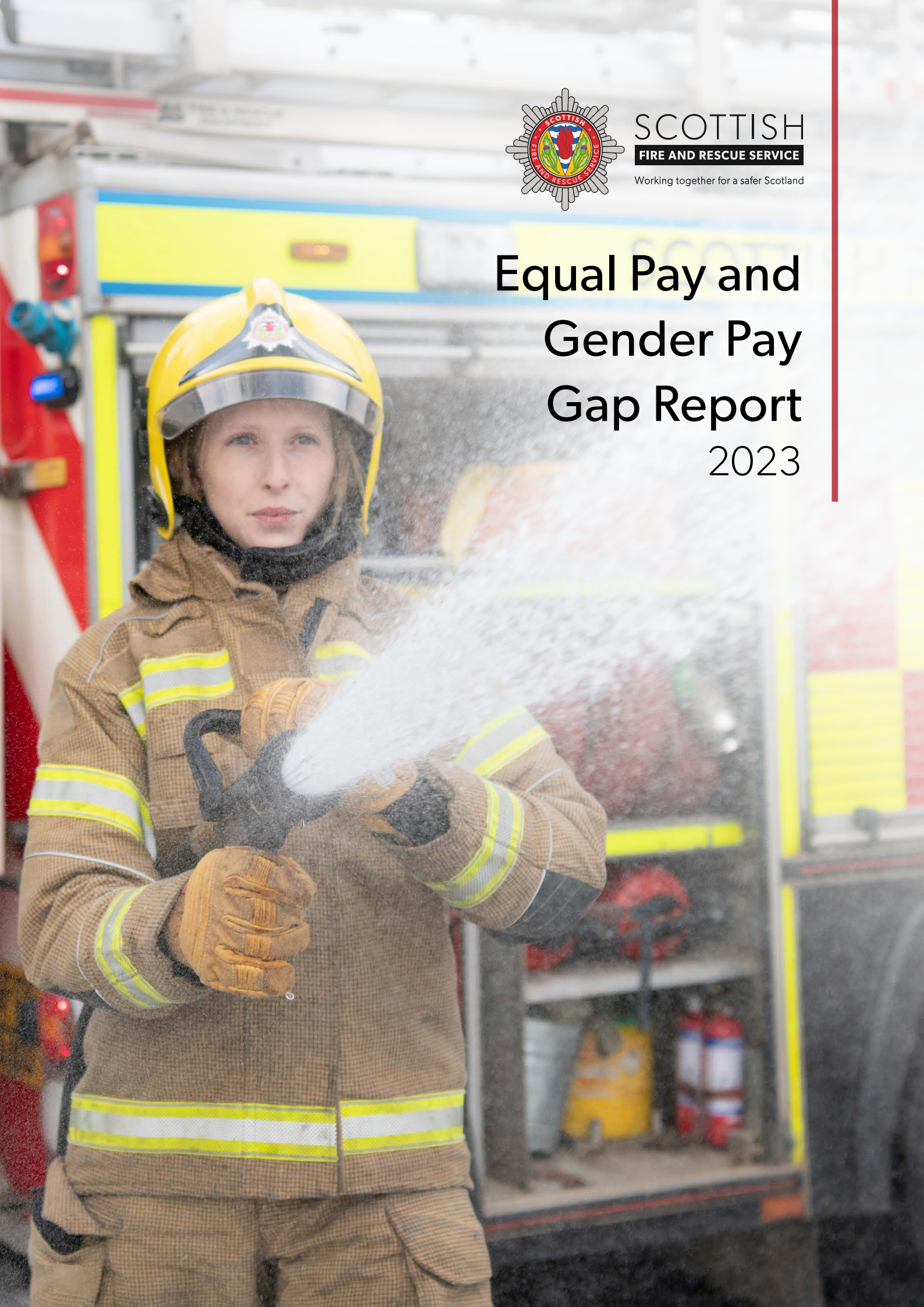




SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

# Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap Report 2023



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# Introduction

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is committed to the principles of equality and equal treatment for all employees, regardless of their backgrounds or personal circumstances. In accordance with the requirements set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public-Sector Equality Duty) and The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, SFRS now reports on the Gender Pay Gap in our organisation and the policies and processes we implement to achieve equality in pay and representation.

In addition to reviewing the current SFRS Gender Pay Gap data, this report will provide information on the Pay Gap experienced by employees with Disabilities and Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) employees. We also provide an overview of the proportion of employees of different gender, ethnic origins or disabilities within the four quartiles of our organisation structures, and highlight the extensive work which is continuing to take place within our organisation to create a positively balanced workforce that reflects the communities of Scotland.

Since the creation of the SFRS in 2013, SFRS has seen a consistent reduction in the Gender Pay Gap and SFRS is committed to maintaining this. SFRS are however aware that there is work still to be done when it comes to balancing our workforce.

We believe that our pay and recruitment processes are gender-neutral, and that this is reflected in the existing Gender Pay gap which compares favourably with most other organisations and the national average. We do however recognise the imbalance in some areas of our workforce profile, and accept that this can manifest itself through differences in the workforce profiles and pay gaps in some sections of our workforce. We believe however that this is due not to discriminatory practices, but to occupational segregation caused by an over-representation of employees from one gender within specific roles. A key consideration in appreciating the origins of this is a recognition that SFRS's employees can be categorised into two main groups – Uniformed and Support.

The largest section of SFRS's workforce is comprised of our Uniformed Firefighters. The Fire and Rescue profession throughout the U.K. predominantly attracts applications for employment from males, and this is reflected in the significant proportion of the SFRS's uniformed Firefighters who are male. In contrast, a wide range of support services are provided by Support Staff, and there the gender balance is far more equitable.

SFRS accepts that there is also an underrepresentation of people from BAME communities, and individuals with disabilities in the workforce. In consequence SFRS has sought, and will continue to seek, to achieve equality in pay and representation for people from these backgrounds. These measures will include ensuring that recruitment processes remain free from discriminatory elements, seeking greater representation through initiatives such as Positive Action, and ensuring that all employees, regardless of their background, have a positive working experience in an inclusive environment.

These measures are we believe resulting in positive and ongoing improvements in equality and representation within SFRS. As already mentioned, we have seen a reduction in the gender pay gap and have also seen a sustained, albeit gradual, increase in the number of women entering the Uniformed Firefighter workforce. We are especially pleased to report that since the 2021 Gender Pay Gap report there has been an increase in the representation of women in senior Uniformed positions, including the appointment of our first female Area Commander in the Wholetime Service. Women also continue to be well represented within the senior management positions within the Support Staff structure, and this success has recently been exemplified by the appointment of a female Deputy Chief Officer (Corporate Services).

This report will discuss these areas in more detail and highlight the initiatives aimed at alleviating the remaining imbalance in our workforce profiles, and how we will continue to work towards a diverse and representative workforce.

## 2. Equal Pay Statement

SFRS is committed to the principles of equal pay and to ensuring that these are applied to all employees through fair and transparent working practices and systems which are based on objective criteria.

The pay structure of uniformed employees is agreed at a UK level by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services, and is based on sound principles that preclude inequalities. All SFRS Support Staff posts are evaluated using a Job Family approach, which is supported by the SFRS's analytical Job Evaluation Scheme and the SFRS Job Evaluation Policy (Support Staff). This is a robust evaluation process based on the Scottish Joint Council's Job Evaluation Scheme which assesses the demands of jobs and assigns them to pay grades based on objective, gender neutral criteria. The SFRS has further underpinned

this by introducing standardised terms and conditions for both employee groups, with any differentiation in terms between these two employee groups being permitted only after a robust Equality and Human Rights Impact assessment, and where they are materially justified due to the differing demands of the roles.

All elements of our People Policies and our Pay and Reward Frameworks are also subject to robust Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment throughout their development, and to strategic oversight by both Executive Management and the Board of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Given the above processes, SFRS is confident that all employees carrying out the same work, equivalent work or work of equal value receive the same pay regardless of gender or other personal characteristics.



## 3. Gender Pay Gap

A gender pay gap is a measure of the difference in the rates of pay of men and women across the entire organisation, regardless of the nature or level of their work. In reporting on the Gender Pay Gap, and in particular on the underlying causes of this pay gap, it is important to recognise that Pay Gaps can originate either through employees in the same job being paid at different rates, or through occupational segregation, i.e. through different roles or levels within the organisation being predominantly held by employees of a specific gender. Given the robust processes used by SFRS to ensure equity in pay for employees carrying out the same work, or work of equal value, SFRS are confident that any pay gap is due to occupational segregation.

Based on current data in relation to staff earnings, and in accordance with Statute and Best Practice, the following six calculations are used by SFRS to show the difference between the average earnings of men and women.

- Mean Gender Pay Gap
- Median Gender Pay Gap
- Mean Bonus Gender Pay Gap
- Median Bonus Gender Pay Gap
- The proportion of men and women who received bonuses
- The proportion of men and women according to quartile pay bands

### 3.1 The Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap

The mean pay gap measures the difference between the average male and female hourly rate, while the median is identified as the midpoint hourly rate of all individuals. The use of a median is helpful as these metrics are not distorted by very large or very small pay rates.

In addition to the core reporting requirements in relation to gender, SFRS also acknowledges the recommendations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Government that employers supplement these metrics by reporting on the pay gaps of employees with disabilities, or from BAME groups. Information of the pay gaps of these employee groups is therefore also provided. In doing so, we have revised our reporting metrics from those applied within our 2021 Gender Pay Gap and Equal Pay report to conform with those contained within the Government's 2021 census. Consequently, all white ethnicities, other than white British/Scottish, are now included within the minority ethnic classification.

Whilst the Office of National Statistics reports that the 2022 Pay Gap in the UK was 8.3% in favour of males, SFRS currently has a mean Gender Pay gap of -2.98%, in favour of women. SFRS are pleased to note that this mean Gender Pay Gap demonstrates not only the continuation of a positive trend since the formation of the SFRS in 2013, but also that women no longer experience lower average pay than men in SFRS. Progress in achieving this since 2017 is illustrated in table 1, (a median figure is not available for 2017 as this was not required under the provisions of The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012).

SFRS Gender Pay Gaps 2017-2023				
	2017	2019	2021	2023*
Mean	5%	4.42%	1.01%	-2.98%
Median	Not available	5.92%	2.5%	0%

Table 1 – SFRS Gender Pay Gaps 2017-2023

\* The data used in this report reflects SFRS staff as of December 2022 whereas the 2021 report was January 2021. The snapshot date for data was brought forward in this recent report to allow sufficient time for the compiling of the report prior to publication.

In identifying the factors that have caused this change since 2021, two main causes have been identified. The first of these is the difference in the pay awards and although the 2022/23 pay award was 5% for Support Staff employees and 7% for Uniformed employees, the 2021/22 pay award was 1.5% to Uniformed employees and 1.5% to 4.67% (depending on salary) to Support Staff employees. The difference in the 2021/22 pay award has had a particular impact on the pay gap due to there being more of the female workforce based

within Support Staff and in particular, in the lower quartile of Support Staff where the higher percentage pay increases were focused. The second factor is a change within the gender balance of men and women within the staff structure. Specifically, SFRS has experienced both an increase in the portion of men within the lower quartile of our organisational structure, and an increase in the representation of women in the upper quartiles. These factors have all contributed to the change in our organisational Gender Pay Gap since 2021.

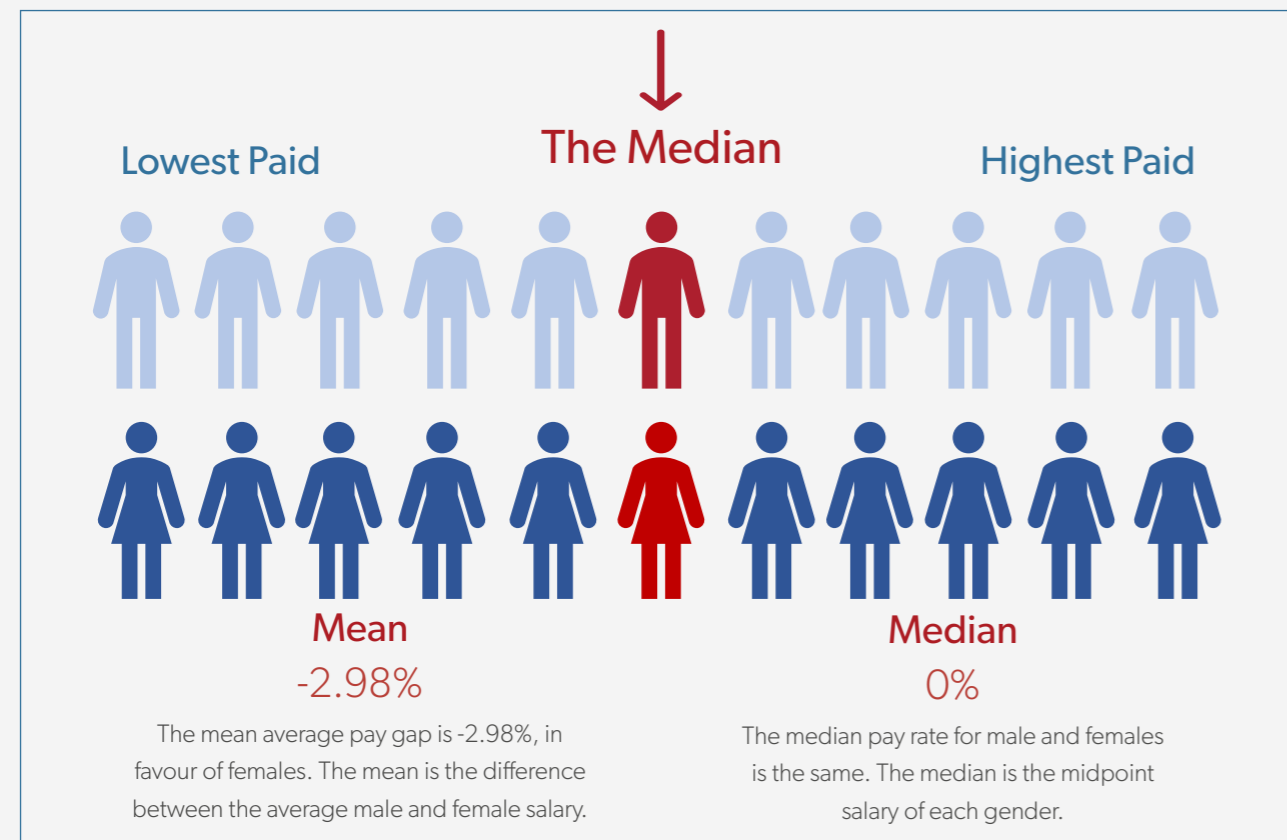


Diagram 1 – The Mean and Median 2023

SFRS's Gender Pay Gap using the median measure is 0%, with the median hourly rate being the same for both the male and female staff groups. The median gap is also found to be 0% when comparing BAME and Disability staff hourly rates to all staff. This is primarily due to the majority of the workforce, (56%), being at Firefighter level which leads to the middle

(median) point commonly being found at this pay level. It should also be noted that the methodology for calculating the median has been revised since the 2021 report to comply with government guidelines; had the revised method been used for 2021, the median pay gap for that year would also have been 0%.

### 3.2 BAME Staff

The mean pay gap of BAME employees in SFRS is -2.66%, meaning it is in favour of BAME staff. This has changed from 0.07% in 2021. A comparison between these figures has identified that this increase is primarily due to the inclusion of all white ethnicities, other than White British/Scottish, in the minority ethnic classification to align with the Government's 2021 census.

### 3.3 Staff with a Disability

The mean pay gap of employees with a disability has changed from -3.03% in 2021 to -7.93%, continuing to be in favour of employees with a disability. When investigating the reasons behind the increase it was found that a high proportion of employees who have disclosed disabilities (69%) are uniformed staff and since 2021, several of these have completed Firefighter training to progress to the competent Firefighter pay rate. Others have progressed to Crew Commander and Watch Commander level. Throughout the recruitment and promotion processes, individuals are encouraged to declare any disabilities so that adjustments can be made wherever possible to support and encourage success, with SFRS's support for neurodiversity

considered to be of particular benefit. A guide to reasonable adjustments and supporting staff with a disability was also introduced in September 2020 to raise awareness and knowledge of the area so the findings of progression within this report are encouraging.

It is also noted that there is a higher proportion of Support Staff in more senior positions who have declared a disability in comparison with those in the lower pay grades. This is evident within the distribution of employees with a disability within the 4 pay quartiles of SFRS's structure, discussed further in section 4.

### 3.4 Bonuses and their impact on SFRS's Pay Gaps

SFRS recognises that bonuses paid to specific employee groups can create inequalities and undermine transparency in reward packages. Consequently, in creating standard terms and conditions after the formation of the SFRS, the Service consciously chose not to incorporate bonus schemes within any of our Reward packages. As there are no bonus schemes offered at SFRS, our pay gaps metrics are based solely on core salary.



## 4. Gender Representation Within SFRS

In addition to reporting on the Gender Pay Gap, SFRS also wish to report on the representation of men and women within the Service as a whole, and within the four quartiles of our Structure, with each quartile demonstrating the distribution of male and female employees by seniority/pay grade. Given the differentiation between the workforce gender profile in the Uniformed and Support Workforce however SFRS also wish to report on those within each of these employee groups separately, and to explain the differing circumstances that influence the proportion of men and women in each quarter of the organisation's pay structure. The disparity in the numbers and proportion of both genders within SFRS's workforce is illustrated in the table below.

	Female		Male		Total	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
<b>Uniformed employees</b>	614	9%	6097	91%	6711	89%
<b>Support Staff</b>	447	54%	382	46%	829	11%
<b>SFRS Total</b>	1061	14%	6479	86%	7540	100%

Table 2 – Gender Proportion of Uniformed and Support Staff Comparison

Diagram 2 shows the distribution of gender across each quartile of pay in SFRS's total structure from the lowest 25% (quartile 1) of earners to the highest 25% of earners (quartile 4). The high representation of males within each of the four quartiles is however directly due to the predominance of men within the Uniformed function.

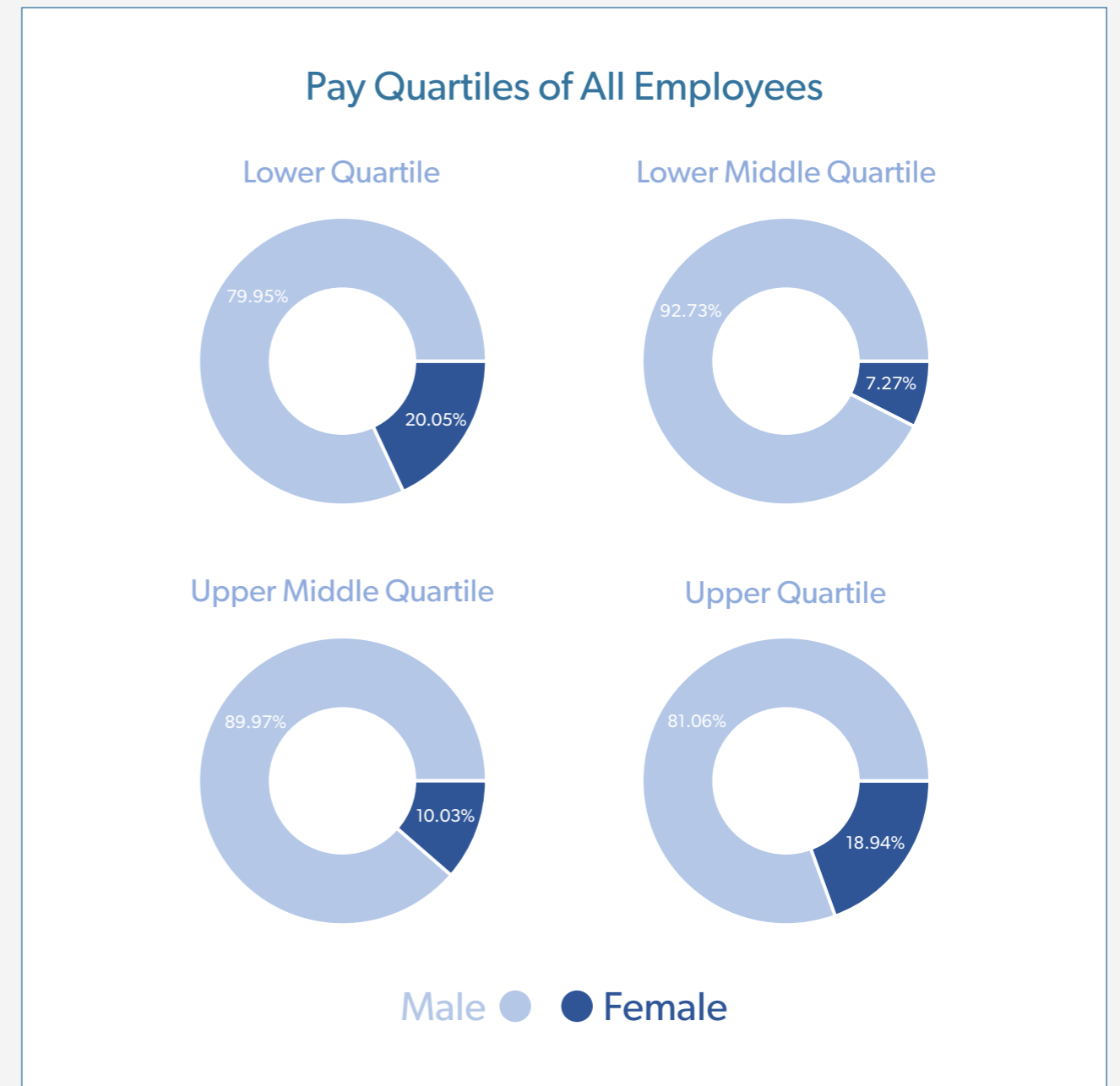


Diagram 2 – Pay Quartiles of All Employees

## 4.1 Gender representation within Support Staff

The percentages of male and female employees within each of the four quartiles of our Support Staff structure is illustrated within diagram 3.

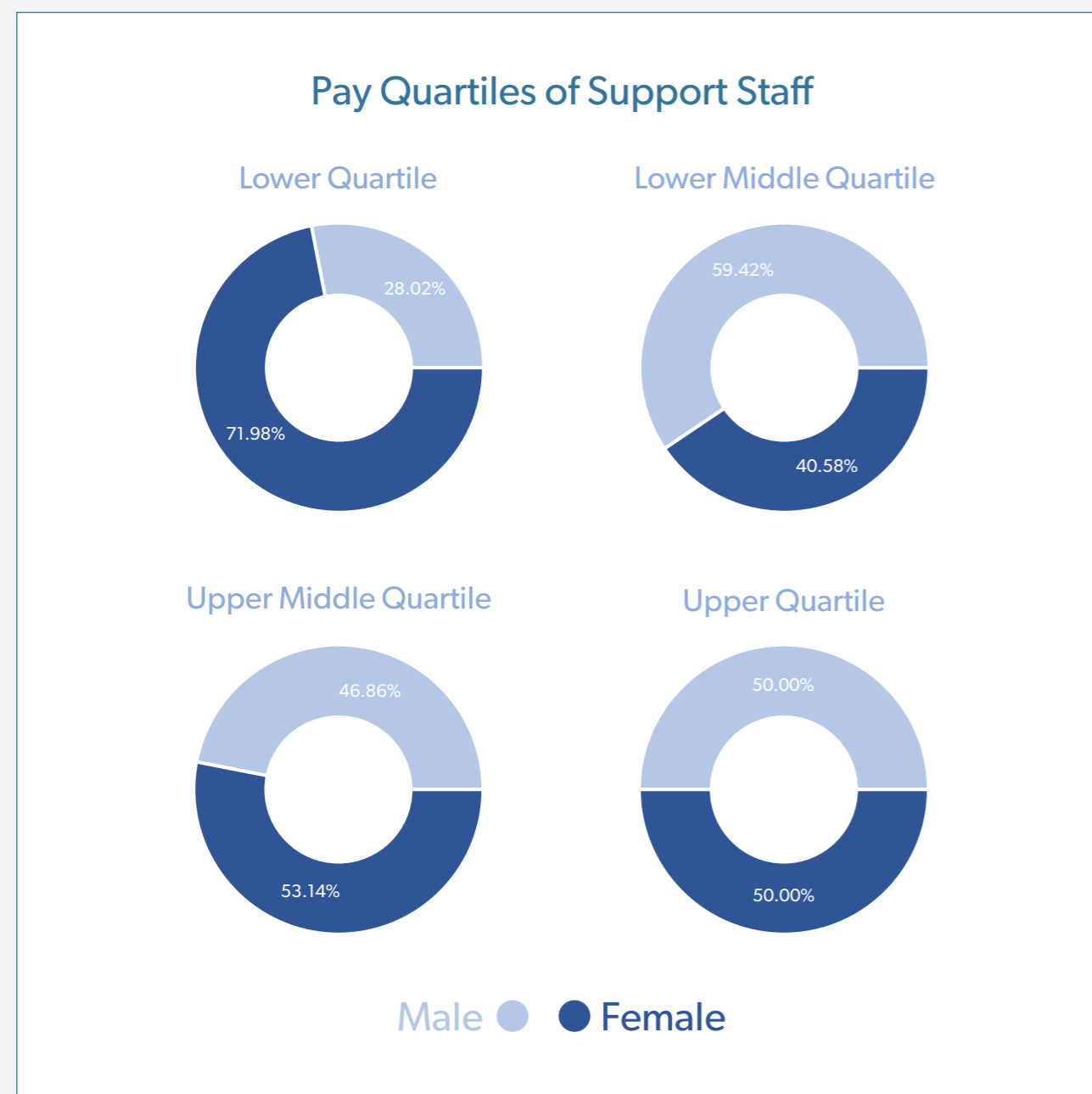


Diagram 3 – Pay Quartiles of Support Staff

The disproportionate number of women within the lower quartile of our Support Staff reflects the large proportion of administrative posts within this band, a role which has traditionally attracted larger numbers of women applicants. As we believe that our recruitment and attraction processes are gender-neutral, we feel that the disproportionate representation of women in this employee group is due to outdated societal perceptions that can inhibit men from applying for such jobs. SFRS also however accepts that career progression from lower-paid posts can be more challenging for women as they often have primary care responsibilities, and are more likely to be in part-time employment, which again can inhibit career progression.

SFRS are however continuing to explore how working practices can be revised to support employees balance personal and professional responsibilities. We have therefore introduced a range of flexible working arrangements, including Agile Working and Home Working provisions, and have a range of flexible policies in place to support employees in achieving a positive work/life balance. SFRS's People and Organisational Development Directorate have also revised their functional structure to provide more accessible career paths for administrative employees and will continue to explore how the talents of employees of all grades throughout the Service can be supported in achieving their aspirations. As a result of these measures the representation of women within the lower quartile has fallen by 6.4% since 2021. Further information on these initiatives is provided below in our "Current Initiatives" section.

Quartile 2 also shows a significant variation between the representation of men and women, with almost 19% more male than female employees within this quartile. A review of the roles within this quartile demonstrates that these are predominately Technical roles, with the Fleet Support Technicians and ICT roles featuring prominently. Both these types of occupations, as also found outwith SFRS, remain male dominated and consequently women are less likely to hold the technical qualifications and experience required to be appointed to these roles at the operative, supervisory or managerial levels. SFRS are however currently seeking to increase the number of apprenticeships within many of these Technical roles, and this may in time assist in addressing this imbalance.

In contrast with quartiles 1 and 2 however, quartiles 3 and 4 demonstrate a more equitable balance of male and female employees, a trend that is particularly evident within the most senior managerial roles in Quartile 4. The numbers of women within the Support Staff employee group therefore illustrates SFRS's commitment to diversity, particularly within the upper quartiles where the number of women is comparable to that of their male counterparts.

## 4.2 Gender Representation within Uniformed Staff

The Uniformed structure within SFRS contains Firefighters employed under four separate set of terms and conditions. These being:

- Wholetime – composed of employees for whom Firefighting is a full-time role, and who are paid a salary
- Operations Control – who deal with all emergency 999 calls and the subsequent mobilisation of resources to respond to fires and other incidents, and who are paid a salary
- Retained Duty System – composed of Firefighters employed on a part time basis, who receive a retaining fee in return for making themselves available to respond to emergency calls, and receive an hourly rate equivalent to their Wholetime colleagues when actively engaged in their duties
- Volunteer Duty System – comprised of local people who voluntarily make themselves available to serve their communities in the event of an emergency, and who are paid at the same hourly rate as their Wholetime and Retained colleagues when they do so

In diagram 4 the Wholetime, RDS and Volunteer employee groups have been reviewed in quartiles together as they receive comparable pay rates. The diagram illustrates the preponderance of males within each quartile of the group and again reflects the societal perception that Firefighting is a male occupation, with applications from women for such posts remaining at a relatively low level.

## Wholetime, RDS, and Volunteer Staff Pay Quartiles

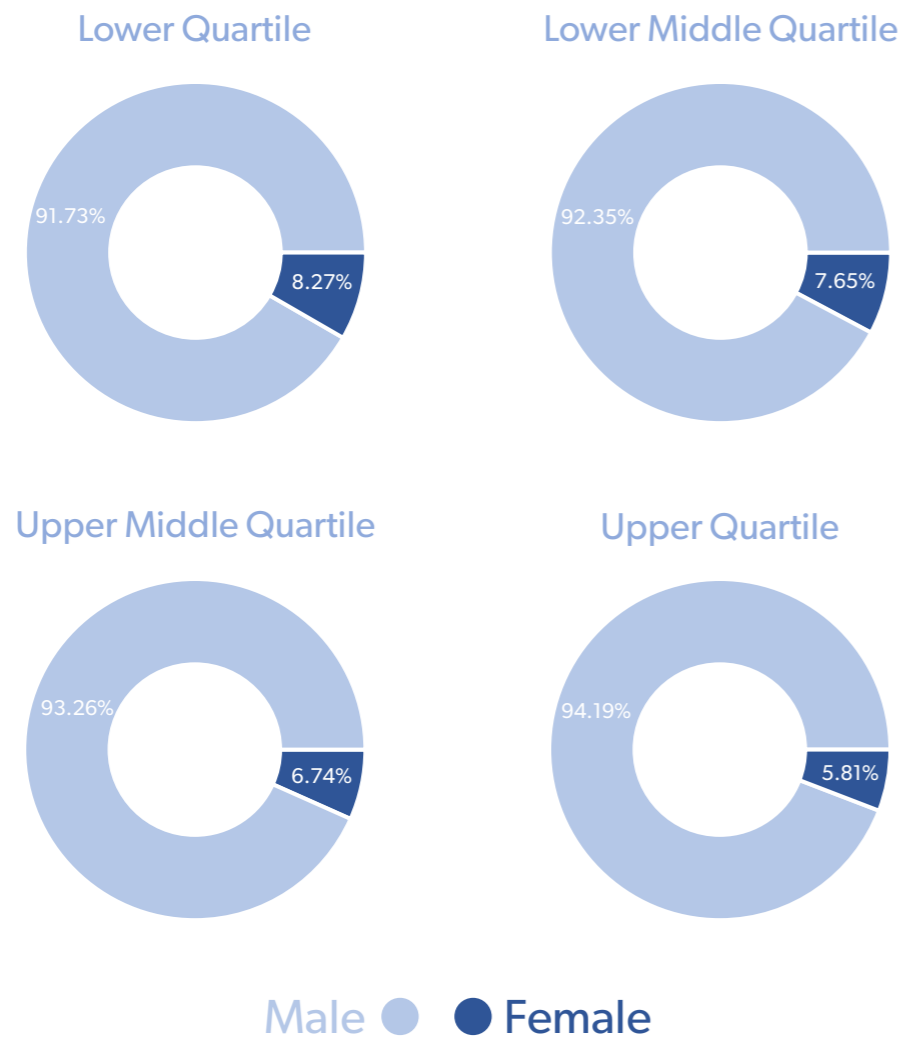


Diagram 4 – Wholetime, RDS, and Volunteer Staff Pay Quartiles

SFRS acknowledges the proportionately lower number of women within the more senior quartiles. It should be recognised however that in common with all UK Fire and Rescue Services, SFRS operates a single tier entry system whereby all uniformed employees enter the Service at the Firefighter level, and progress to the higher roles as they gather experience and qualifications. Whilst this approach equips our Firefighters to face the challenges of managing emergency incidents, it results in a lag between an increase in women entering the Service and this being reflected within the number of women in promoted roles.

To support women in achieving career progression within the Uniformed workforce, and to support the achievement of a representative workforce throughout the Service employee groups, SFRS has introduced a range of initiatives. These include Positive Action campaigns to encourage and support applications from women to join the Uniformed workforce, support for national and internal women’s support networks, and sponsoring networking and development events for women organised by external partners. We have also introduced extensive development programmes to support all employees maximise their potential. In turn we have seen a promising increase in women joining the Service in recent years, including an increase in women in the Wholetime Uniformed group by 2.75% since the 2021 report.

### 4.2.1 The Wholetime Uniformed Service

The increasing numbers of females joining the uniformed Service is leading progressively to greater representation of females achieving career development. Table 3 shows the progress of females attaining both supervisory and middle management roles and highlights the first woman reaching the rank of Area Commander, this being a Strategic Management role.

Equal Pay & Gender Pay Gap Report	2019	2021	2023
Chief Officer	0	0	0
Deputy Chief Officer	0	0	0
Assistant Chief Officer	0	0	0
Deputy Assistant Chief Officer	0	0	0
Area Commander	0	0	1
Group Commander	2	2	2
Station Commander	2	6	10
Watch Commander	34	30	28
Crew Commander	27	30	40
Firefighter	134	151	144
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>225</b>

Table 3 – Representation of Women in the Wholetime Uniformed Service

### 4.2.2 Operations Control

Our Operations Control form an essential component of SFRS operational capabilities, and are the first point of contact for a member of the public when dialling 999 to report an emergency. Whilst our Control Firefighters are part of the Uniformed workforce, in contrast to the Wholetime, Retained and Volunteer groups, it has traditionally been female dominated and this continues to be the case at all levels in the Control structure.

## Control Staff Pay Quartiles

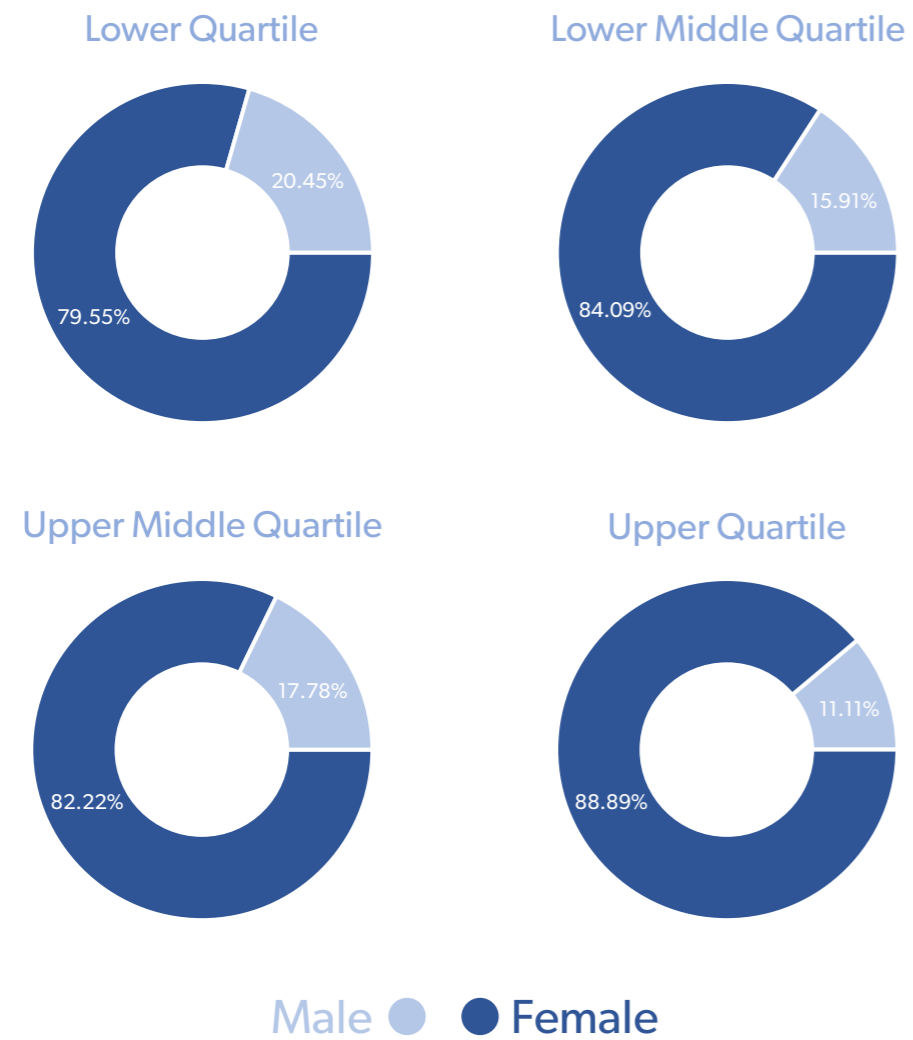


Diagram 5 – Control Staff Pay Quartiles

### 4.3 BAME Representation within SFRS

As of December 2022, BAME staff constitute 1.78% of SFRS's total workforce. Whilst this is a disproportionately low level of representation, it is important to note the large proportion of employees who have declined to provide information on their ethnic background, and this suggests that the number of employees from the BAME communities is likely to be under-reported. A number of actions have been taken to encourage employees to provide personal information and permit SFRS with more comprehensive information on the number of employees, however it is accepted that these have had limited success, and may be an area requiring further consideration. Improving the employee information we hold will therefore form part of our future initiatives, and, further detail on intentions in this respect is provided in the final section of this report.

A breakdown of the ethnicity of SFRS's employees is provided within table 4.

Ethnicity	Headcount	Percentage
White	4139	54.89%
BAME	134	1.78%
Prefer Not to Say	21	0.28%
Not Recorded	3246	43.05%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7540</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4 – Staff by Ethnicity

In terms of representation within the four quartiles of SFRS's organisational structure, the distribution of SFRS's BAME employees is illustrated in table 5. This demonstrates that whilst overall numbers remain relatively low, employees from these communities are proportionately more likely to hold senior positions within the 2 highest quartiles.

Quartiles	BAME		White British / Scottish		Not Known	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
<b>1</b>	19	1.01%	587	31.14%	1279	67.85%
<b>2</b>	32	1.70%	1090	57.82%	763	40.48%
<b>3</b>	46	2.44%	1149	60.95%	690	36.60%
<b>4</b>	37	1.96%	1313	69.66%	535	28.38%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>1.78%</b>	<b>4139</b>	<b>54.89%</b>	<b>3267</b>	<b>43.33%</b>

Table 5 – Pay Quartiles by Ethnicity



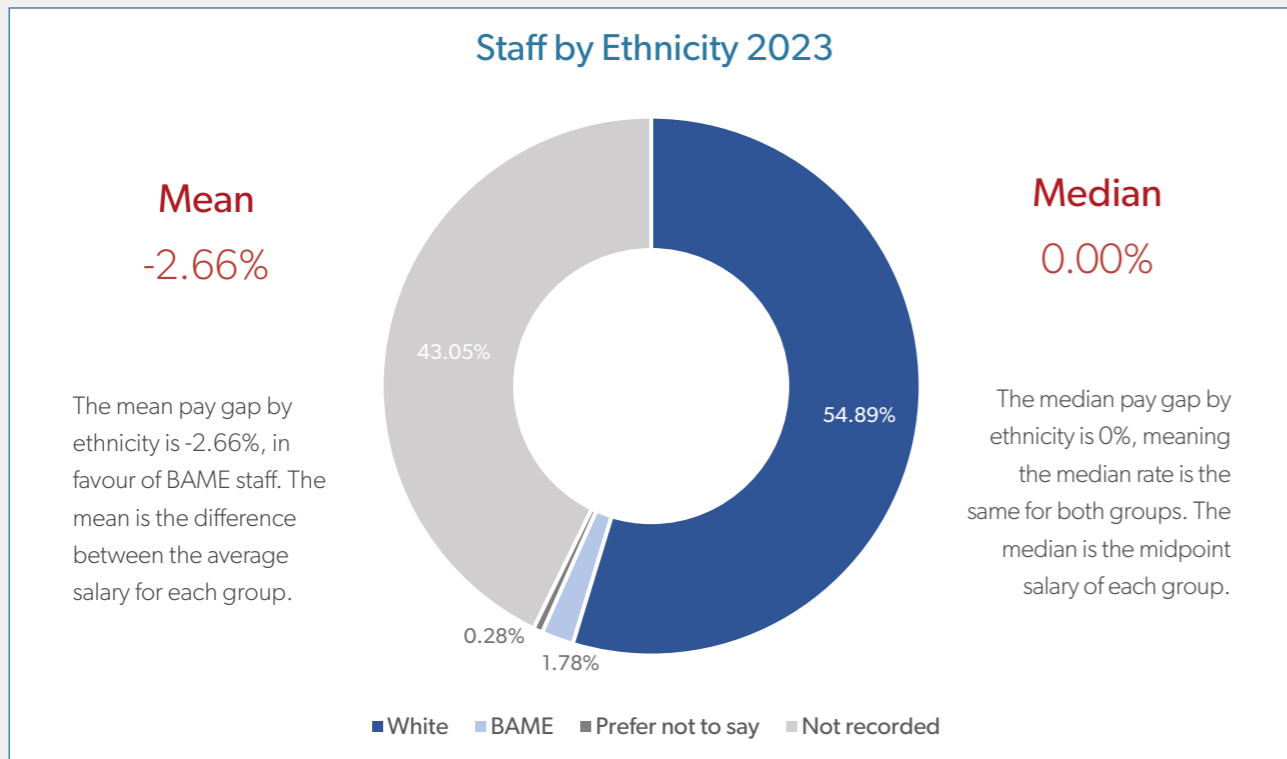


Diagram 6 – Staff by Ethnicity 2023

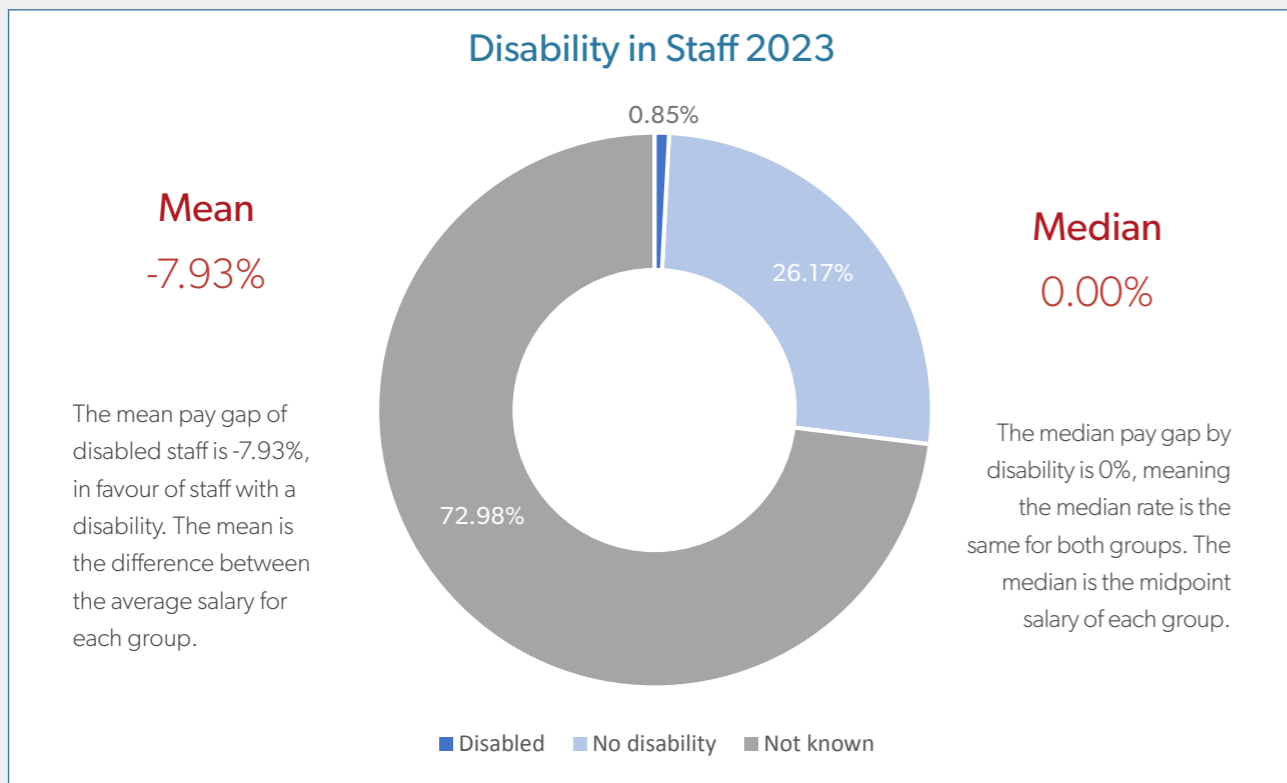


Diagram 7 – Disability in Staff 2023

#### 4.4 Disability Representation within SFRS

In December 2022, 64 employees of SFRS had disclosed a disability, constituting 0.85% of our workforce, a figure that is significantly lower than the one fifth of Scotland's population who identify as disabled. SFRS considers that the high proportion of SFRS employees who have not declared whether or not they have a disability suggests a high level of under-reporting. It is also believed that the physical challenges faced by Firefighters can make it challenging for employees with some forms of disability to remain within their roles. Nevertheless, SFRS accepts that the representation within SFRS can be improved. The levels of employees who have declared whether they have or do not have a disability, and those who have not provided SFRS with this information is illustrated in table 6.

Disability	Headcount	Percentage
Yes	64	0.85%
No	1973	26.17%
Not Known	5503	72.98%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7540</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6 – Disability in Staff

In relation to the distribution of employees with disabilities within the four quartiles of SFRS structure, this is illustrated in table 7.

Quartiles	Yes		No		Not Known	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
<b>1</b>	13	0.69%	364	19.31%	1508	80.00%
<b>2</b>	15	0.80%	475	25.20%	1395	74.01%
<b>3</b>	18	0.95%	510	27.06%	1357	71.99%
<b>4</b>	18	0.95%	624	33.10%	1243	65.94%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>0.85%</b>	<b>1973</b>	<b>26.17%</b>	<b>5503</b>	<b>72.98%</b>

Table 7 – Disability in Staff Pay Quartiles



#### 4.5 Representation of Minority or Protected Groups

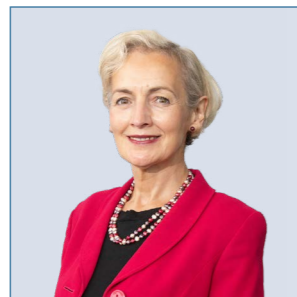
SFRS accepts that significant work remains to be done if we are to increase the numbers of employees with disabilities, from the Black and Minority Ethnic communities, or with other protected characteristics to a level that is more reflective of Scottish society. Since its formation, the SFRS has consistently sought to attract a more representative workforce, and is determined to continue to strive to achieve this. A range of initiatives will therefore continue to be implemented to increase attraction rates and to ensure that the working practices, terms and conditions and working environment within the Service meet the needs of a diverse workforce. An overview of the initiatives is provided below in the “Current Initiatives” section of this report.



#### 4.6 Gender Analysis of the Board of SFRS

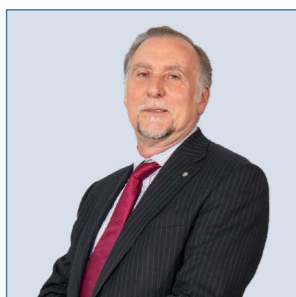
Our Board members perform an important role in shaping the future of the Service by providing strategic oversight on behalf of the Scottish Government and ensuring that the principles of equality, fairness and transparency are integral to all our activities.

As we recognise the value of different perspectives in challenging established processes and organisational norms, we are committed to achieving the gender representation objective (GRO), as set out in the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018.



The Scottish Government’s Public Appointments Team are responsible for appointments to the Board of the SFRS, and are regulated by the Ethical Standards Commissioner. The Board currently comprises five women and seven men, including the female Chair. Since the 2021 Gender Pay Gap Report, one appointment round was held to appoint four Board members. This attracted a total of 93 applications, with 42% of the candidates being female. From this, one female and three males were appointed leading to the SFRS Board now comprising of the current members from 24 July 2021.

As opportunities arise, the Service will continue to take steps considered appropriate to encourage applications from women for the role of a Board member. These positive action measures include hosting webinars and information events to inform potential applicants about the role of a Board member and using our networks to help increase wider diversity and representation of the people within the communities we serve.



## 5. Current Initiatives

SFRS is committed to the principles of fairness, equality and inclusion, and seeks to ensure that these are embedded in everything we do. We have adopted a Values framework which ensures that Safety, Teamwork, Respect and Innovation are at the centre of all our activities, and have included objectives aimed at enhancing the employee experience within our Strategic Plan.

Equality and fairness are also central to our normal business activities, with the following equality measures being embedded within our business processes:

#### Inclusive Employment Policies and Procedures

All our employment policies and procedures are subject to equality and human rights impact assessments to detect and assess their differential impact upon women and other protected characteristics. This process ensures that our employment policies are fair and free from discrimination, and creates an inclusive and holistic approach to equality.

#### Recruitment

SFRS has, in partnership with groups such as Stonewall, Career Positive and Disability Confident Employer, sought to ensure that our recruitment processes and materials are free from discrimination, and we proactively seek to attract applicants from underrepresented groups. We currently have established relationships with the Asian Fire Service Association, LGBT and female firefighter associations. We are registered with Stonewall’s Proud Employers job board, where we advertise for front line positions which are currently underrepresented by LGBT colleagues, we are members of Stonewall’s Diversity Champions programme and were awarded Silver status in the 2022/23 Workplace Equality Index. We have partnerships with the Saltire and Equality Network which we use to promote the Service as an inclusive employer and to learn how we can further our equality and diversity activities. We hold a corporate membership with Women in the Fire Service (WFS) which we utilise to post SFRS external jobs on their career site to reach a wider group of female applicants. In recent years, we have also sought to recognise the neurodiversity within our communities,

and have provided a range of supporting mechanisms for those with conditions such as dyslexia who are seeking employment or career development within SFRS. We always endeavour to have diverse selection panels that represent all characteristics. Where we can’t achieve a balanced panel, we utilise HR colleagues to ensure that balance.

#### Workplace Culture

SFRS is committed to being a people centred organisation where everyone feels they belong and can build a rewarding career, working together for a safer Scotland. SFRS already have well developed elements of organisational culture in place and our framework approach seeks to broaden and strengthen these, in continuing to evolve and develop our culture in line with our Long-Term Vision and Strategic Plan.

In support of these aims, the relaunch of our Dignity and Integrity Policy as a Dignity and Respect Policy in 2022 was accompanied by the introduction of Dignity and Respect Contact Advisers to better address any concerns raised by colleagues as it related to their fair treatment in the workplace.

Chaired by the Deputy Chief Officer and senior leaders in SFRS, the Women’s Experience Liaison Forum was also established as an additional vehicle for senior managers and the representative bodies to discuss matters relating to inclusive workplace practices.

#### Learning and Development

Occupational segregation is a key challenge, and SFRS have recognised that women, the disabled and ethnic minorities are under-represented at senior level within our Service, and particularly within the uniformed management structure. We have therefore ensured that our development and progression opportunities are free from discrimination and open to all colleagues. All colleagues regardless of working pattern, have fair and equal access to training and development, and we have implemented a range of flexible learning methods through our digital first approach such as online classroom learning, and flexible self-directed learning to enable this. SFRS also work in partnership with trade unions and providers to ensure

lifelong learning opportunities. Our ambition is to continue to expand opportunities for unrepresented groups, and also better understand and remove any barriers for these groups in the context of learning and development. The Service will also continue to provide awareness and development sessions on related topics e.g., unconscious bias, and build capacity through our Leadership Development Programmes to support women, the disabled and ethnic minorities' progression and development. These programmes also ensure that managers and leaders within the Service are aware of equality and inclusion in the decision-making process.

### Employee Networks and Celebrating Diversity

SFRS support colleagues from equality themed groups to come together and create their own support network. The virtual groups are employee led and connect colleagues who have a common interest in sharing their experiences, supporting others, raising awareness and contributing to the Service's understanding of issues arising from a protected characteristic or another equality group. We currently have an established and productive LGBT network who co-ordinate and attend Pride events across the country as well as being a fantastic forum for discussion. A Women's network and a Neurodiversity network are also particularly active groups. Several senior colleagues within these networks are active allies and show support from a strategic management level. The Equality and Diversity and Health and Wellbeing teams also run regular spotlight campaigns to highlight new equality and diversity or welfare initiatives, events or legislative changes, such as the focus on the challenges that the menopause can present. These campaigns seek to foster a culture of awareness and belonging.

Despite these measures, SFRS recognises that further work is required if we are to achieve our goal of a workforce representative of all the communities of Scotland, and where people with protected characteristics work in a supportive environment and are afforded equality of opportunity. We are therefore acting to address the under-representation of women and of others with protected characteristics within the workforce, and to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

To support this, we undertook a review of our Positive Action Strategy 2019 – 2022 and are in the process of implementing a revised approach to balancing the workplace, positive action and inclusive workplace initiatives. This is a long-term objective with a number of early deliverables.

The key principles of our renewed approach to positive action are:

- To be responsive to the business needs of the SFRS as it relates to recruitment demands
- To be delivered and owned at both national and local levels of SFRS
- The participation of all parties involved in the advertising and management of vacancies
- The inclusion of internal development and promotion campaigns and initiatives
- A direct link to more general inclusive workplace initiatives such as Building the Future Together

In 2021/22 SFRS hosted a series of online positive action information sessions targeted towards people from under represented groups seeking employment opportunities with SFRS. These will continue to be offered throughout 2023 and beyond and will be supported by local delivery of targeted engagement with under represented groups.

A Positive Action Toolkit is being finalised for use by Area based personnel to host positive action events, to include positive action features in more generalised events and support local targeted engagement with under represented groups. During 2021 and 2022 SFRS also promoted and sponsored attendance at development and leadership events for women, whilst in 2023-24 we aim to pilot a reverse mentoring programme for women and people from an ethnic minority background as a positive action measure for existing staff.

### Policy Review

We continue to review the application of relevant People and flexible working policies and arrangements to ensure these support equalities and the attraction and retention of a diverse workforce. We have introduced both agile and home working practices to support our Flexible working arrangements, improve accessibility of work, and enable all employees to balance the demands of employment and personal commitments.

### SFRS Branding

We will continue to review the SFRS brand and how this and the range of roles across SFRS are communicated, internally and externally, to increase attraction from under-represented groups to all SFRS posts, and to dispel gender-based perceptions of employment with SFRS.

### Recruitment, Development and Promotion

We will review SFRS' recruitment, selection and promotion processes to ensure there are no potential barriers to attraction, employment and career progression for under-represented employee groups, and to ensure they deliver equality of opportunity. We will also review existing and planned development programmes to ensure there are no

potential barriers to career progression / development e.g. for women, part time staff, or those with a disability, and will provide tailored support for career progression to encourage participation and promotion processes for those from under-represented groups.

### Equal Pay

We have developed and implemented pay and reward strategies, supported by robust processes to ensure equal pay and the reduction of occupational segregation, and continue to enhance the total reward package to include additional flexible benefits which meet the needs of a diverse workforce, including gathering feedback from staff.

### Employee Information

We are improving processes for gathering employee demographic/sensitive data to enable reporting in relation to the full range of protected characteristics, and provide better understanding of workforce profile and its needs.

Internal communications have been circulated to encourage colleagues to update personal information by being open and transparent about how the data will be used, about how this information informs policy and procedure, and to reassure colleagues that such information will be kept confidential.

## 6. Future Actions

In pursuance of our aim to achieve a workforce representative of all the communities of Scotland, SFRS will continue to build on the progress achieved through our existing Initiatives, and will develop and implement the initiatives outlined within our "Taking Action to Balance our Workforce – Action Plan" which is attached as Appendix B.

## 7. Conclusion

Since its inception in 2013, the SFRS has continually sought to put equality issues at the forefront of organisational priorities, and has recognised equality of treatment and opportunity as a prime objective when developing systems, policies and processes.

Through our continuing efforts, we have consistently reduced the Service's Gender Pay Gap to its current positive level, and are seeing a promising increase in the representation of women in our workforce.

Whilst acknowledging the progress made, SFRS is aware that much more needs to be done if we are to achieve our goal of reaching a level of representation of employees with protected characteristics in all employee categories that equal those in Scottish society.

In pursuit of this goal, SFRS are continuing to expand and implement our existing equality policies, processes and initiatives, and confidently expect to continue to address the current imbalance within our workforce and continue to develop SFRS as a great place to work for anyone in Scotland, regardless of their gender or background.



# APPENDIX A

## Supporting information

To support the information provided above, SFRS wishes to provide the supporting statistical data on the composition of our workforce.

### Gender Representation by Staffing Group

	% of Workforce	Percentage		Number		Total
		Female	Male	Female	Male	
All staff	100%	14.07%	85.93%	1061	6479	7540
Uniformed (WT)	45.80%	6.52%	93.48%	225	3228	3453
Uniformed (RDS)	37.27%	7.05%	92.95%	198	2612	2810
Uniformed (Volunteer)	3.58%	15.56%	84.44%	42	228	270
Uniformed (Control)	2.36%	83.71%	16.29%	149	29	178
Support	10.99%	53.92%	46.08%	447	382	829

### Gender Representation Amongst Support Staff

Pay Grade	Employees	Headcount		Percentage	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
Modern Apprentice	11	2	9	18.18%	81.82%
1	5	4	1	80.00%	20.00%
2	137	107	30	78.10%	21.90%
3	112	54	58	48.21%	51.79%
4	228	93	135	40.79%	59.21%
5	117	75	42	64.10%	35.90%
6	79	54	25	68.35%	31.65%
7	44	14	30	31.82%	68.18%
8	47	19	28	40.43%	59.57%
9	19	12	7	63.16%	36.84%
10	17	6	11	35.29%	64.71%
11	8	5	3	62.50%	37.50%
Director	4	1	3	25.00%	75.00%
Deputy Chief Officer	1	1	0	100.00%	0.00%
Total	828	447	382	53.99%	46.14%

### Gender Representation Amongst Uniformed (Wholetime) Staff

Role	Employees	Headcount		Percentage	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
Chief Officer	1	0	1	0.00%	100.00%
Deputy Chief Officer	1	0	1	0.00%	100.00%
Assistant Chief Officer	3	0	3	0.00%	100.00%
Deputy Assistant Chief Officer	6	0	6	0.00%	100.00%
Area Commander	25	1	24	4.00%	96.00%
Group Commander	75	2	73	2.67%	97.33%
Station Commander	147	10	137	6.80%	93.20%
Watch Commander	599	28	571	4.67%	95.33%
Crew Commander	641	40	601	6.24%	93.76%
Firefighter	1955	144	1811	7.37%	92.63%
Total	3453	225	3228	6.52%	93.48%

### Gender Representation Amongst Uniformed (Operations Control) Staff

Role	Employees	Headcount		Percentage	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
Area Commander	1	1	0	100.00%	0.00%
Group Commander	4	3	1	75.00%	25.00%
Station Commander	10	9	1	90.00%	10.00%
Watch Commander	42	36	6	85.71%	14.29%
Crew Commander	27	23	4	85.19%	14.81%
Firefighter	94	77	17	81.91%	18.09%
Total	178	149	29	83.71%	16.29%

# APPENDIX B

## Taking Action to Balance our Workforce – Action Plan

### Gender Representation Amongst Uniformed (Retained Duty) Staff

Role	Employees	Headcount		Percentage	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
Watch Commander	258	15	243	5.81%	94.19%
Support Watch Commander	53	10	43	18.87%	81.13%
Crew Commander	522	21	501	4.02%	95.98%
Firefighter	1977	152	1825	7.69%	92.31%
Total	2810	198	2612	7.05%	92.95%

### Gender Representation Amongst Uniformed (Volunteer Duty) Staff

Role	Employees	Headcount		Percentage	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
Watch Commander/ Volunteer Leader	37	6	31	16.22%	83.78%
Crew Commander/ Deputy Leader	39	3	36	7.69%	92.31%
Firefighter	194	33	161	17.01%	82.99%
Total	270	42	228	15.56%	84.44%

Key Theme	We will	Sex	Race	Disability
Leadership, Governance and Decision Making	Establish a strategic equality and human rights group to consider, review and make recommendations to the Strategic Leadership Team and other relevant Boards/ Committees on Equality, Diversity and Human Rights matters.	x	x	x
	Support the evolution of the Senior Leader Equality Champion role around the protected characteristic they represent including Sex, Race and Disability.	x	x	x
	Provide senior leaders with training, guidance and resources to take a proactive approach on Sex, Race and Disability equality matters in the workplace.	x	x	x
	Work with partner agencies to improve understanding and support implementation of inclusive workplace practices as it relates to protected characteristics	x	x	x
Equal Pay	Continue to develop consistent and robust processes to ensure equal pay and the reduction of occupational segregation and continue to monitor the total reward packages around flexible working benefits that meet the needs of our diverse workforce.	x	x	x
	Review our mechanisms for the job evaluation of Support Staff posts taking account of unintended bias on the grounds of sex, ethnicity and disability.	x		
Recruitment	Continue to monitor the SFRS Recruitment, Selection and promotion processes and outputs to ensure that there are no potential barriers to attraction, employment and career progression for any employee group, including women, people from an ethnic minority background and those with a disability.	x	x	x
	Use positive action measures, as per the Equality Act 2010, to address under-representation in SFRS, including targeted recruitment campaigns to attract women, people from an ethnic minority background and individuals with a disability.	x	x	x
	Take steps to address hierarchical and horizontal occupational segregation as it relates to women, people from an ethnic minority background and people with a disability through internal recruitment, development and promotion activities.	x	x	x
	Pilot a reverse mentoring scheme between senior leaders and under-represented employees to build knowledge and understanding.	x	x	x

Key Theme	We will	Sex	Race	Disability
Employee Information	Improve our processes for gathering demographic/ sensitive data to enable reporting in relation to all of the protected characteristics.	x	x	x
	Communicate regularly with colleagues on the reason for collating data and the way their data will be held and used with a view to improving disclosure rates	x	x	x
	Monitor and analyse employee information including grievance, discipline and exit interviews and act should any issues be identified.	x	x	x
Inclusive policies and practices	Continue to review our Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment process, recognising that there is no such thing as a sex/race/disability neutral policy, and that every people policy or decision we make has the power to create equality or inequality for our employees.	x	x	x
	Engage with women who are pregnant and those on maternity leave to ensure they are supported on their return to work	x		
	Support women transitioning through the menopause.	x		
	Continue to promote and monitor our agile working and flexible working policies to ensure that they enable individuals to balance home and work life.	x	x	x
Understand and improve Workplace Culture	We will monitor and take steps to provide that the Dignity and Respect Policy and Bullying Harassment and Discrimination Procedure is embedded throughout the Service, so that everyone understands the positive behaviours that are required, and the unacceptable behaviours which have no place in our Service.	x	x	x
	Engage with our employees, employee representative bodies and different levels of management through forums, informal feedback sessions and surveys.	x	x	x
	Review the remit of our Employee Networks to enhance engagement between the Service and the networks.	x	x	x
	Continue to work to tackle sexual harassment both in the workplace and in wider society by participating in internal and external initiatives such as progressing Scottish Government's tackling violence against women and girls' agenda.	x	x	x
	Continue to promote the role of our Contact Advisers who will listen to concerns in a confidential, impartial way and will be able to explore and signpost other sources of support available.	x	x	x

Key Theme	We will	Sex	Race	Disability
Learning and Development	Invest in our talent management activities to address occupational segregation and the underrepresentation of women, people with an ethnic minority background and people with a disability at Senior levels within the organisation.	x	x	x
	Monitor our learning and development activities to ensure they are accessible to all employees within the SFRS	x	x	x
	Work with partners and external providers when reviewing our Equality and Diversity packages to ensure that they are intersectional and consider good practice in the workplace for women, racialised minorities and people with a disability.	x	x	x
	Develop the Equality Network reference to broaden the appreciation of the challenges experienced by minority groups, and gain the benefits of differing perspectives.	x	x	x
Employee Networks and Celebrating Diversity	Make use of inclusive styled messaging and branding that presents a realistic image of the roles available and culture within SFRS.	x	x	x



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March 2023 – Version 1.0