NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

EDI Sector Report

for UK Fire and Rescue Services

Foreword

For more than a decade, there has been a focus in the UK fire and rescue service (UKFRS) to increase diversity and inclusion across the workforce. However, despite those efforts, there is still significant underrepresentation from across the spectrum of communities that fire and rescue services (FRSs) serve.

This report details the most recent quantitative equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) workforce data held by the Home Office and the devolved administrations for UK FRSs. There are five data sets covering gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and disability across a range of UKFRS staff groups. While no direct comparisons are made with historical data sets, it is clear that the profile of many roles in UK FRSs remains overwhelmingly white and male.

The business case for diversity is well documented and clear: the best fire and rescue service is diverse and benefits from the widest possible talent pool across all levels of activity. Diversity helps to drive reform in the way UK FRSs provide services to communities, and improves leadership, culture and behaviour. The case for greater diversity across UK FRSs is compelling and should not be seen as a desired state but as a necessary one.

Following multiple critical reports about culture and behaviour, public trust and confidence in the UKFRS have been seriously damaged. Recent findings from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) 'State of Fire' report

and the publication of the 'Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade' highlight failures of leadership, management and processes, in addition to the Spotlight report on Values and Culture alongside the State of Fire report. The findings also reveal a culture that fails to effectively challenge and address inappropriate behaviour or provide an environment in which staff who are subjected to unacceptable behaviour feel safe and supported enough to report such incidents.

These reports and other from individual UK FRSs, alongside the lack of progress in increasing diversity across the workforce, highlight the need for a rethink of the strategies and initiatives being employed to increase diversity. A concerted effort is needed to eradicate toxic cultures and unacceptable behaviour in the UKFRS once and for all.

The NFCC is committed to leading and supporting services to meet this challenge. We are clear that there is no place for harassment, bullying or discrimination in the UKFRS. The NFCC is establishing a cultural reform programme to highlight and share the good practice and learning that has been identified in some individual FRSs and in other sectors, to embed the Core Code of Ethics across the UKFRS, introduce work from our Leadership and People programmes (some of which is highlighted later in this report) and ensure that the recommendations of reviews into UKFRS culture are fully addressed and integrated into UK FRSs.

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Operating Context

1. Operating Context

1.1 The NFCC

The NFCC is the professional voice of the UKFRS. The NFCC drives improvement and development throughout the UKFRS while supporting strong leadership, including for those fire services in the devolved administrations.

The NFCC does this by producing products, tools and guidance that can be accessed by all UK FRSs. The NFCC is also uniquely placed to gather and share notable practice across all UK FRSs.
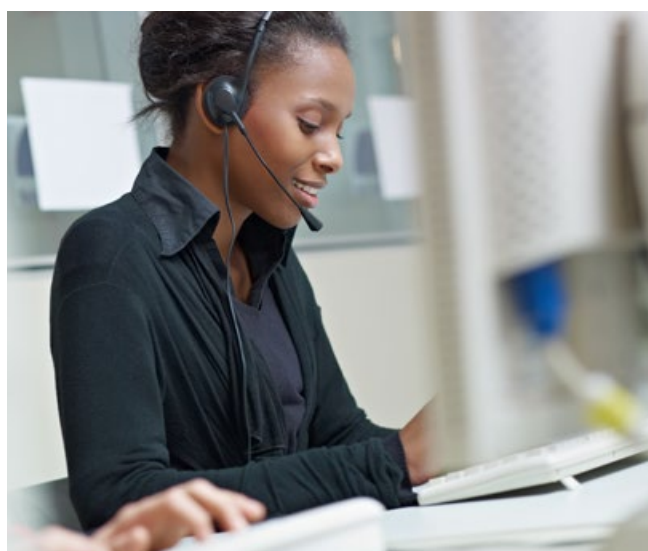
> " The NFCC drives improvement and development throughout the UKFRS"

1.2 The Strategy

In its first year, the NFCC prepared a business plan and strategy that aligned the work of the organisation to three core objectives. These objectives are supported by three programmes of work, one of which was the People Programme. The work of the programme is framed by the People Strategy 2017–2022, which details the following priorities to improve the way we manage, develop and lead our people:

• Develop cultural values and behaviour that make UK FRSs a great place to work for all our people
• Strengthen our ability to provide an excellent service by diversifying our staff, promoting inclusion and creating a fair and equal place to work
• Strengthen leadership and line management to support organisational change and improved community outcomes
• Continue to support the health and well-being of all our people
• Develop ways of working that respond to service needs
• Provide excellent training and education to ensure continuous improvement of services to the publict

1.3 Fit for Future

Alongside these programmes of work, the NFCC has been working in partnership with the National Employers (England) and the Local Government Association (LGA) to develop a future vision for FRS, called Fit for the Future (FfF).

FfF includes a series of 12 improvement objectives. In relation to EDI, improvement objectives 6, 7 and 8 are quoted from FfF below:

Improvement objective 6

Prospective employees are attracted to fire and rescue services as their employer of choice where inclusive recruitment practices and the available diverse roles and responsibilities help the service manage risk in the local community.

Improvement objective 7

An inclusive culture is at the heart of every fire and rescue service. They are welcoming and supportive places to work, retaining the widest variety of people from all backgrounds throughout their careers the partners.

Improvement objective 8

The Core Code underpinned a new Code of Ethics Fire Standard, with the aim that, by embedding and committing to the ethical principles and behaviours within the Core Code, fire and rescue services could generate a more positive working culture and continuously improve services to the public.

1.4 Fire Standards

The independently chaired Fire Standards Board (https://www.firestandards.org/) has been established to oversee the identification, organisation, development, and maintenance of Fire Standards for fire and rescue services in England for the benefit of the profession, the services and the communities and the public served by them.

The Board has responsibility for agreeing priorities and its workplan; oversight of standards in development; approval of final standards produced; and consideration of the published standards and whether they remain current. The Board is conscious of the need to ensure value for money in the way it works and the work it does.

The Board considers the work of other standards producing bodies and organisations and will reference or draw from equivalent existing standards, wherever appropriate.

The Board monitors the effectiveness of the standards produced for the profession to support continuous improvement, including considering feedback from HMICFRS on how standards have been implemented.

EDI is woven into every fire standard, although the following four fire standards are particularly relevant to this report:

• Fire Standard – Core Code of Ethics
• Fire Standard – Safeguarding
• Fire Standard – Leading the Service
• Fire Standard – Leading and Developing your People

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1.5   Core Code of Ethics

The Core Code of Ethics (Core Code) for FRSs in England was a recommendation made in the State of Fire Report 2019. It was developed by the NFCC in partnership with the LGA and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners The code was developed to support a consistent approach to ethics, including behaviour, to improve workforce culture, inclusivity and diversity throughout the sector and in the delivery of FRS services to our communities.

The Core Code and guidance are underpinned by the Code of Ethics Fire Standard, developed by the Fire Standards Board. HMICFRS will refer to both documents in inspections, so English FRSs should use them to prepare for inspections.

It is expected that an FRS will initially use the Core Code to conduct a gap analysis with their existing behavioural frameworks, values and cultural approaches to see if they meet the requirements of the Core Code and the Code of Ethics Fire Standard. This will ensure that the ethical principles in the Core Code are incorporated into all current as well as new policies, procedures and plans.

The Core Code recognises that there are different governance arrangements, and is flexible enough to be adopted by every service. The code can be added to but not detracted from, thereby ensuring that it reflects local values and expectations of behaviour.

The Core Code sets out five ethical principles based on the Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles), which, alongside the accompanying guidance, provides a basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour:

Putting our communities first
We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.

Integrity
We act with integrity, including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.

Dignity and respect
We make decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

Leadership
We are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexibility and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

Equality, diversity and inclusion
We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI, both within the FRSs and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations and celebrate differences.

EDI data and analysis for English Fire and Rescue Services

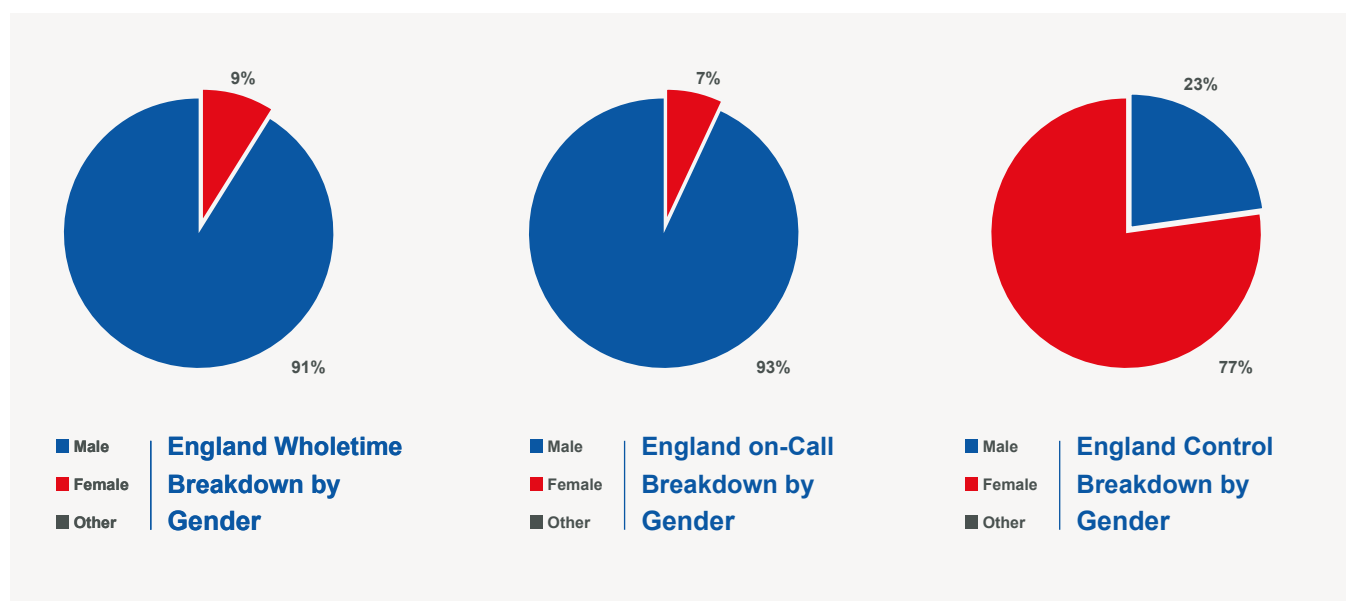# 2. EDI data and analysis for English Fire and Rescue Services

2.1 Data Sets

The data presented in this section was collected by English FRSs and reported to the Home Office, which makes the following data sets available on its website:

- FIRE1101: Staff in post employed by fire and rescue authorities by headcount and full time equivalent by role and fire and rescue authority
- FIRE1102: Total staff numbers (full time equivalent) by role and fire and rescue authority
- FIRE1103: Staff headcount by gender, fire and rescue authority and role
- FIRE1104: Staff headcount by ethnicity, fire and rescue authority and role
- FIRE1105: Staff headcount by age, fire and rescue authority and role
- FIRE1106: Staff headcount by religion and role, for England
- FIRE1107: Staff headcount by sexual orientation and role, for England
- FIRE1108: Percentage of staff (headcount) that were women by fire authority, role and rank
- FIRE1110: Staff leaving fire authorities, by fire and rescue authority and by role
- FIRE1111: Staff leaving fire authorities, by reason and by role, England
- FIRE1112: Staff retiring from fire and rescue authorities, by reason and fire and rescue authority
- FIRE1120: Staff joining fire authorities (headcount), by fire and rescue authority, gender and role
- FIRE1121: Staff joining fire authorities, by fire and rescue authority, ethnicity and role
- FIRE1122: Staff joining fire authorities, by fire and rescue authority, age and role

- FIRE1123: Apprentices by gender, fire and rescue authority and role
- FIRE1124: Apprentices by ethnicity, fire and rescue authority and role
- FIRE1125: Apprentices by age, fire and rescue authority and role
- FIRE1130: Staff headcount by disability status and role, England
- FIRE1131: Percentage of firefighters (headcount) from an ethnic minority by fire and rescue authority, role and rank
- FIRE1132: On-call staff (Full Time Equivalent) in post employed by fire and rescue authorities by contract type, rank and fire and rescue authority
- FIRE1133: Total control staff numbers (headcount) by rank, fire and rescue authority and year
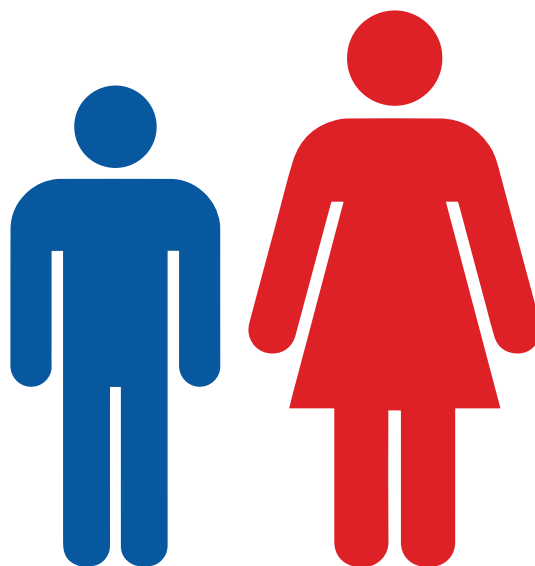
2.2 Gender

Despite progress being made in recruiting more female members of staff to operational firefighting roles, there is still a significant gender imbalance with 9% of wholetime and 7% of On-call firefighters in England being female. There is a significant difference in the gender balance in control staff, where female staff make up the majority at 77%. For Green Book (non-operational) staff, there is a closer balance, with female members of staff making up 54% of the workforce and male members of staff making up 46% of the workforce.

9%
91%
■ Male
■ Female
■ Other
England Wholetime Breakdown by Gender

7%
93%
■ Male
■ Female
■ Other
England on-Call Breakdown by Gender

23%
77%
■ Male
■ Female
■ Other
England Control Breakdown by Gender

46%

of Green Book fire service workers in England are male

England Green Book Breakdown by Gender

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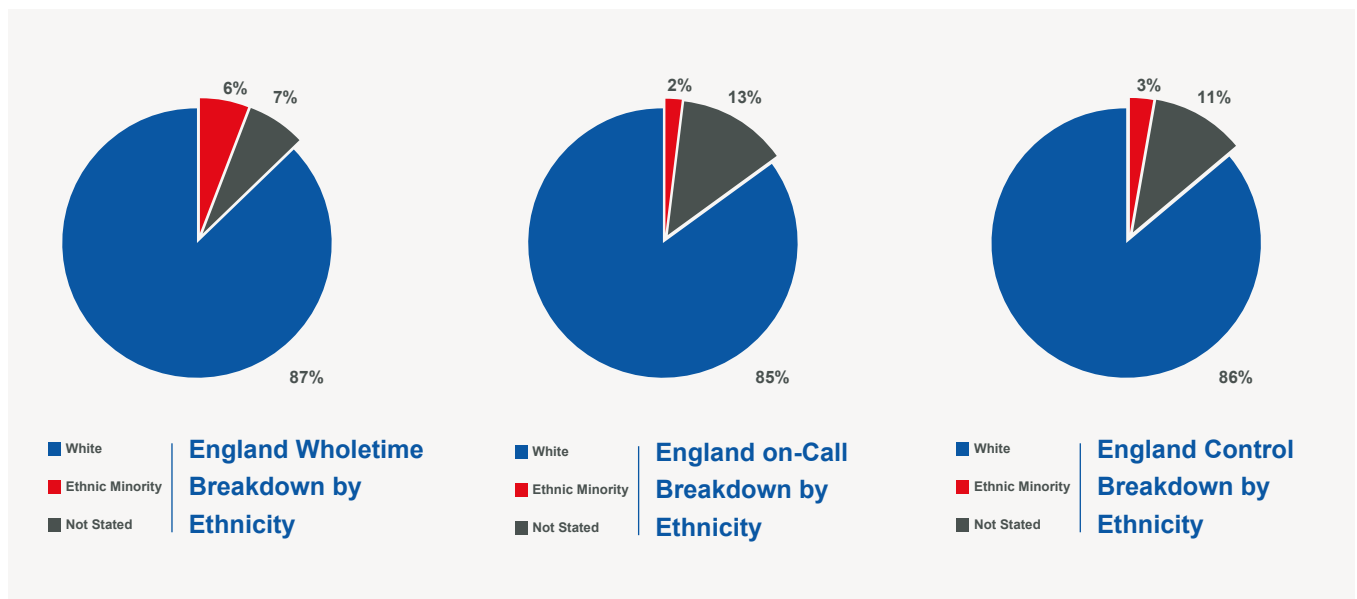Chiefs Council

10%

of Grey Book fire service workers in England are **female**

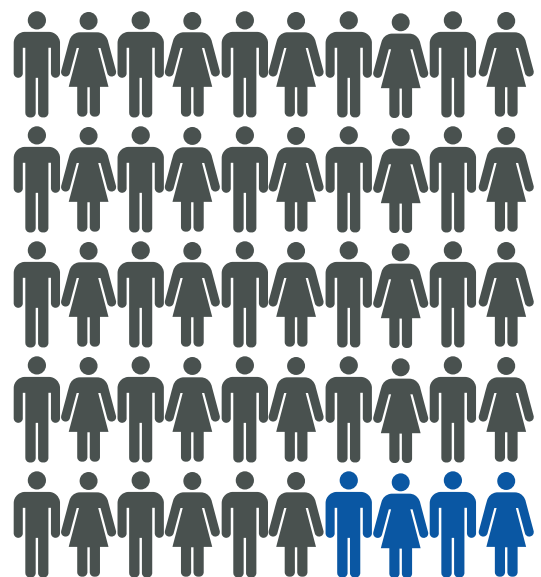**England Grey Book Breakdown by Gender**

2.3   Ethnicity

The data on ethnicity show that, across all different work areas Grey Book (operational) and Green book (non-operational), there is a clear lack of diversity in the ethnic backgrounds of staff working in English FRSs. However, it is important to note that individual FRSs reflect the demographics of their local area, so some services will be recruiting from less ethnically diverse communities than others.

6%   7%

87%

■ White
■ Ethnic Minority
■ Not Stated

England Wholetime Breakdown by Ethnicity

2%   13%

85%

■ White
■ Ethnic Minority
■ Not Stated

England on-Call Breakdown by Ethnicity

3%   11%

86%

■ White
■ Ethnic Minority
■ Not Stated

England Control Breakdown by Ethnicity

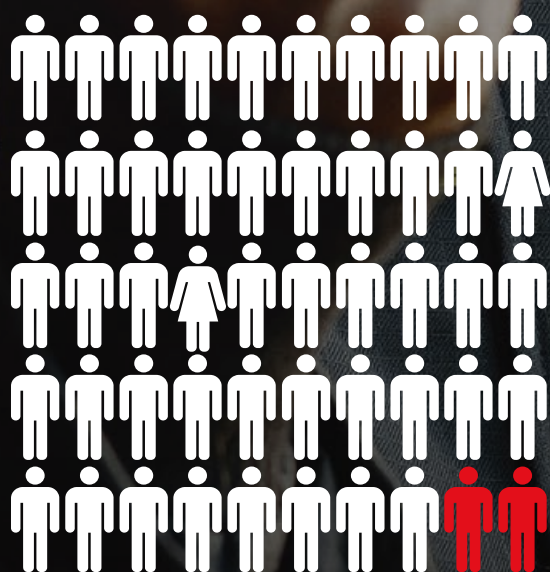# 8%

of Green Book fire service workers in England are an ethnic minority

England Green Book Breakdown by Ethnicity

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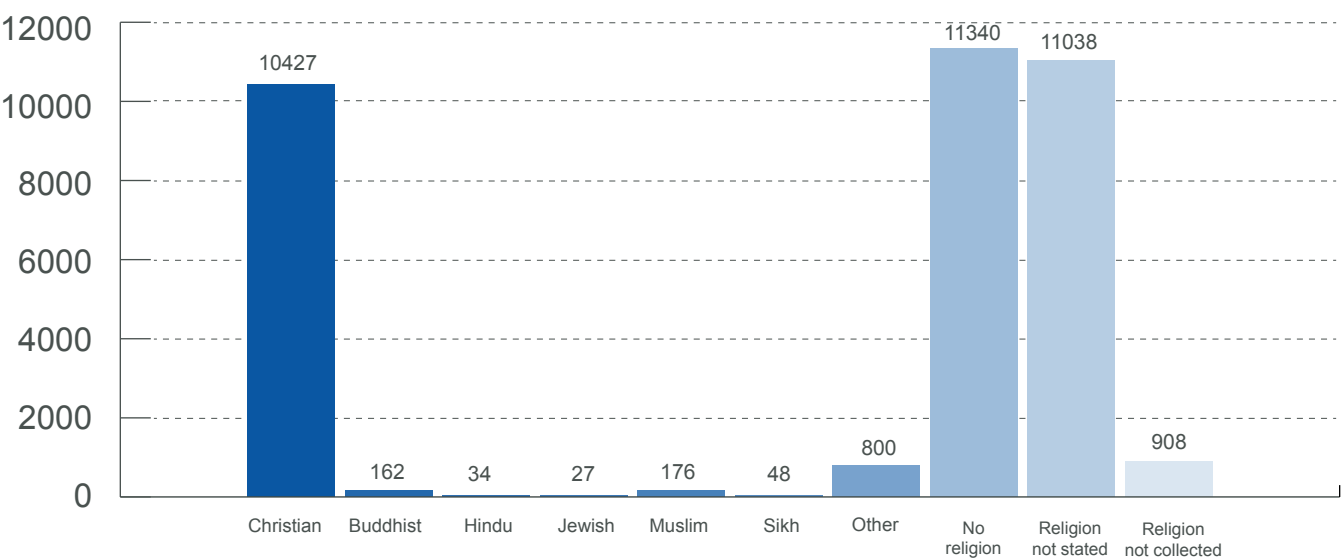
4%

of Grey Book fire service workers in England are an ethnic minority

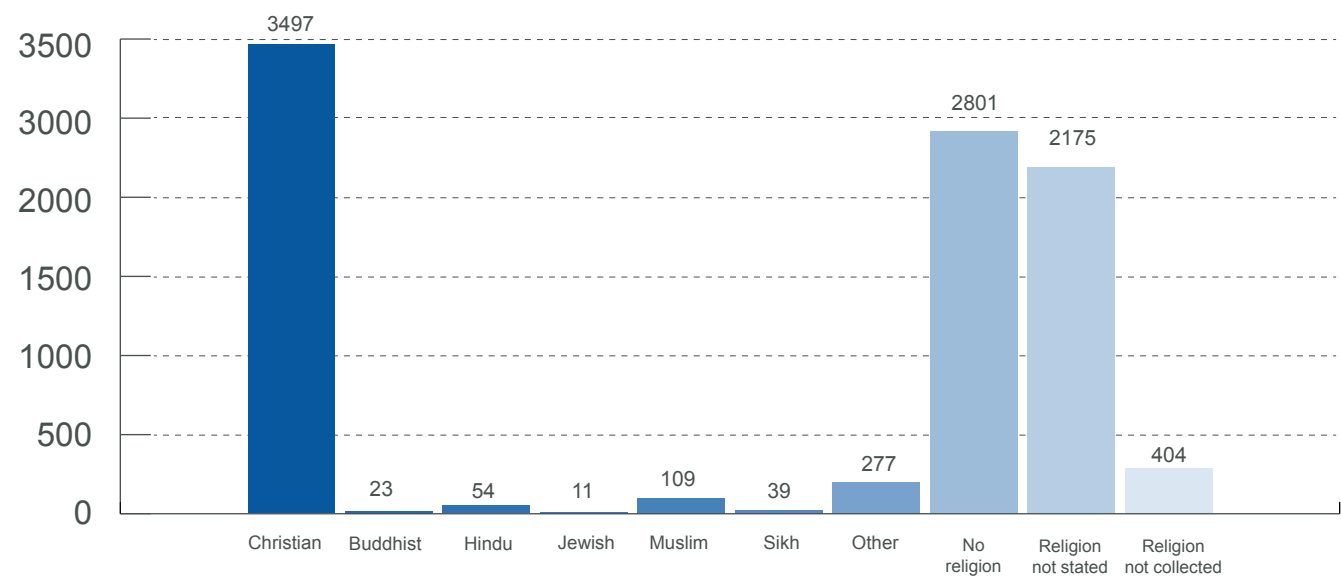**England Grey Book Breakdown by Ethnicity**

2.4 Religion

The data on religion shows that across all different work areas the increased secularisation of society in England, with the majority of people's beliefs recorded as either 'No religion' or 'Not stated'. The single largest religious grouping of faith is Christianity.

England Firefighter Breakdown by Religion

Religion	Count
Christian	10427
Buddhist	162
Hindu	34
Jewish	27
Muslim	176
Sikh	48
Other	800
No religion	11340
Religion not stated	11038
Religion not collected	908

England Control and Support Breakdown by Religion

Religion	Count
Christian	3497
Buddhist	23
Hindu	54
Jewish	11
Muslim	109
Sikh	39
Other	277
No religion	2801
Religion not stated	2175
Religion not collected	404

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2.5   Sexual orientation

The data on sexual orientation shows that across all different work areas, there is a lack of diversity in the sexual orientation of staff working in English FRSs. According to the data, FRSs are mostly made up of heterosexual staff. However, it is important to note that a statistically significant number of staff did not indicate their sexual orientation.
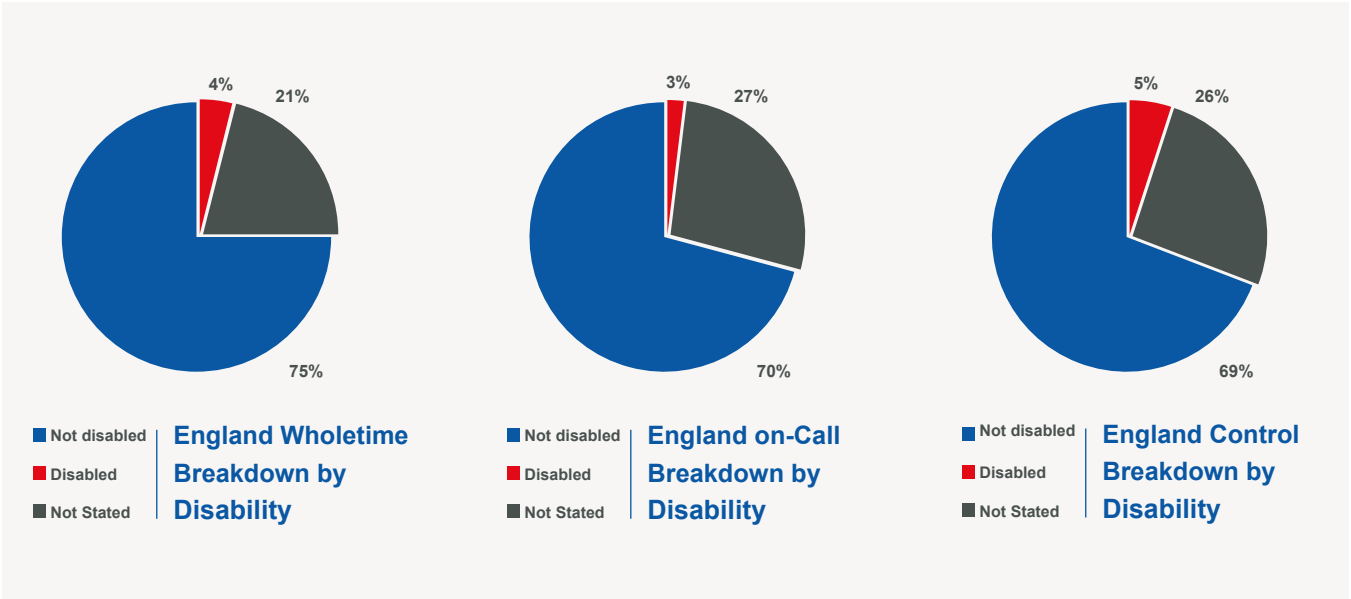
England Firefighter Breakdown by Sexual Orientation
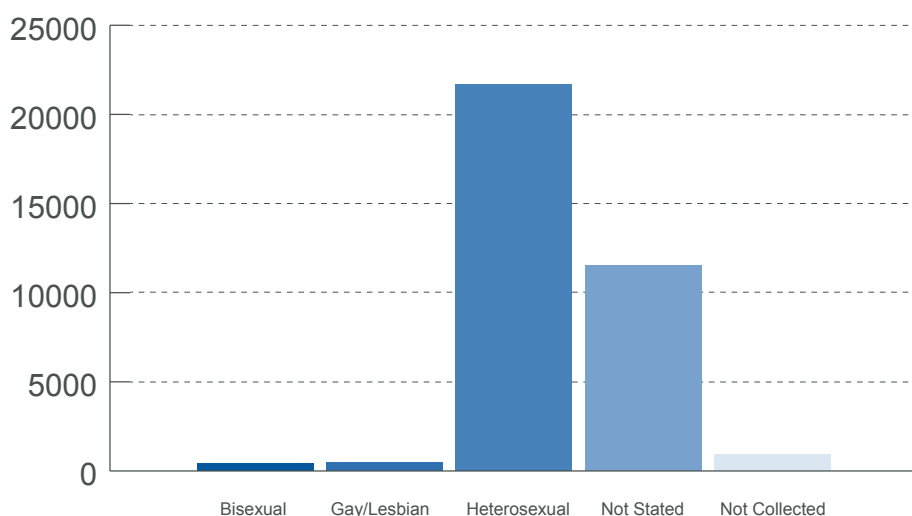
**England Control and Support Breakdown by Sexual Orientation**
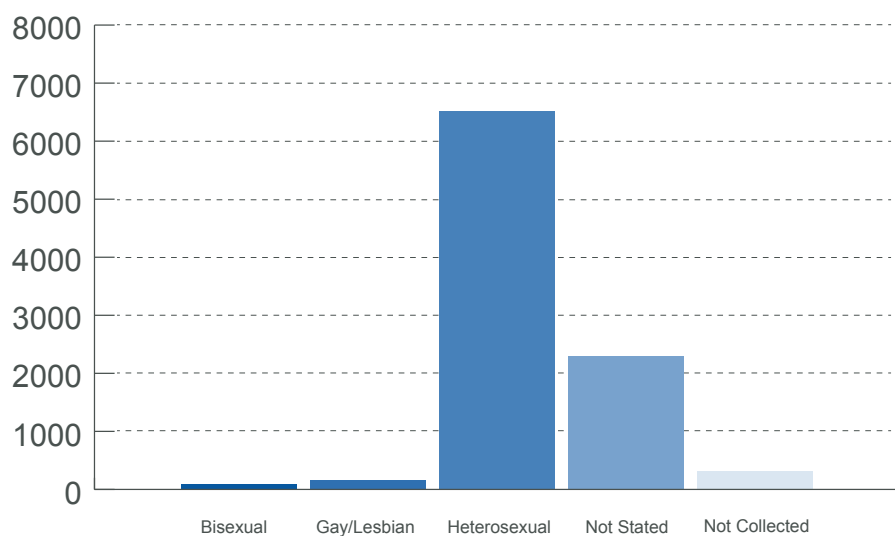
2.6 Disability

The data on disability show that only a small proportion of staff across English FRSs have reported that they have a disability. It is interesting to note that an average of 21.5% of Grey and Green book staff chose not to state if they have or do not have a disability.

4% **21%** **75%**	**3%** **27%** **70%**	**5%** **26%** **69%**
■ Not disabled **England Wholetime** ■ Disabled **Breakdown by** ■ Not Stated **Disability**	■ Not disabled **England on-Call** ■ Disabled **Breakdown by** ■ Not Stated **Disability**	■ Not disabled **England Control** ■ Disabled **Breakdown by** ■ Not Stated **Disability**

8%

of Green Book fire service workers in England are disabled

England Green Book Breakdown by Disability

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4%
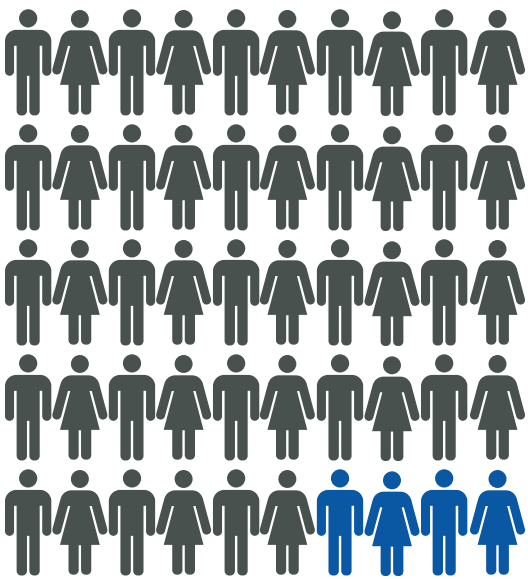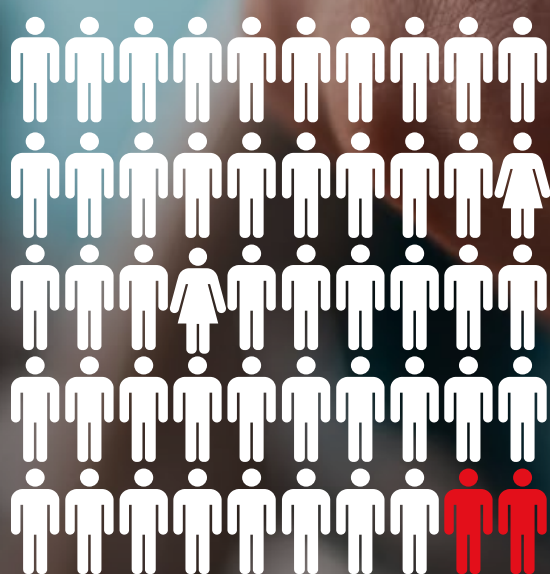
of Grey Book fire service workers in England are disabled

England Grey Book Breakdown by Disability

EDI Achievements and Improvements

3. EDI Achievements and Improvements

3.1 NFCC People and Leadership products supporting the Fire Sector

NFCC leadership framework

The NFCC Leadership Framework, launched in 2019, is built around four quadrants. It clearly defines the leadership behaviour required at each level. Using defined and observable measures to assess our potential and performance allows each of us to see the difference we are making to the people around us and to the performance of the team and the service.

"These measures allow each of us to see the difference we are making to the people around us"

NFCC Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Hub

The NFCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Hub was established to look at ways of working across the sector. The hub shows where services have made a difference to organisational culture by delivering positive action or introducing diverse ways of working. The Hub includes:

Equality of Access	EDI Toolkits	Lunch and learn sessions
These documents provide a range of information about different community groups and have been produced to support cultural change across the sector, promoting discussion, capturing learning, and encouraging research locally, along with the sharing of good practice. Topics include: • Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans people • Neurodiversity • Black communities • Vulnerable, rehoused, homeless • Asian communities • Traveller communities • Roma Community • Emerging migrant communities • People living with dementia • People living with suicidal thoughts and feelings • People living in rural communities	The aim of these toolkits is to help the Fire and Rescue Service staff to have quality and informed conversations. They will help all staff to be supportive and to ensure an inclusive environment which harnesses the unique strengths people can bring. The following toolkits are available: • Gender diversity • Neurodiversity • Staff networks	The NFCC offers engaging recordings from an ongoing series of EDI Lunch and Learn sessions. The topics are diverse and far reaching, hosted by a range of different speakers to talk about their lived experiences. Topics include: • Neurodiversity • Trans visibility in FRS • Racial equality • Techniques to avoid burnout • Being part of the LGBT+ community • The Disability Charter • Men's talking club

NFCC People and Leadership products supporting the Fire Sector (continued)

EDI Strategic Improvement Plan	Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit	EDI Data Toolkit
This has been written to complement the NFCC People Strategy 2017-2022 and the NFCC Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Position Statement. This Strategic Improvement Plan sets out how the NFCC will support FRSs in delivering improvement through centralised initiatives.	The NFCC Equality Impact Assessment template is effectively a risk assessment. Its overall aim is to identify risk of inequality, discrimination, or disadvantage within Service activities (or proposed activities) by assessing the impact your policies, project or decision is likely to have on different communities your Fire and Rescue Service both serve and employ.	Collecting EDI data is only meaningful if the culture of the Fire and Rescue Service supports openness and acceptance of difference. This toolkit will assist with setting strategies, enable data-based decision making, identify effective practices and make a powerful case for diversity.

NFCC Maturity Models and Workforce Good Practice Framework

The Maturity Models and Workforce Good Practice Framework are already helping FRSs to assess their current practice. FRSs can use the self-assessment tool to measure maturity levels in different areas, review their progress and highlight areas where progress can be made, all of which will have a positive impact on culture.

NFCC Coaching and Mentoring Portal and Toolkit

Coaching and mentoring can be transformative. They can play a critical role in enhancing and developing our current and future leaders. Using a central portal to connect individuals with the right qualified coach or mentor not only provides a consistent approach to improving our workplace culture but also allows equal access for every FRS.

NFCC Talent Management Toolkit

The Talent Management Toolkit helps services drive culture change throughout the sector by ensuring that they have people with the right skills, behaviour and values in the right roles at the right time.

Effective talent management relies on a healthy culture. You will find tools, guidance, good practice and examples to support you through all stages of the employee life cycle.

NFCC Supervisory Leadership Development Programme

The Supervisory Leadership Development Programme is a self-directed programme, designed by the NFCC in collaboration with the Chartered Management Institute. It supports leaders across the fire sector in their day-to-day leadership and management activities. It also provides access to learning materials to address current development needs.

Based on the NFCC Leadership Framework and the Core Code of Ethics, the programme's modules are designed to develop first-line leaders (Level 3), who are people-focused, collaborative and inclusive at this critical point in their careers.

NFCC Recruitment Hub

The NFCC Recruitment Hub brings together a comprehensive collection of information, guidance and good practice. Used in conjunction with the NFCC Talent Management Toolkit, a bespoke selection and recruitment approach will help you ensure that you have people with the right skills, behaviour and values in the right roles at the right time to drive culture change throughout the sector.

Executive Leadership Programme

The Executive Leadership Programme is a programme of personal development delivered by Warwick Business School and the NFCC. It is designed to enhance leadership capabilities, allowing key strategic issues confronting the FRS to be addressed.

The programme has three main focuses: diversity, political acuity and self-awareness. These drive the content and approach of the modules and are continually referenced across all elements of the programme.

On-call recruitment

The oncallfire.uk website attracts prospective employees to the role of an on-call firefighter. Videos, content and guidance are presented in a fresh, engaging way that enables users to connect with their local FRSs. It also includes information for primary employers, along with a Web Campaigns Toolkit with video 'strings' for creating and running recruitment campaigns on social media.

FRS Learn

The FRS Learn platform enables easy sharing of locally produced learning materials across FRSs. The platform's catalogue of subject matter and the format of the training materials are constantly being expanded and diversified.

Apprenticeships

The NFCC Apprenticeships website provides access to:

NFCC Apprenticeship Strategy	This strategy aims to support fire and rescue services as they work to match their capabilities and capacity of their changing role and the demands placed upon them.
NFCC Apprenticeship Toolkit	This toolkit will help FRSs develop and deliver appropriate apprenticeships. The toolkit is a guide to aid decision-making and planning, and includes links to relevant websites.
Apprenticeship Standards • Operational Firefighter • Fire Safety Inspector • Business Fire Safety Advisor • Emergency Service Contact Handling • Community Safety Advisor • Fire Safety Engineer (in development)	The apprenticeship standards are occupation-focused not qualification-led. Learning happens throughout the apprenticeship. Apprentices are assessed at the end to prove that they can perform all aspects of their job. Apprentices will develop transferable skills and gain credibility. Five fire-specific apprenticeship standards are currently available as well as apprenticeships for other occupational sectors that form part of an FRS workforce.

NFCC People and Leadership products supporting the Fire Sector (continued)

Model policies

The People Policy Panel, on behalf of the NFCC, has developed a set of consistent, legally compliant model HR policies to promote good practice and efficiency across the UKFRS, which FRSs can adapt to suit their own priorities.

Currently, ten policies are available via the UKFRS website:

- Agile working
- Absence management
- Maternity
- Personal performance and development conversations
- Recruitment
- Talent management
- Well-being
- Workforce planning
- Working time regulations
- Work-life balance

Innovative working patterns

The NFCC has worked with FRSs to identify new and innovative working patterns. These have been compiled into nine case studies, with supporting information about wholetime and on-call duty systems. The case studies include useful information about international working patterns.

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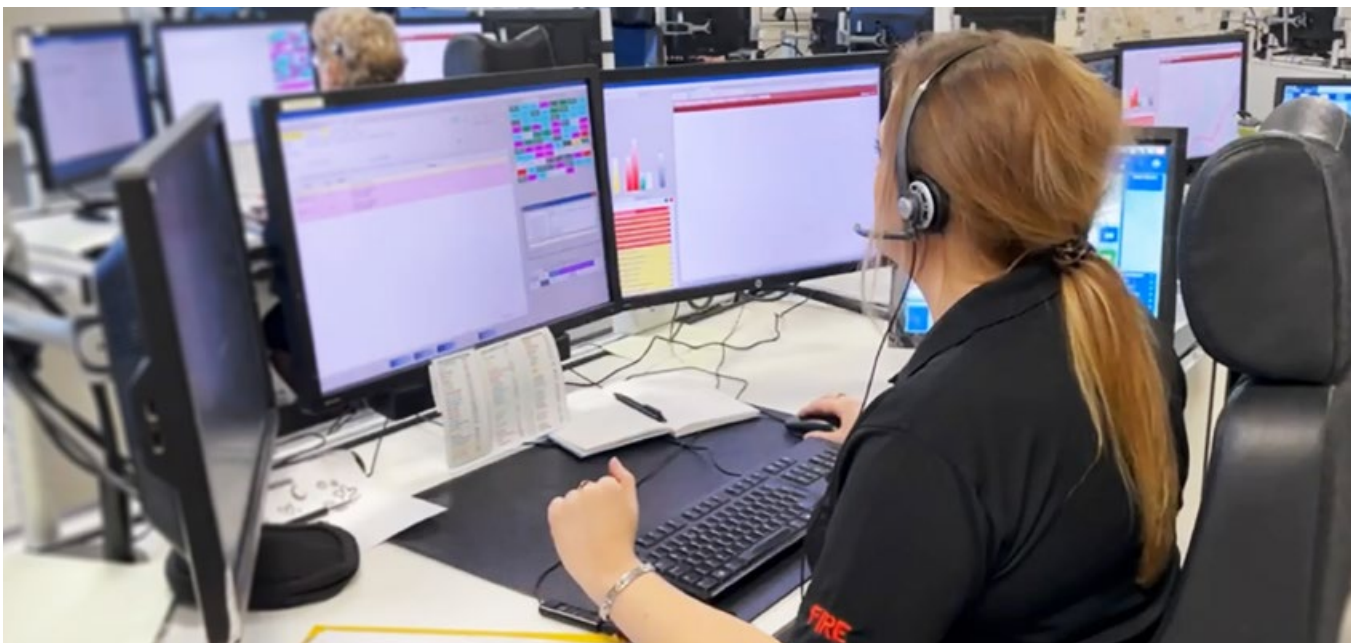
3.2 NFCC people and leadership products in development

NFCC Middle Leadership Programme (due April 2024)

Following the successful launch of the Supervisory Leadership Development Programme, the NFCC Middle Leadership Programme will be working on a consistent, national approach to develop our current, aspiring and new middle managers (Level 5), regardless of role (Green and Grey book staff), contract type or location. The focus will be to develop the professionalism, skills and behaviour required for leaders in the fire sector.

NFCC Direct Entry Scheme (recruitment due to commence in 2023)

The Direct Entry Scheme is a framework to support people who are experienced leaders entering the sector at station and area manager levels to undertake operational roles that align with the existing role maps. It is a nationally agreed programme that is robust, quality-assured and credible and will be centrally coordinated and supported at a national level, even if it is delivered at a regional and local level. This enables the scheme to be overseen nationally and provides consistency, which is essential for sustainable success.

It is designed to be both additional and complimentary to existing progression routes which is essential, to ensure we continue to nurture and develop our internal fire sector staff. However, the scheme can attract new and experienced leaders from outside of the fire service, who can bring a range of innovative ideas, skills, experience and diversity of thought.

NFCC Strategic Continuing Professional Development Masterclasses

The NFCC has recently launched the first in a series of Strategic Continuing Professional Development Masterclasses. These are designed to support the continuing development of knowledge and skills of all current, aspiring and new strategic leaders in the fire sector. The masterclasses will focus on areas of corporate management and leadership skills that leaders may not have had much exposure to before, but developing skills in these areas is essential if leaders are to grow in their roles and understand their responsibilities.

Each masterclass will be recorded, professionally edited and uploaded to the UKFRS.com website so that they can be viewed at any time.

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3.3 Implementation Support

The NFCC Implementation Support Team advises and supports FRSs, helping them to adopt and implement products developed by the NFCC. The team also maintains dialogues with FRSs to ensure not only that they are kept informed of national issues but also that the products produced by the NFCC meet FRS needs.

> " **The NFCC Implementation Support Team advises and supports FRSs.** "

3.4 People, Culture and Leadership Workplan, 23/24 and beyond

The NFCC is in the process of finalising its People, Culture and Leadership workplan. The workplan will cover a five-year period from 2023/24 to 2028/29 and will be informed by both the NFCC Sector Strategy and the Improvement Objectives of FfF. The workplan will also draw on the output from the first NFCC Sector Culture and Inclusion Conference and the recommendations of the independent culture reviews of FRSs.

The progression of the workplan will also be supported by a new coordinating committee supported by an external advisory panel.

The workplan will prioritise the following key workstreams:

- Creation of a Culture Performance Dashboard Methodology. The dashboard methodology will provide services with a cultural performance benchmarking and monitoring tool
- Creation of a Challenging Behaviour Toolkit containing information, guidance, best practice and tools from across the UK to help FRSs deal with challenging behaviour in their own context
- Use of independent reporting or an Investigation Options Appraisal Report to help FRSs evaluate options for how best to:
  - Manage whistleblowing and reporting
  - Investigate allegations of harassment, bullying and discrimination
  - Manage the hearings of these allegations
  - Understand the merits of an in-house verses an outsourced method; the appraisal will consider complaints that are 'third tier' on the disciplinary scale