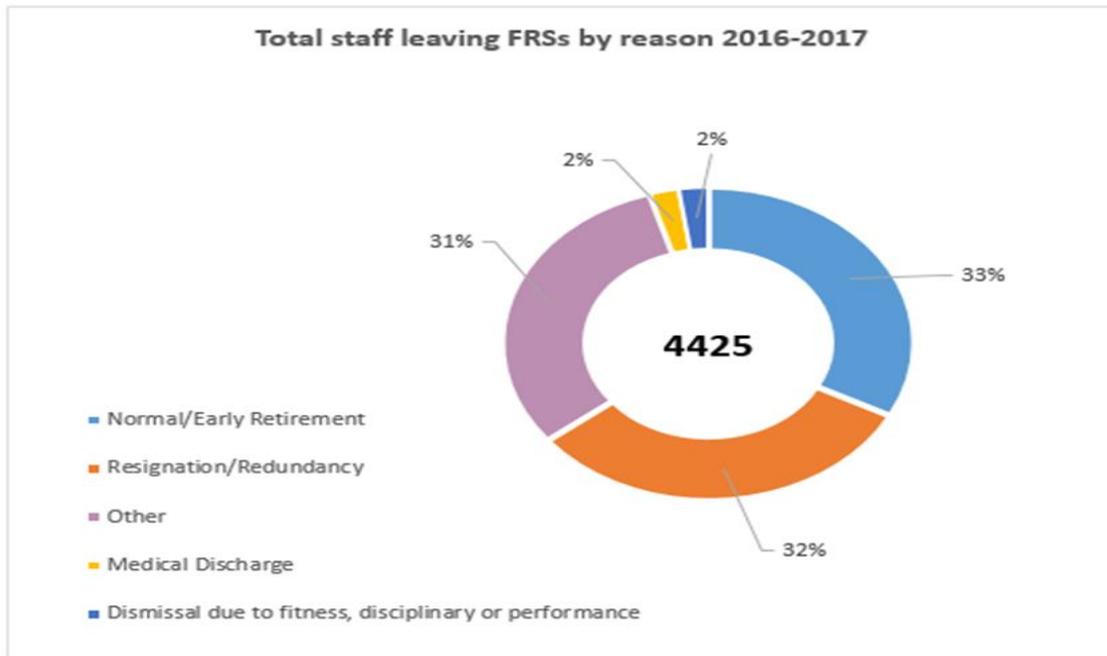
9. Total staff employed by CDDFRS was 534 (FTE). This figure is 6.2% lower than the previous year and 13.7% lower than 5 years ago.
10. In CDDFRS, total firefighter strength was 447 FTE. This figure is 4.9% lower than the previous year and 13.4% lower than 5 years ago.
11. The total number of fire control and support staff was 87 FTE. This figure is 12.1% lower than the previous year and 15.5% lower than 5 years beforehand.



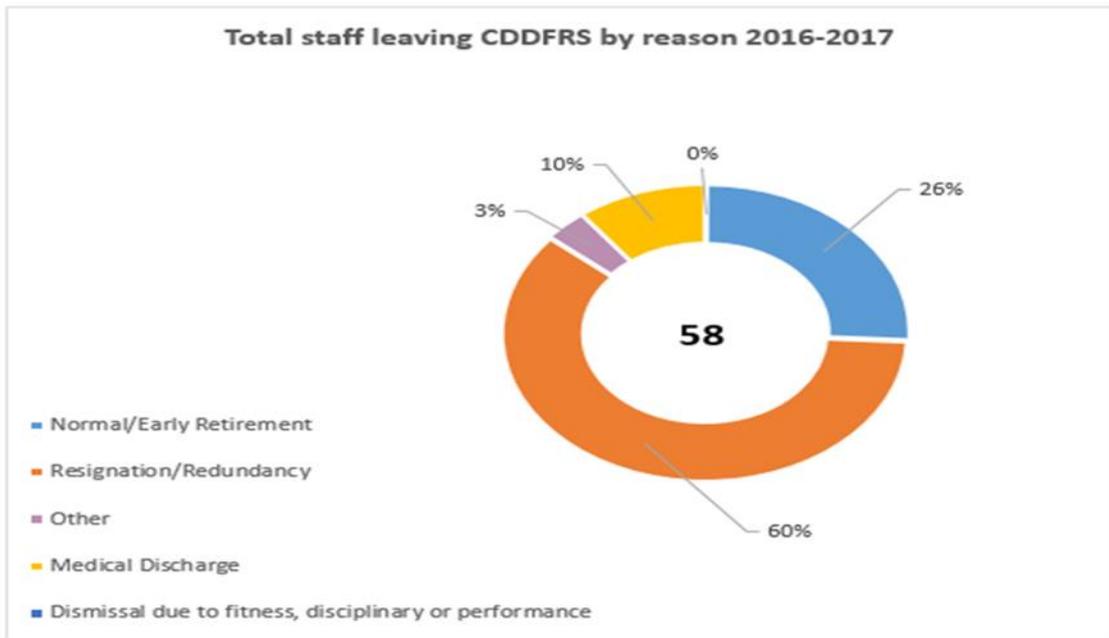
12. During the reporting period April 2016 to March 2017, the reduction in staff FTE is a result of 'normal' staff retirements and medical discharge. In addition, the service offered the opportunity for 'early retirement' (ER) or 'voluntary redundancy' (VR) to Corporate and Control staff. 15 staff took the opportunity which facilitated a restructure of the service, generating savings to address the deficit in the medium term financial plan (MTFP).

Total Leavers

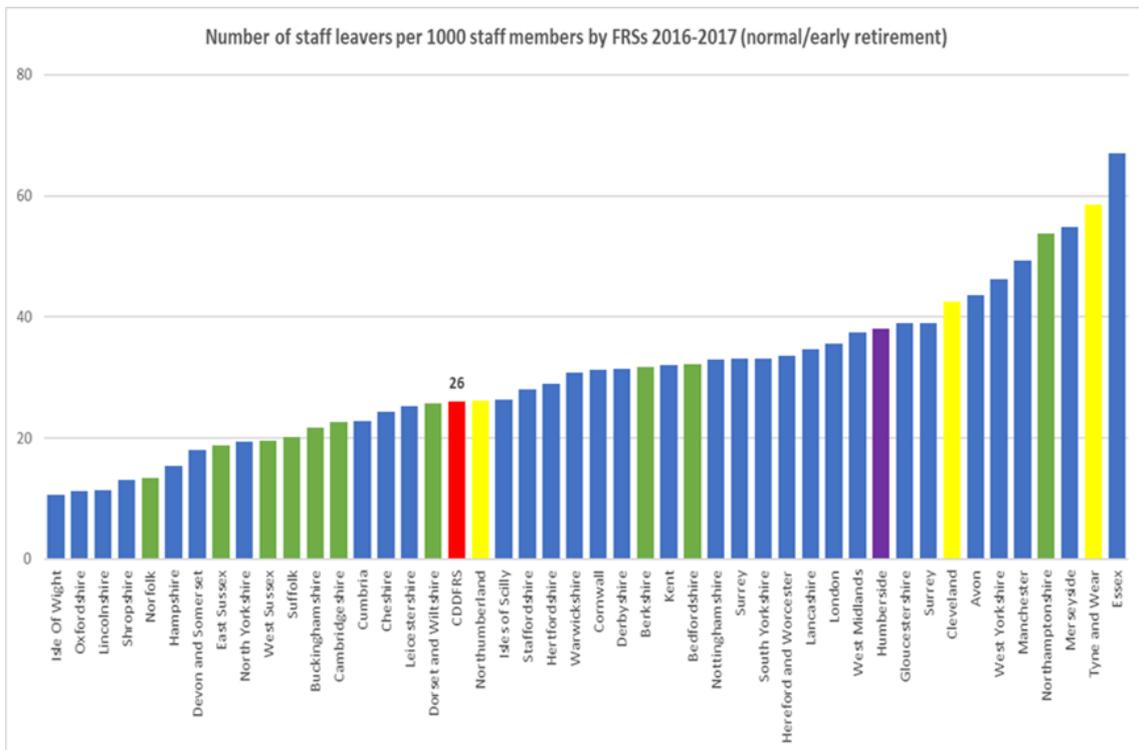
13. During the financial year 2016/17, 4,425 staff left FRSs; this is 11% of staff headcount, rising from 10% in the previous year.
14. The most common reason staff left FRSs in 2016/17 was because of a 'normal' or 'early' retirement which accounted for a total of 33% (1,446) of those leaving. The vast majority of staff leaving for this reason were whole-time firefighters (1,106). This was 33 people per 1000 members of FRS staff which is the same as in the previous year; 5 years beforehand this was 23 people.



15. In 2016/17, 58 members of staff left CDDFRS, this is 10% of staff headcount, rising from 7.9% in the previous year. 60% of staff left the service due to 'resignation/redundancy' which equates to 35 people.
16. Wholetime (WT) firefighters (FF) were the main contributor to the number of staff leaving with 19 leaving the service for various reasons including 'medical discharge', 'normal retirement' and 're-employment by another FRS'.
17. 18 Retained Duty System (RDS) FF left the service for various reasons including 'medical discharge', 'normal retirement', 'resignation to take other employment' or for 'other' reasons.
18. 13 Corporate and Control members of staff left the service through ER/VR, in addition 1 further Control member of staff resigned and 7 Corporate members of staff left the service; reasons given were 'resignation to take other employment' and 'other' reasons.

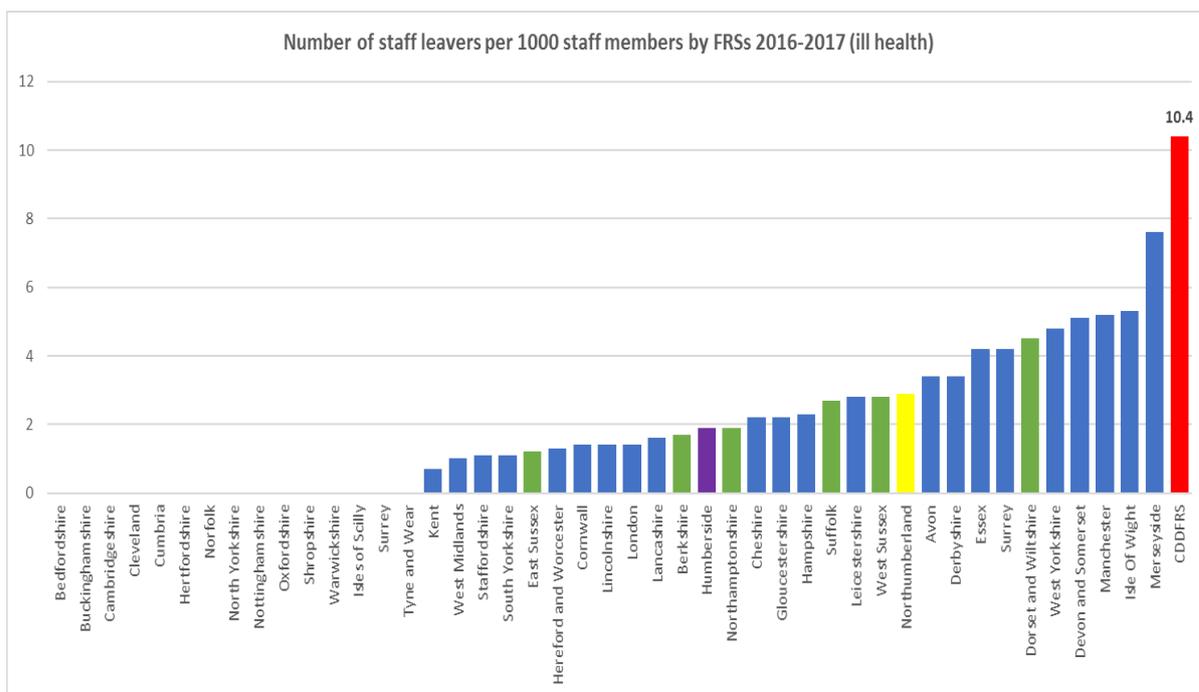


19. During the financial year 2016/17, 15 staff left CDDFRS because of ‘normal/early retirement’, this equates to 26 people per 1000 members of staff which is below the national average. In the previous year this rate was 32.8 people and 5 years beforehand this was 21.7 people.



20. In 2016/17 101 FRS staff retired through ‘ill health’ which equates to 2% of those leaving. This was 2.3 people per 1000 members of FRS staff. In the previous year, this rate was 1.9 and 5 years beforehand it was 1.7 people.

21. In 2016/17, CDDFRS saw an increase in staff leaving the service due to ill health, 6 staff left equating to approximately 10% of those leaving the service. This was 10.4 people per 1000 members of staff, compared to 3.3 in the previous year and 1.6 people 5 years beforehand. On average, 1 member of staff left the service each year since 2010/11 due to ill health.
22. Of the 6 staff who left, 4 were WT FF and 2 were RDS FF who were unable to carry out their operational role due to various physical conditions. The service has taken a more robust stance towards modified duties to ensure the effective management of absence, ensuring people return to their permanent role if permissible as quickly as possible. If this is not possible, opportunities for redeployment within the service are considered, unfortunately for the 6 staff above, no such opportunities were available and they were medically retired from the service.



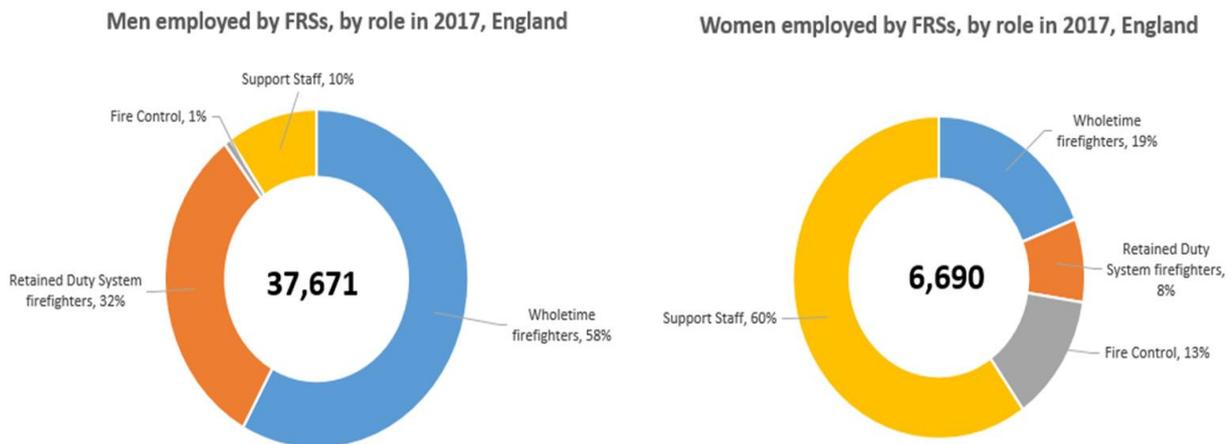
Workforce Diversity

23. Diversity statistics as at 31st March 2017 cover the following five diversity characteristics – gender, age, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation as well as new statistics on those joining the FRS.

Gender

24. 5.2% (1,838) of firefighters were female in England in 2017. This compares with 5% (1,824) in the previous year and 4.3% (1,791) 5 years previously. The number and proportion of female firefighters has slowly increased since data was first collected in 2002 where 1.7% (753) of firefighters were female.
25. Of the 37,671 male staff employed by FRSs, 90% were firefighters which is unchanged from 2016. In contrast, only 27% of the 6,690 female FRS employees were firefighters, down from 28% in 2016.

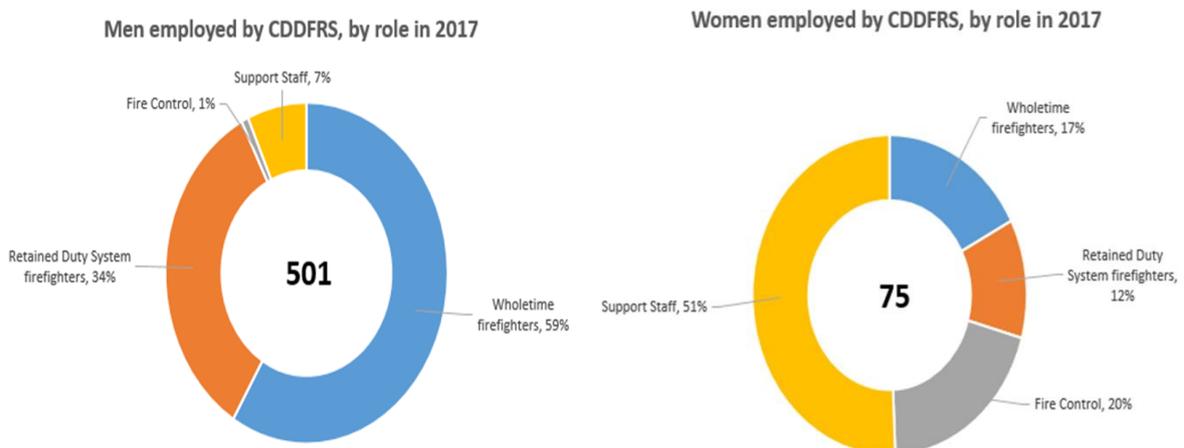
26. Nationally, the main cause of the increase in the proportion of female firefighters has been the reduction in the number of male firefighters. Since 2010, the number of female firefighters has slightly increased by around 100 whilst the number of male firefighters has decreased by almost 8,800.



27. Of the 576 staff employed by CDDFRS in 2017, 82% were firefighters.

28. Of the 501 male staff employed, 93% were firefighters. 75 females were employed by the service which equates to 13% of the total workforce; which is lower than the national statistic of 15.1% of all FRS staff being women.

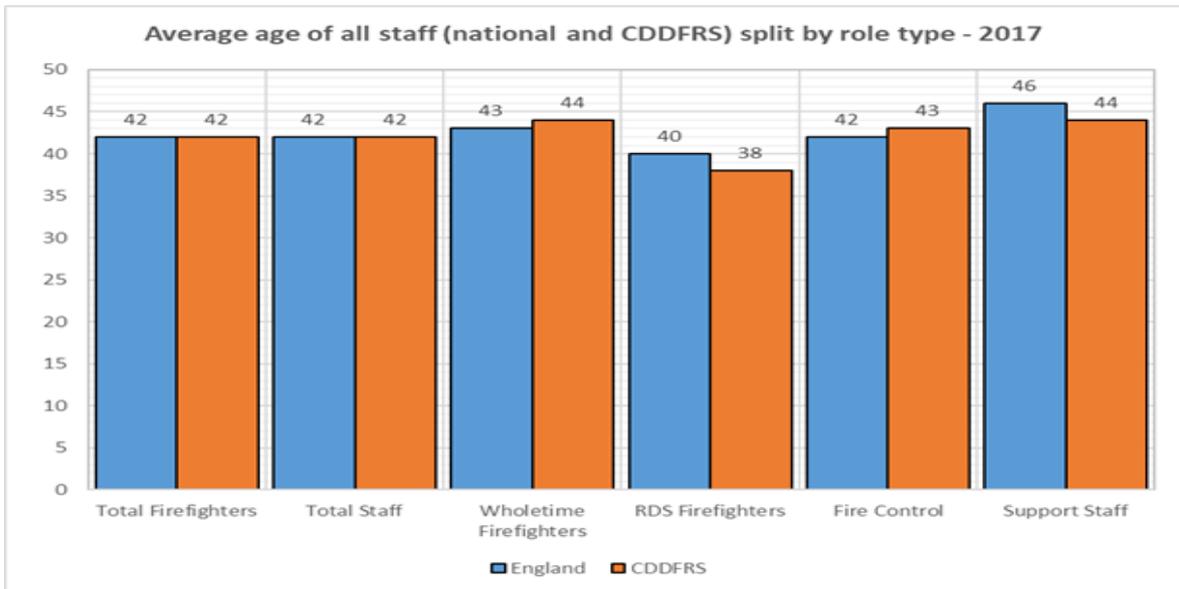
29. 29% of the 75 females (22) were firefighters meaning in 2017, 4.5% of CDDFRS firefighters were female which is lower than the national statistic reported. This figure has increased from 3.8% last year and 3.7% 5 years previously.



Age

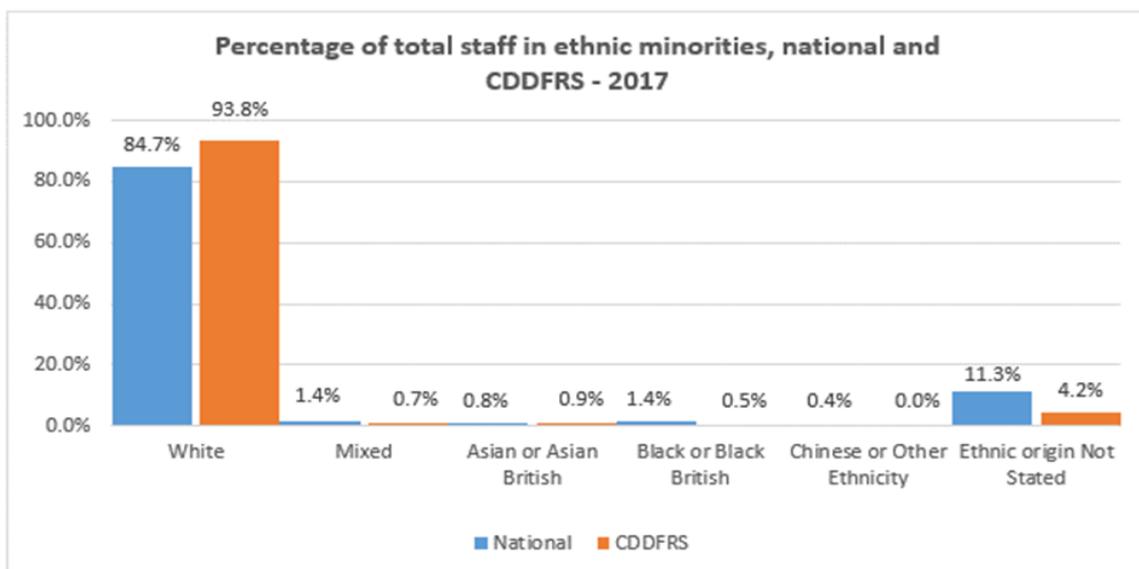
30. Nationally, the number of firefighters in the three youngest age bands (16-24, 25-35, 36-45) all decreased every year between 2012 and 2017, however in CDDFRS the number of firefighters in the 16-24 age band has increased year on year, only decreasing in 2017.

31. 35% of firefighters were aged between 46 and 55 years old in England in 2017, in comparison, in CDDFRS this was 40%. Overall, the age of FFs is increasing, the average age of firefighters in 2017 in both England and CDDFRS was 42, the previous year this was 41 and 5 years ago the average was 40.

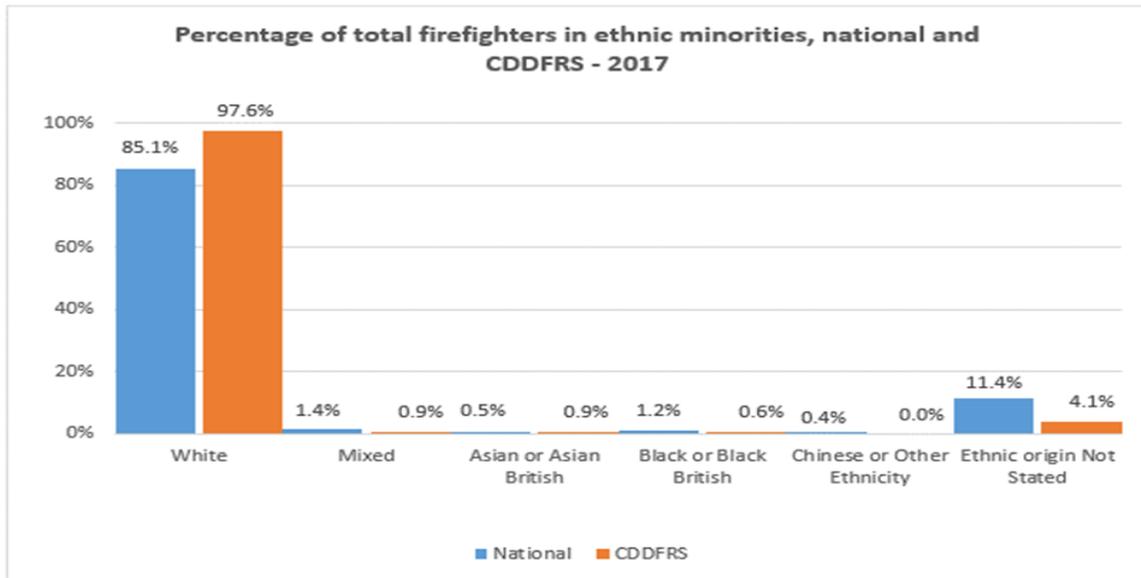


Ethnicity

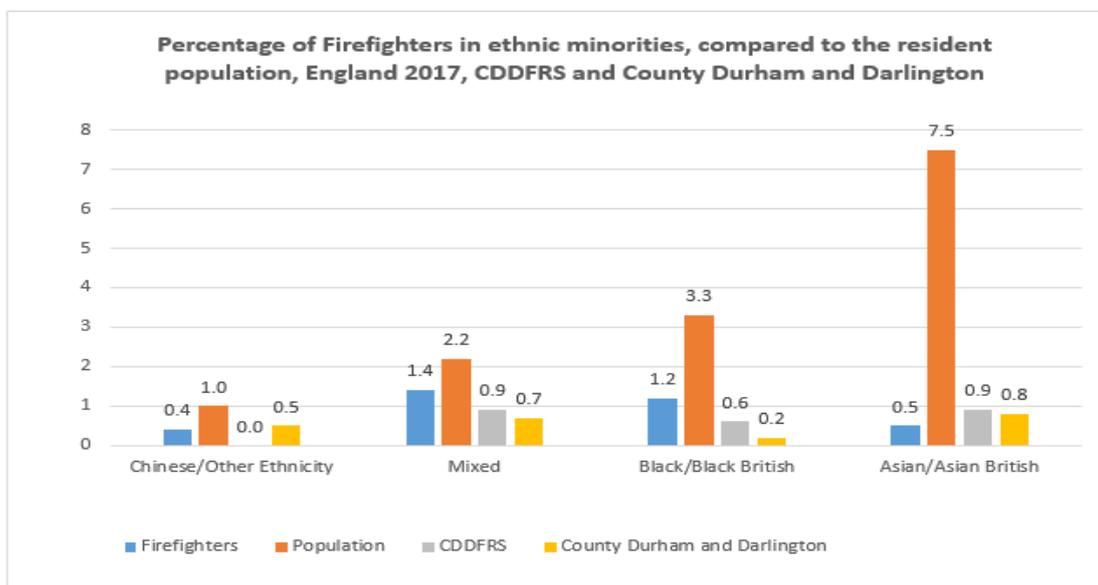
32. In 2016/17, 4.5% of FRS staff in England stated they were from an ethnic minority group which is comparable to last year and higher than 4.1% 5 years ago. In CDDFRS, 2.1% of staff stated they were from an ethnic minority group which is the same as last year and higher than 1.7% 5 years ago.
33. However nationally, 11.3% of all staff did not state their ethnicity which is considerably higher than the 4.2% of CDDFRS staff who did not state their ethnicity. The Human Resources (HR) Team have requested staff to identify their ethnicity on FireWatch to enable more accurate reporting of the ethnicity of our workforce.



34. Of those who stated an ethnicity, 3.9% of firefighters were from an ethnic minority group in England in 2017. This compares to 3.8% in the previous year and 3.5% 5 years ago. The actual number of firefighters who stated they were from an ethnic minority group has decreased over the past 5 years; however, the equivalent percentage has increased over this time because a greater proportion of white firefighters have left FRSs.
35. 2.4% of CDDFRS firefighters stated that they were from an ethnic minority group which is lower than the national average. This is the same as stated last year and higher than the 2% stated 5 years ago. 4.1% did not state their ethnicity which is lower than the national figure reported of 11.4% however is higher than the 'not stated' figures reported over the last 5 years.



36. To varying extents, all four ethnic minority groups were underrepresented as firefighters in 2017 compared with the population of England. CDDFRS performed slightly better in comparison with representation of 'Mixed', 'Black or Black British' and 'Asian/Asian British' groups as firefighters, exceeding the percentage of the local population.



Experimental Statistics

37. Experimental statistics are published to involve users and stakeholders in their development as a means to build in quality at an early stage. For the first time last year statistics on religion and sexual orientation were published. They were and remain as experimental statistics due to quality limitations with the data collected. These statistics serve a public good in understanding the diversity of the FRS workforce and in future will complement the existing statistics presented in this paper.

Workforce Joiner Diversity

38. For the first time this year, the Home Office collected information on the diversity of those joining FRSs. This was a voluntary collection with 39 FRSs completing the return; however, the Home Office proposes to make this mandatory for 2017/18.
39. The proportion of females, staff from ethnic minority and younger staff within 'new joiners' in 2017 was greater than from within total staff.
40. During 2016/17, across the 39 FRSs who provided the data, there were 1,480 new FF by headcount, 8.7% of these were female which is greater than the current 5.2% of all FF that are female. CDDFRS had 9 new FF, 1 of which was female equating to 11%.
41. During 2016/17, 5.1% of new FF were from an ethnic minority group which is greater than the 3.9% of all FF that were from an ethnic minority group. In CDDFRS, 3 of the 9 new FF stated their ethnicity as 'White', the remaining 6 did not state their ethnicity which reported as 0%.
42. 72% of new FF were 35 or under during 2016/17 which is greater than the 26% of all FF that were 35 or under. 78% of FF joining CDDFRS in the same period were 35 or under with the average age being 31 years old where in England this was 32 years old.

SUMMARY

43. The comparative analysis presented in this report highlights that the Service should continue to take positive action to increase the diversity of the workforce in underrepresented groups and particularly in operational roles, albeit this has been challenging in recent years, as until 2017 CDDFRS had not recruited into the whole-time service since 2009.
44. For the reporting year 2017/18, the recruitment of 10 apprentices, 50% of whom are female and 12 firefighters, 17% of whom are female will positively impact our statistics for workforce diversity.
45. Key objectives within the Workforce Development Strategy aim to increase the diversity of the workforce going forward. The objectives include a positive action programme to encourage applications from underrepresented groups which include providing support internally to our current staff and YFA/Cadet scheme members as well as to the wider community. The programme includes a more innovative use of social media advertising campaigns and a review of our current FF apprenticeship programme prior to the recruitment of our next cohort of FF apprentices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

46. Members are requested to:

- a. **Note** and comment on the content of the report.

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