

**Safest People, Safest Places**

County Durham and Darlington  
**Fire and Rescue Authority**



## **COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**

**09 FEBRUARY 2017**

### **FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES: OPERATIONAL STATISTICS BULLETIN FOR ENGLAND 2015-16**

#### **REPORT OF AREA MANAGER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

##### **Purpose of report**

1. To present a summary of the data on the total workforce, leavers and workforce diversity published in the 'Operational Statistics Bulletin for England: 2015-16'.

##### **Background**

2. The 'Operational Statistics Bulletin for England: 2015-16' report is published annually by the Home Office (previously by DCLG) and it focuses on trends in workforce, leavers, workforce diversity, firefighter safety and fire prevention activities carried out by 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 2015 to 31 March 2016. The statistics reported nationally for support and fire control staff have been grouped together, however we would normally report these figures separately.
4. In this report, only the data on total workforce, leavers and workforce diversity from the Operational Statistics Bulletin are included as the firefighter safety and fire prevention data from the bulletin have been reported separately.

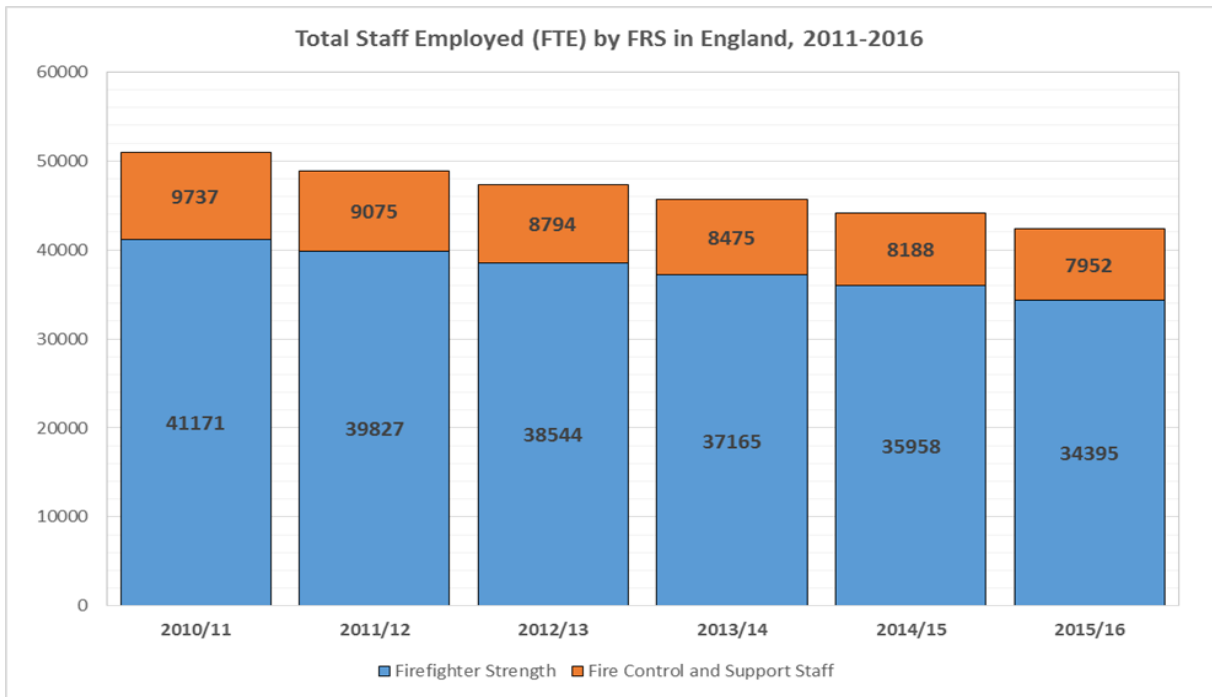
##### **Data Analysis**

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

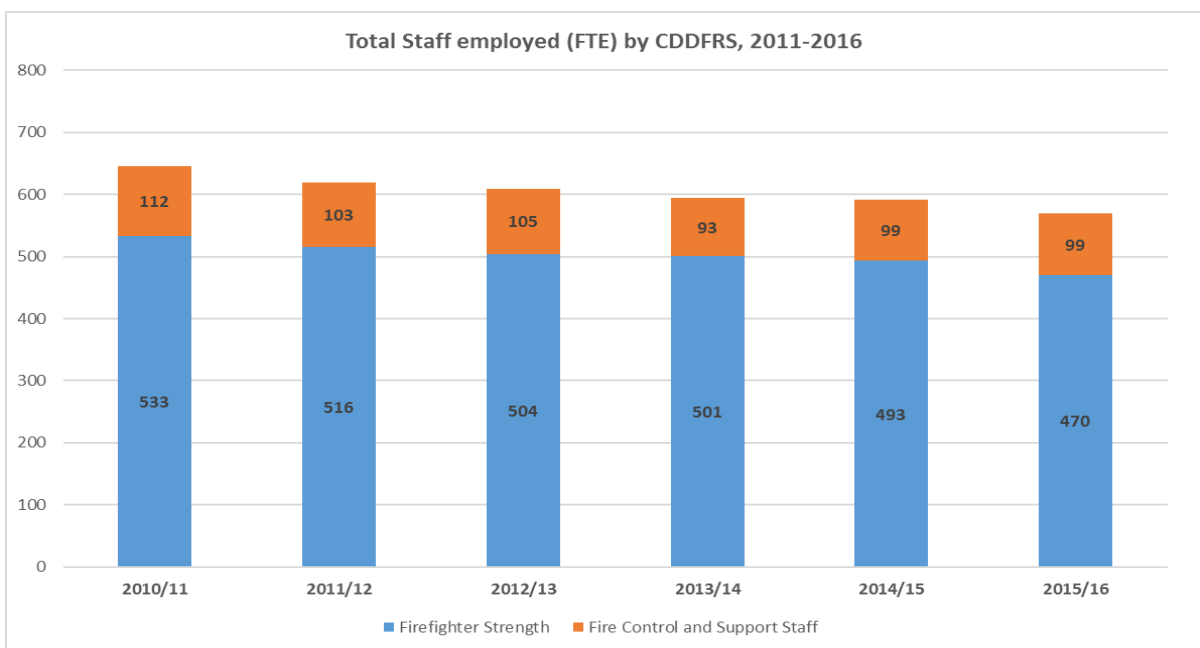
##### **Total Workforce**

6. Approximately 42,300 full time equivalent (FTE) Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) staff were employed in England in 2015/2016. This figure is 4% lower than in 2014/2015 and 17% lower than 5 years before.
7. Total firefighter strength was 34,395 FTE. This figure is 4% lower than the previous year and 16% lower than 5 years ago.

8. The total number of support and fire control staff was approximately 8,000 FTE. This figure is 3% lower than the previous year and 18% lower than 5 years beforehand. This reduction can be partly attributed to fire control mergers over those 5 years.

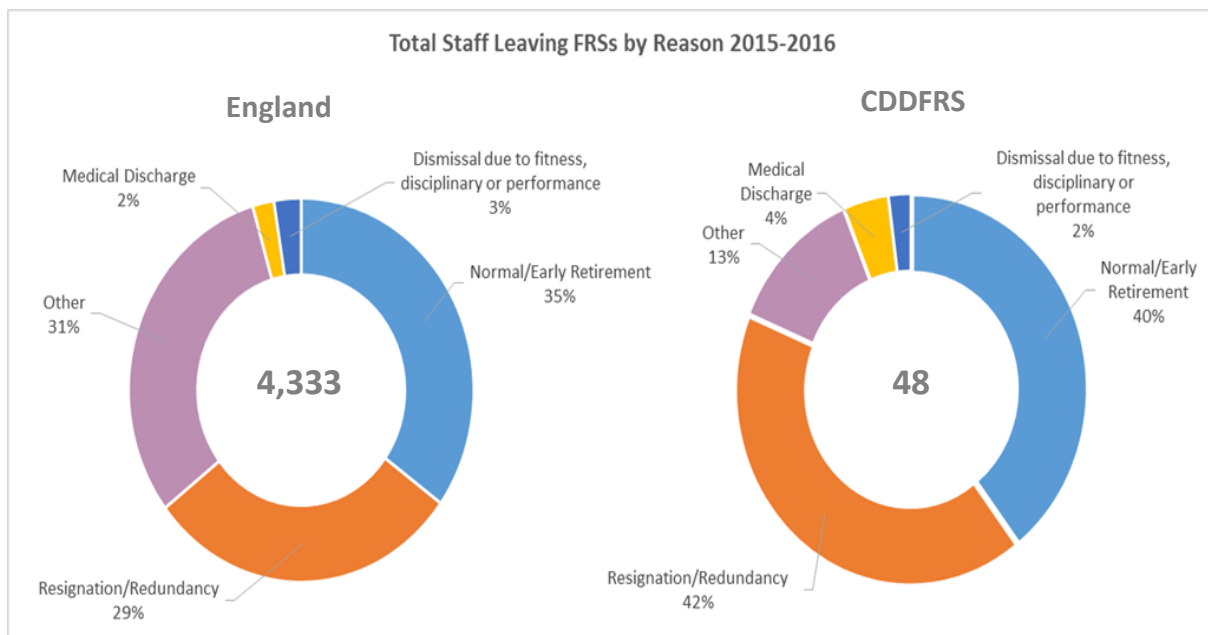


9. Total staff employed by CDDFRS in 2015/16 was 569 (FTE). This figure is 3.9% lower than the previous year and 11.8% lower than 5 years ago. During the reporting period April 2015 to March 2016 a number of Service transformation options were implemented that resulted in the reduction of 13 operational posts, this reduction in staff was met through retirements and 3 firefighters transferring to a neighbouring FRS.

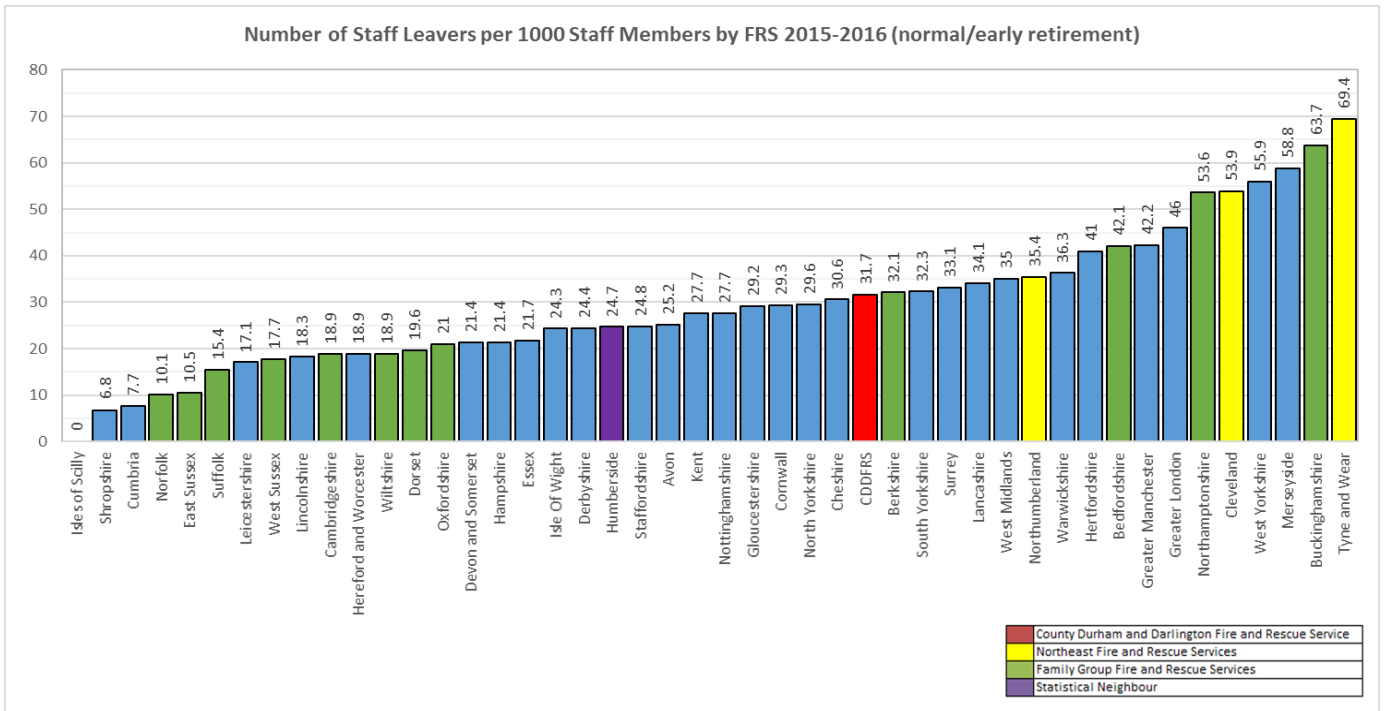


## Total Leavers

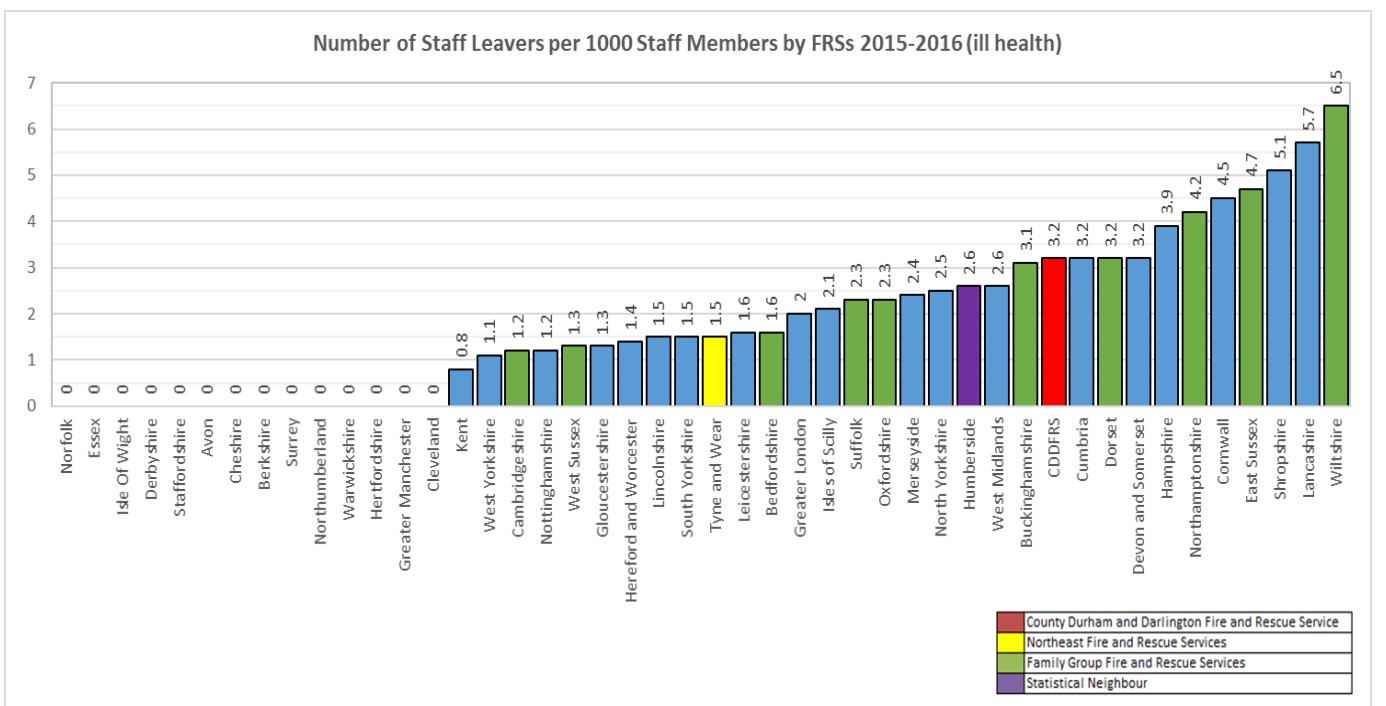
10. During the financial year 2015/16, roughly 4,300 staff left FRSs, this is 10% of staff.



11. The most common reason staff left FRSs in 2015/16 was because of 'normal retirement' which accounted for around a third of those leaving. The vast majority of staff leaving for this reason were whole-time firefighters.
12. In 2015/16, the most common reason staff left CDDFRS was because of 'resignation/redundancy', this equates to 42% or 20 people. Retained Duty System (RDS) firefighters were the main contributor to this figure with 15 leaving the Service for various reasons including 'moving outside of the area', 'seeking other employment' or for 'personal reasons'. 4 corporate and 1 operational member of staff left the Service, reasons given were 'resignation due to another role', to 'pursue other employment' and 'other'. All staff are offered an exit interview when leaving the Service, which provides us with an opportunity to identify areas of good practice or where improvement could be made.
13. In 2015/16, in all FRSs, approximately 1,500 staff retired through a 'normal' or 'early' retirement. This was 32 people per 1000 members of FRS staff, in the previous year this rate was 26 people and 5 years beforehand this was 13 people.
14. During the financial year 2015/16, 19 staff left CDDFRS because of 'normal' or 'early' retirement', this equates to 31.7 people per 1000 members of staff which is slightly below the national average. In the previous year this rate was 14 people and 5 years beforehand this was 11 people, demonstrating a continuing increase in staff retiring from the service in line with the trend nationally.



15. In 2015/16 approximately 90 FRS staff retired through 'ill health'. This was 1.8 people per 1000 members of FRS staff. In the previous year, this rate was 1.8 and 5 years beforehand it was 0.8 people.
16. CDDFRS had 2 staff leave the service due to ill health in 2015/16, this equates to 3.2 people per 1000 members of staff. CDDFRS had no other staff leave employment due to ill health retirement since 2010.



## Workforce Diversity

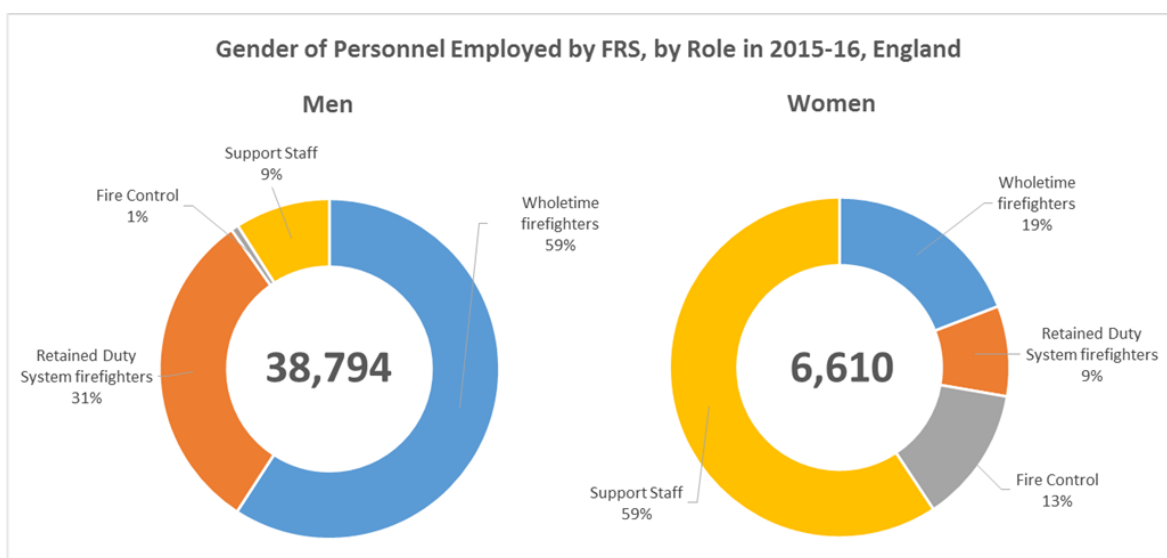
17. Diversity statistics as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, report that firefighters in England were predominantly male (95%), white (96%) and aged 36 or older (73%).

## Gender

18. 5% (approximately 1,800) of firefighters were women in England in 2016. This compares with 4.7% in the previous year and 4.1% 5 years previously. The number and proportion of women firefighters has slowly increased since data was first collected in 2002 where 1.7% of firefighters were women.

19. Of the 38,794 male staff employed by FRSs, 90% were firefighters. In contrast, only 28% of the 6,600 female FRS employees were firefighters.

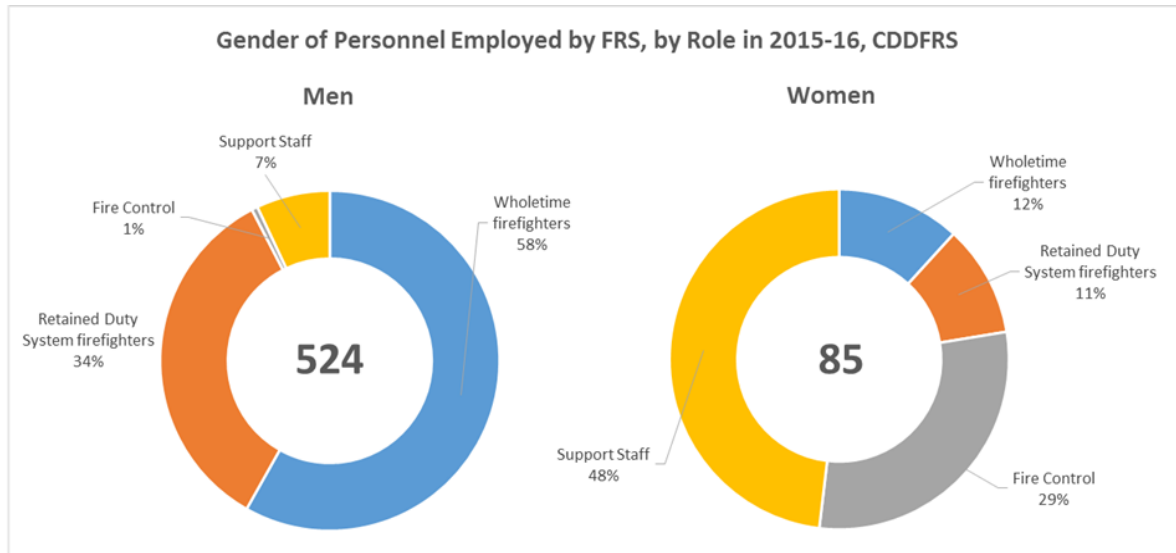
20. Nationally, the main cause of the increase in the proportion of women firefighters has been the reduction in the number of male firefighters, rather than an increase in the number of women firefighters.



21. Of the 609 staff employed by CDDFRS in 2016, 82% were firefighters.

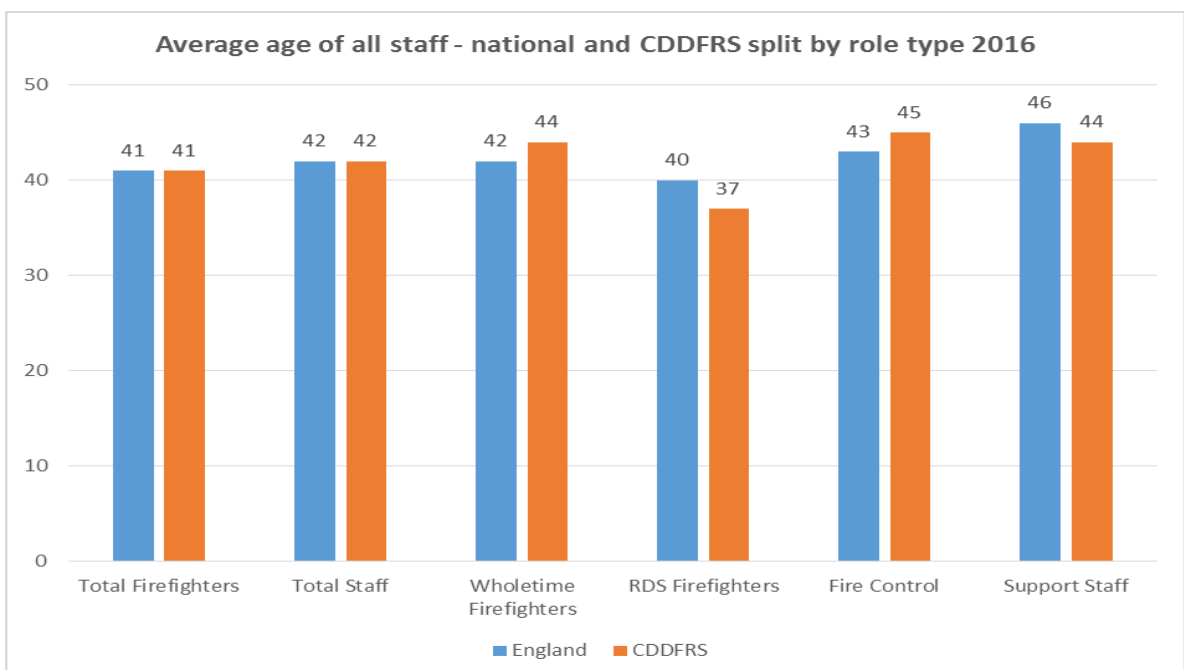
22. Of the 524 male staff employed, 92% were firefighters. 85 women were employed by the Service which equates to 14% of the total workforce; this aligns to the national statistic of 14.6% of all FRS staff being women.

23. 23% of the 85 women (19) were firefighters meaning in 2016, 3.8% of CDDFRS firefighters were women; this is lower than the national statistic reported. This is comparable to the previous year but improved from 3.4% 5 years previously.



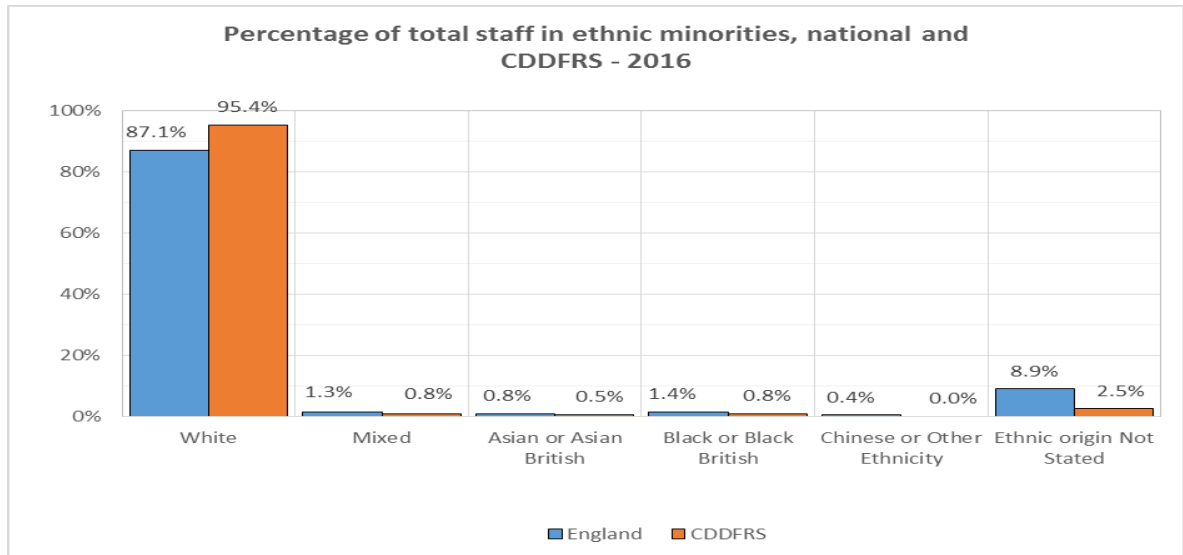
## Age

24. Nationally, the number of firefighters in the three youngest age bands (16-24, 25-35, 36-45) all decreased every year between 2011 and 2016, however in CDDFRS the number of firefighters in the 16-24 age band has increased year on year over this time. This is as a result of RDS recruitment.
25. 38% of firefighters were aged 46 or over in England in 2016, in comparison, in CDDFRS this was 39%. The average age of firefighters in 2016 in both England and CDDFRS was 41 which is the same as the previous year but higher than 5 years ago when the average was 40.
26. 54% of support and fire control staff in England were aged 46 or over, in comparison, 51% of support and fire control staff in CDDFRS were aged 46 or over.

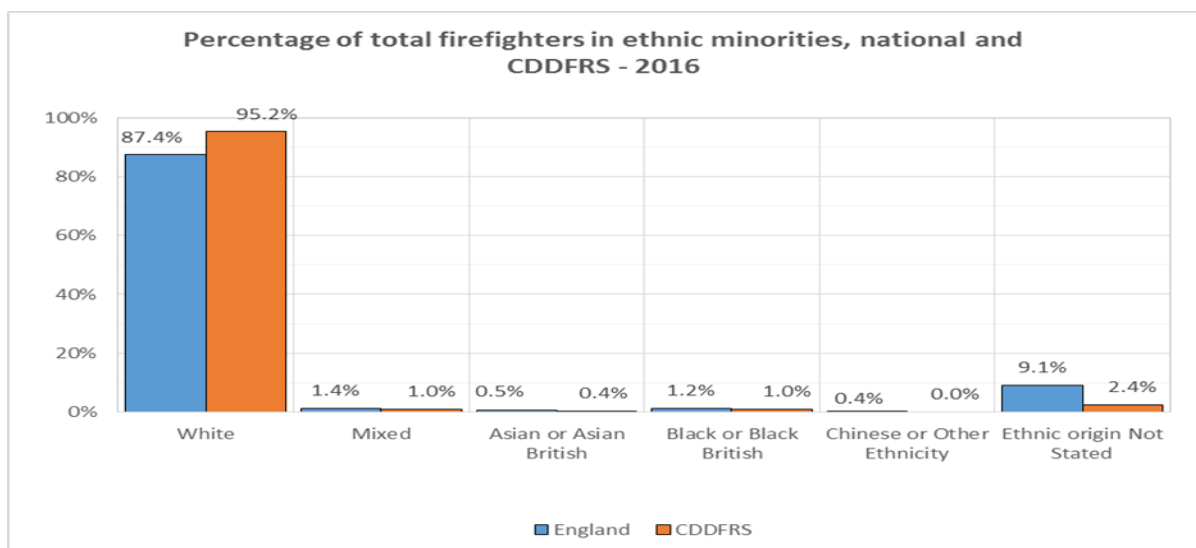


## Ethnicity

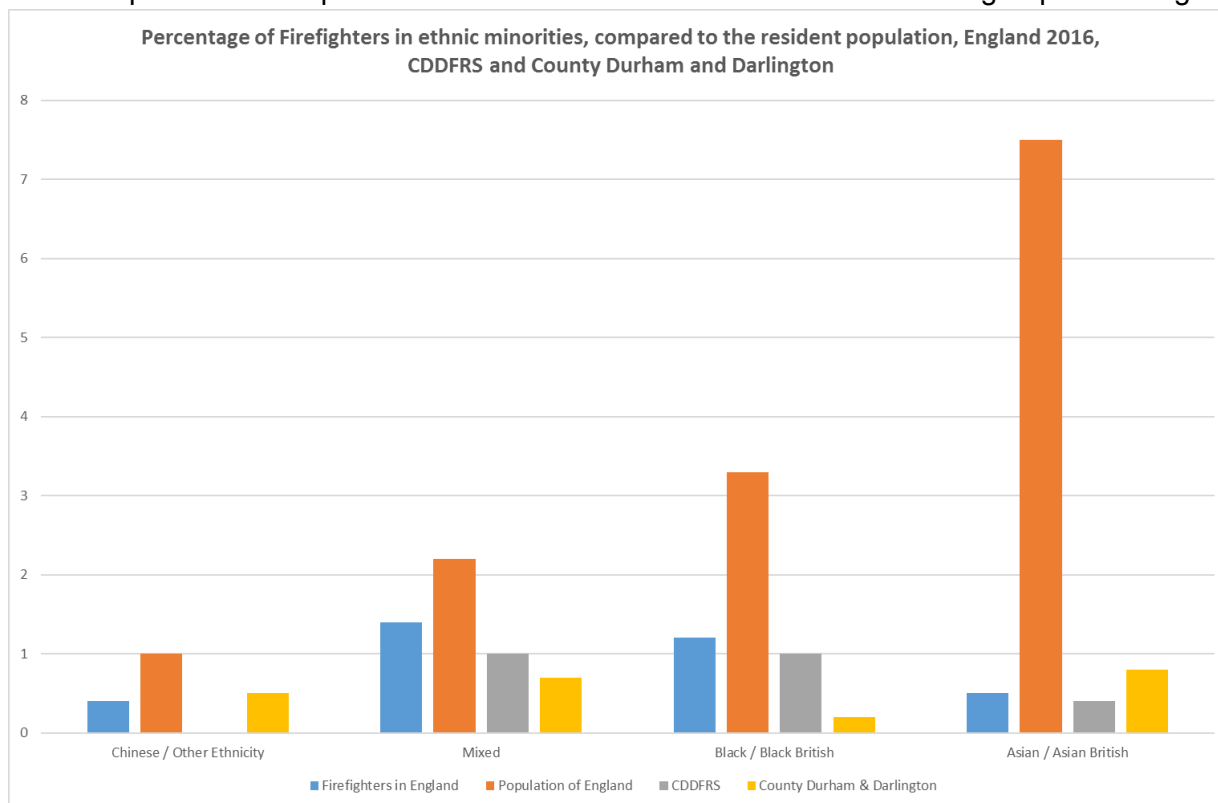
27. In 2015/16, 3.9% of FRS staff in England stated they were from an ethnic minority group, this figure was 2.1% in CDDFRS. However 8.9% of all staff did not state their ethnicity which is considerably higher than the 2.5% of CDDFRS staff who did not state their ethnicity. The Human Resources (HR) Team have requested staff to identify their ethnicity on FireWatch to enable more accurate reporting of the ethnicity of our workforce.



28. Of those who stated an ethnicity, 3.5 per cent (approximately 1,270) of firefighters were from an ethnic minority group in England in 2016. 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.
29. 2.4% of CDDFRS firefighters stated that they were from an ethnic minority group; this has continued to increase over the last 5 years, albeit lower than the national average. 2.4% did not state their ethnicity which is lower than the national figure reported of 9.1%.



30. To varying extents, all four ethnic minority groups were underrepresented as firefighters in 2015/2016 compared with the population of England. CDDFRS performed slightly better in comparison with representation of 'Mixed' and 'Black or Black British' groups as firefighters,



## Experimental Statistics

31. Experimental statistics are published to involve users and stakeholders in their development as a means to build in quality at an early stage. New experimental statistics are being developed for religion and sexual orientation to serve a public good in understanding the diversity of the FRS workforce and in future will complement the existing statistics presented in this paper.

## Summary

32. 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 no recruitment has taken place into the whole-time service since 2009.
33. The recruitment of 10 apprentices, 50% of whom are female and the current whole-time recruitment process provides the Service with an opportunity to positively impact these statistics and reduce the average age of the workforce.



## Recommendations

34. Members are requested to:

- (a) **note** and comment on the content of the report.

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