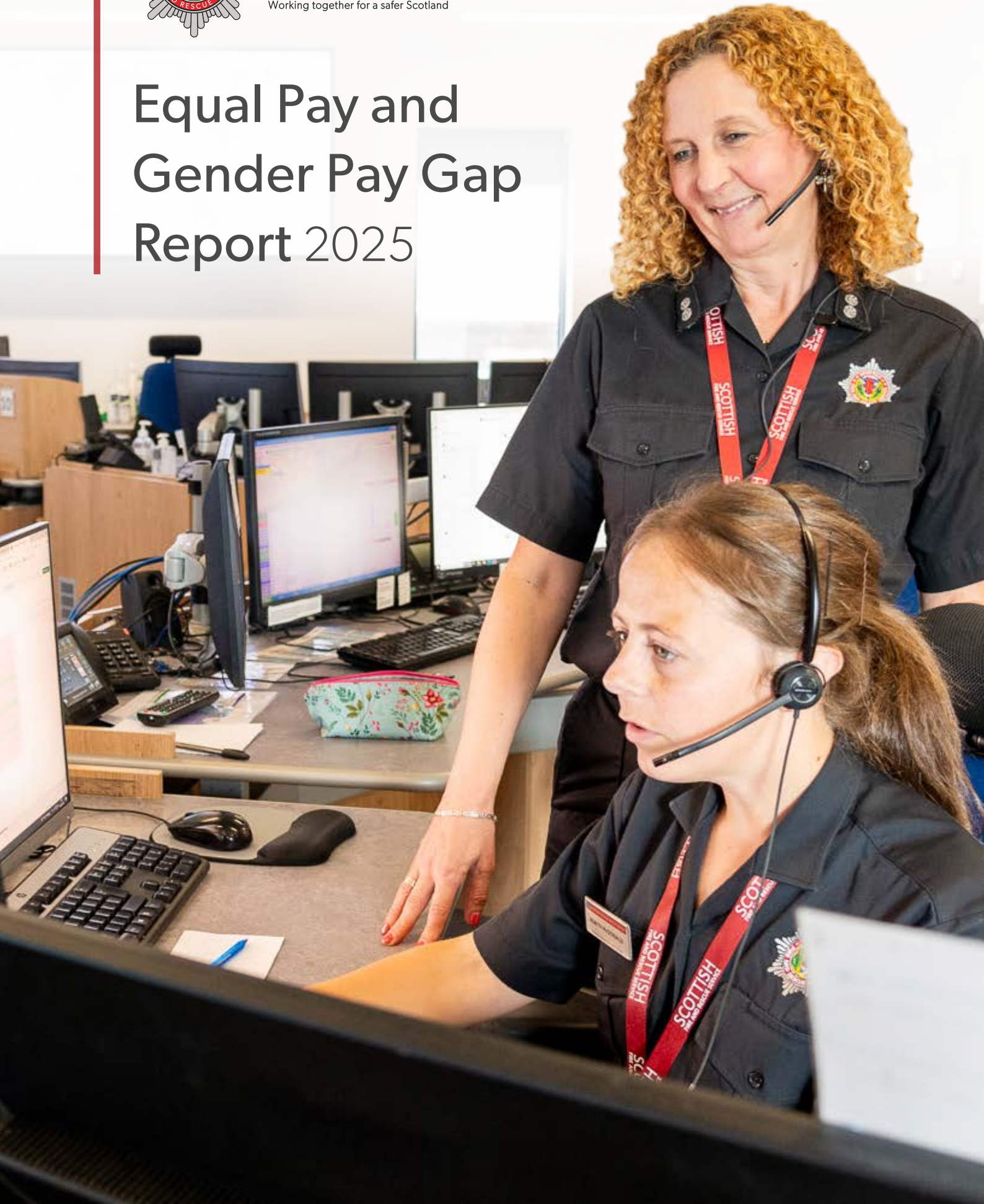




SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap Report 2025



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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 reports every two years on the Pay Gap and occupational segregation in our organisation by Gender, Disability and Ethnicity. This report looks to explore this and provide information on the policies and processes we implement to achieve equality in pay and representation.

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. 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.

SFRS are however aware that there is work still to be done when it comes to balancing our workforce which we believe arises from occupational segregation caused by an over-representation of employees from one gender within specific roles, rather from any discriminatory practice. 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 ethnic minorities, 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.

This report will 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. These measures are we believe resulting in positive and ongoing improvements in equality and representation within SFRS. As already mentioned, we have seen the gender pay gap move to be in favour of women, and have also seen a sustained trajectory of women being promoted within the Uniformed ranks. Women also continue to be well represented within the senior management positions within the Support Staff structure.

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.



Interpreting the Data

Please note the following considerations when interpreting the data within this report:

- For data exploring disability and ethnic minorities, this report is based on relatively small data sets which makes robust analysis challenging. It also means that small changes could show a significant impact in terms of percentage increase/decrease
- SFRS recognise the importance of gathering employee's protected characteristics data in order to be able to accurately report on it and draw meaningful conclusions. SFRS are committed to working on initiatives to encourage employees to share their information and this is explored further in **Section 5**.

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 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. Pay Gaps

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 requirements of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Government that employers also report on the pay gaps of employees with disabilities, or from ethnic minorities. Information of the pay gaps of these employee groups is therefore also provided.

Whilst the Office of National Statistics reports that the 2024 Pay Gap in the UK was 7% in favour of males, as of 30 November 2024 SFRS has a mean Gender Pay gap of -3.1%, 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. There are three main factors which have contributed to this over this time. The first being the standardisation of Support staff pay, during which 7% was added to the support staff salary budget. As support staff have a greater percentage of women than the uniformed staff group, this led to a more significant increase in the female average pay

than male. The second factor is believed to be the differentiation between the NJC pay awards and that of support staff in recent years. This again increased support staff relative to the Uniformed function. Finally, the Scottish public sector pay policy has mostly awarded a greater percentage of pay awards to lower paid support staff (predominantly women) than to the middle pay grades that have a lot

of male dominated employee groups (ICT and Fleet) or higher paid group where the gender split is more even. Progress in the Gender Pay Gap 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 Gap 2017-2025					
	2017	2019	2021	2023	2025*
Mean	5%	4.42%	1.01%	-2.98%	-3.1%
Median	Not available	5.92%	2.5%	0%	0%

Table 1 – SFRS Gender Pay Gap 2017-2025

* The data used in this report reflects SFRS staff as of 30 November 2024 compared to the 2023 report snapshot date of 20 December 2022. The date was brought forward in this recent report to allow sufficient time for the compiling of the report prior to publication.

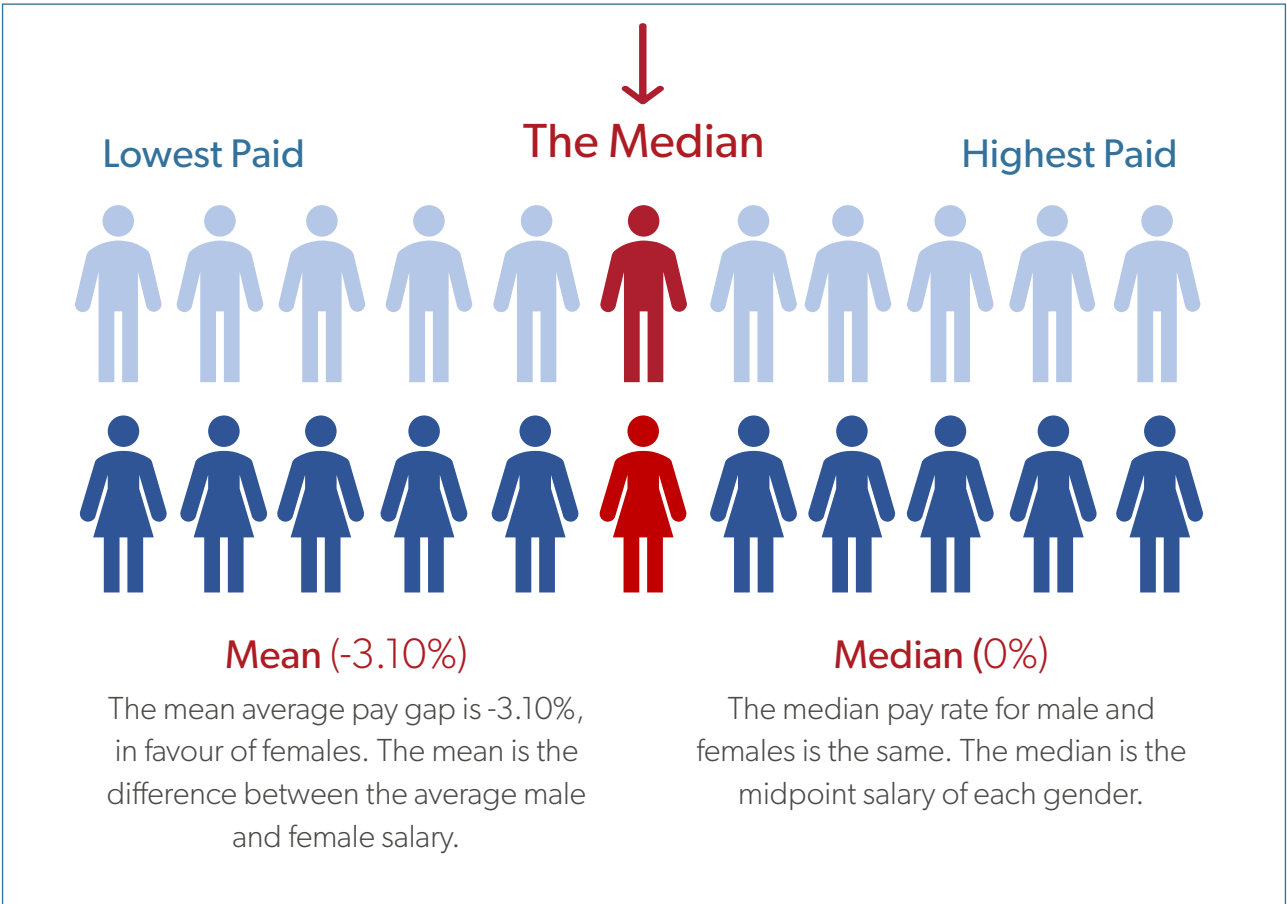


Diagram 1 – The Mean and Median 2025

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 hourly rates of staff

from ethnic minorities and staff with a disability, to all staff. This is primarily due to the majority of the workforce, (55%), being at Firefighter level which leads to the middle (median) point commonly being found at this pay level.

3.2 Ethnicity Pay Gap

Ethnicity Pay Gap			
	2021	2023	2025
Ethnicity Mean Pay Gap	0.07%	-2.66%	-5.66%

Table 2 – SFRS Staff with a Disability

The mean pay gap for employees from ethnic minority backgrounds in SFRS is -5.66% when compared to the overall SFRS average hourly rate, meaning it is more favourable than the average. This has changed from -2.66% in 2023 however due to the relatively low representation of those from ethnic minorities,

detailed further in [Section 4.3](#), small changes can have a significant effect therefore although promising it is difficult to draw firm conclusions around this. The median pay gap of employees from ethnic minority backgrounds as a whole is 0% when compared to the staff average.

3.3 Disability Pay Gap

Disability Pay Gap			
	2021	2023	2025
Disability Mean Pay Gap	-3.03%	-7.93%	-5.88%

Table 3 – SFRS Staff with a Disability

The mean pay gap of employees with a disability as of November 2024 is -5.88%, and although this has changed slightly from 2023, it continues to be in favour of employees with a disability. 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 is available to raise awareness and knowledge of the area.

It is important to note that, as with Ethnicity, there is limited data available regarding employee's declaring a disability, which makes it challenging to draw reliable conclusions. Addressing this data gap is a priority, and further details on our commitment to improving this can be found in [Section 5](#).

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. Representation within SFRS

In addition to reporting on the gender pay gap, SFRS also report on the gender representation 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 pay. Given the differentiation between the workforce gender profile in the Uniformed and Support Workforce,

SFRS also wish to report on those within each of these employee groups, 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 Table 4.

	Female		Male		Total	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
Uniformed employees	608	9%	6,008	91%	6,616	88%
Support Staff	490	54%	414	46%	904	12%
SFRS Total	1,098	15%	6,422	85%	7,520	100%

Table 4 – 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 structure.

Pay Quartiles of All Employees

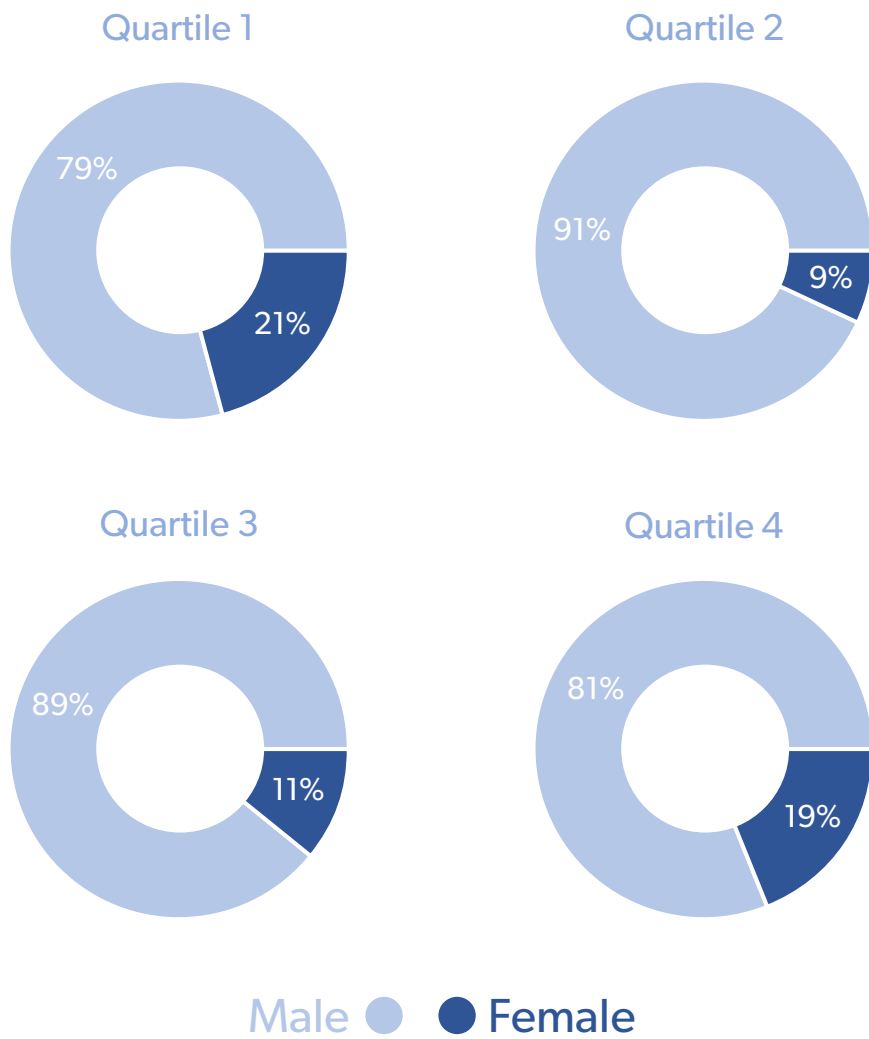


Diagram 2 – Pay Quartiles of All Employees

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.

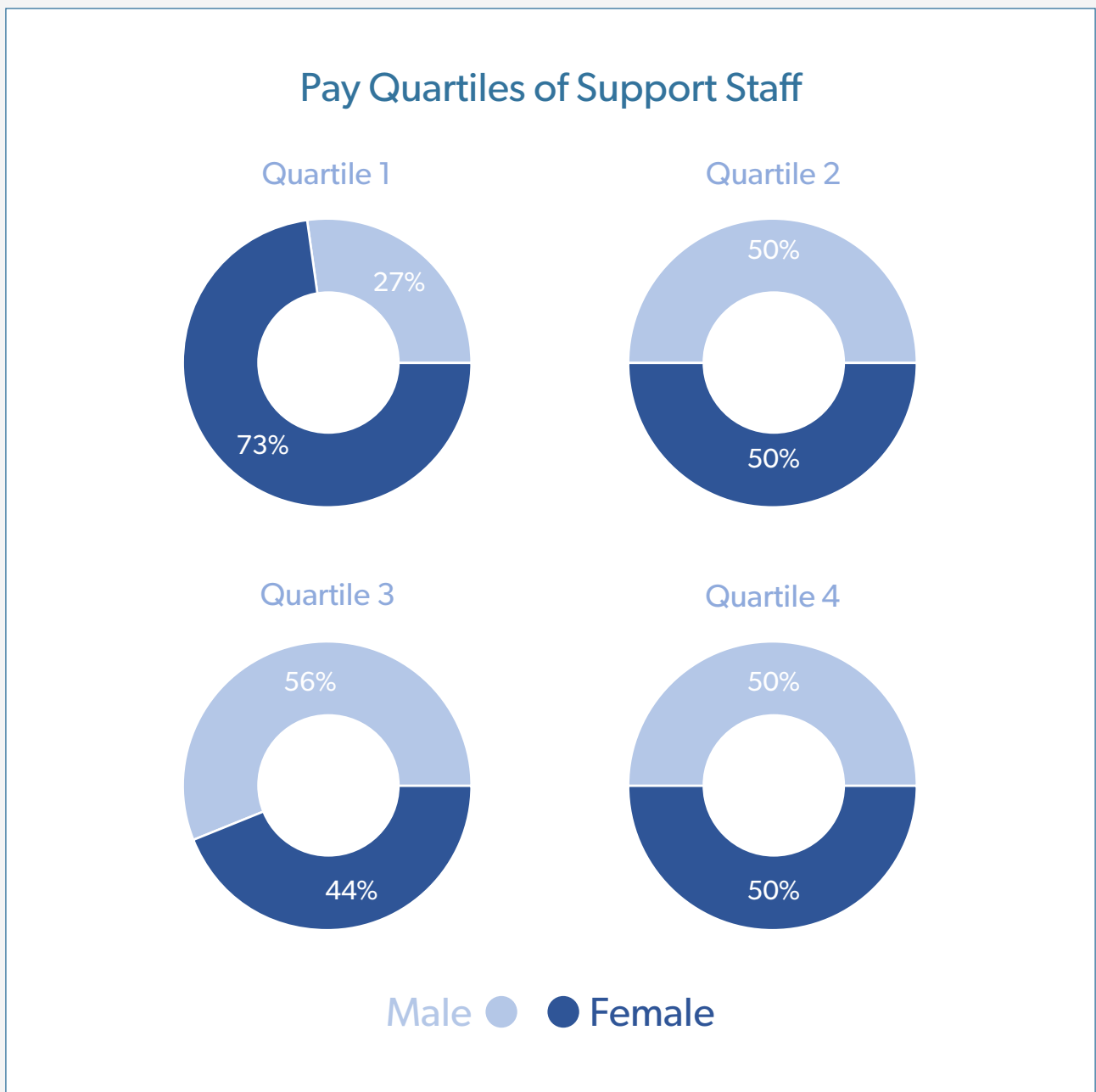


Diagram 3 – Pay Quartiles of Support Staff

The disproportionate number of women within the Quartile 1 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 create perceived barriers to career progression.

SFRS are however continuing to explore how working practices can be revised to support employees balance personal and professional responsibilities. We introduced a range of flexible working arrangements, including Agile Working and Home Working provisions, which appear to be working well for attraction and retention, and have a range of flexible policies in place to support employees in achieving a positive work/life balance. SFRS have also revised the functional structure within several Directorates to provide more accessible career paths for administrative employees and work will continue to explore how the talents of employees of all grades throughout the Service can be supported in achieving their aspirations. Further information on these initiatives is provided in [Section 5](#).

In contrast with Quartile 1, the upper 3 quartiles 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 (RDS) – 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.

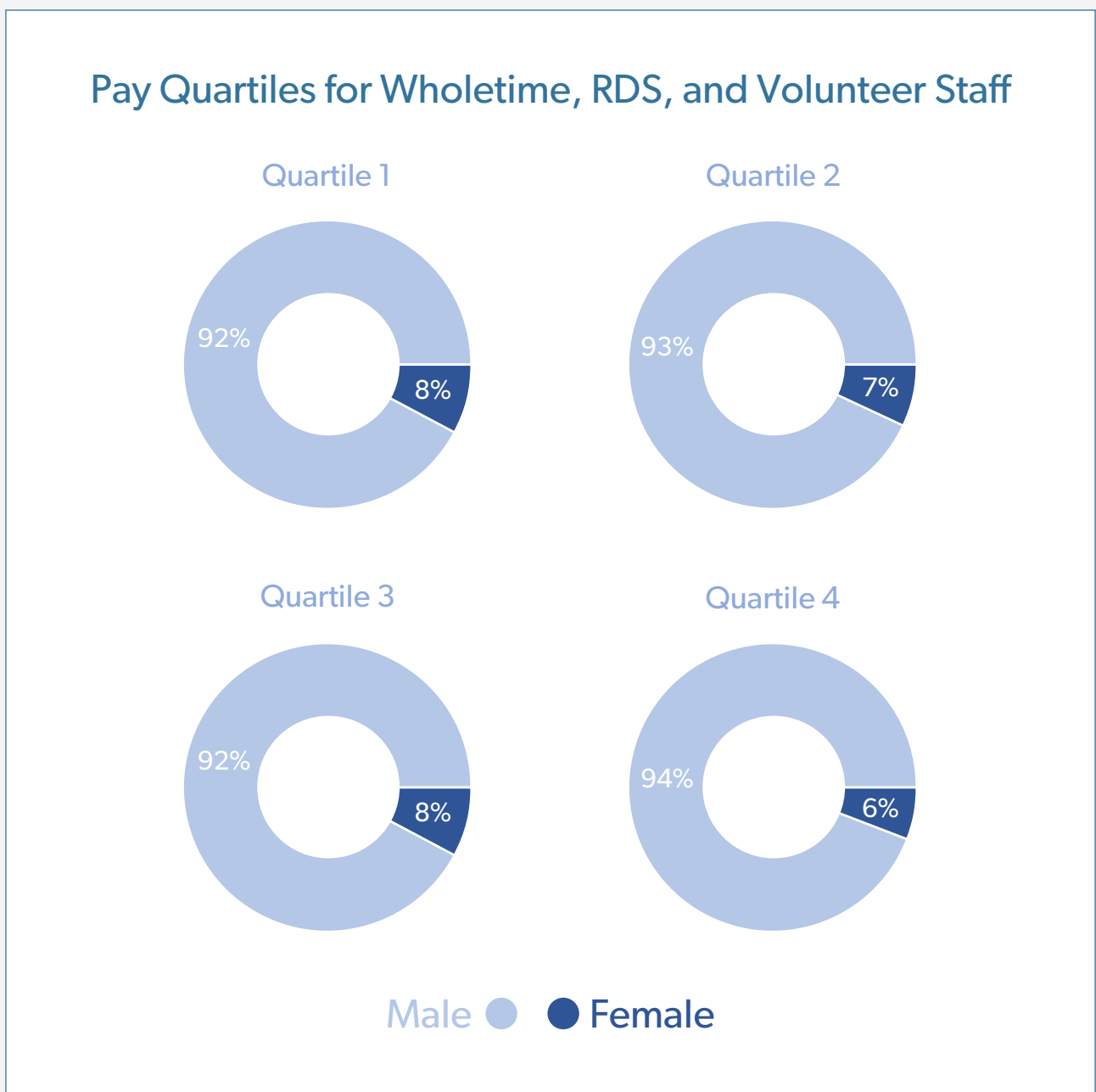


Diagram 4 – Wholetime, RDS, and Volunteer Staff Pay Quartiles

It is recognised that in common with the majority of 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. Most recently, the standardisation of terms and conditions for our RDS staff has been achieved which allows an increased variety of options in availability hours which may in turn make it a more attractive and achievable option for woman or those with caring responsibilities. Other initiatives 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.

4.2.1 The Wholetime Uniformed Service

From [Table 5](#), we can see there has been a decrease in female Wholetime staff from 2023 to 2025 however if we look at the numbers as a percentage of the overall Wholetime group, it shows females still account for a similar proportion overall, with females representing 6.5% in 2023 compared to 6.4% of the Wholetime group in 2025. There also continues to be promising progression in greater representation of females achieving career development. In the 2023 figures, the first woman reached the rank of Area Commander and although this individual has now retired meaning there is no longer a female post holder of this rank, the significant increase in female Group Commanders shown in [Table 5](#) shows promise that this trajectory will be continued.

Representation of Women in the Wholetime Uniformed Service				
	2019	2021	2023	2025
Chief Officer	0	0	0	0
Deputy Chief Officer	0	0	0	0
Assistant Chief Officer	0	0	0	0
Deputy Assistant Chief Officer	0	0	0	0
Area Commander	0	0	1	0
Group Commander	2	2	2	6
Station Commander	2	6	10	7
Watch Commander	34	30	28	30
Crew Commander	27	30	40	38
Firefighter	134	151	144	134
Total	199	219	225	215

Table 5 – 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.

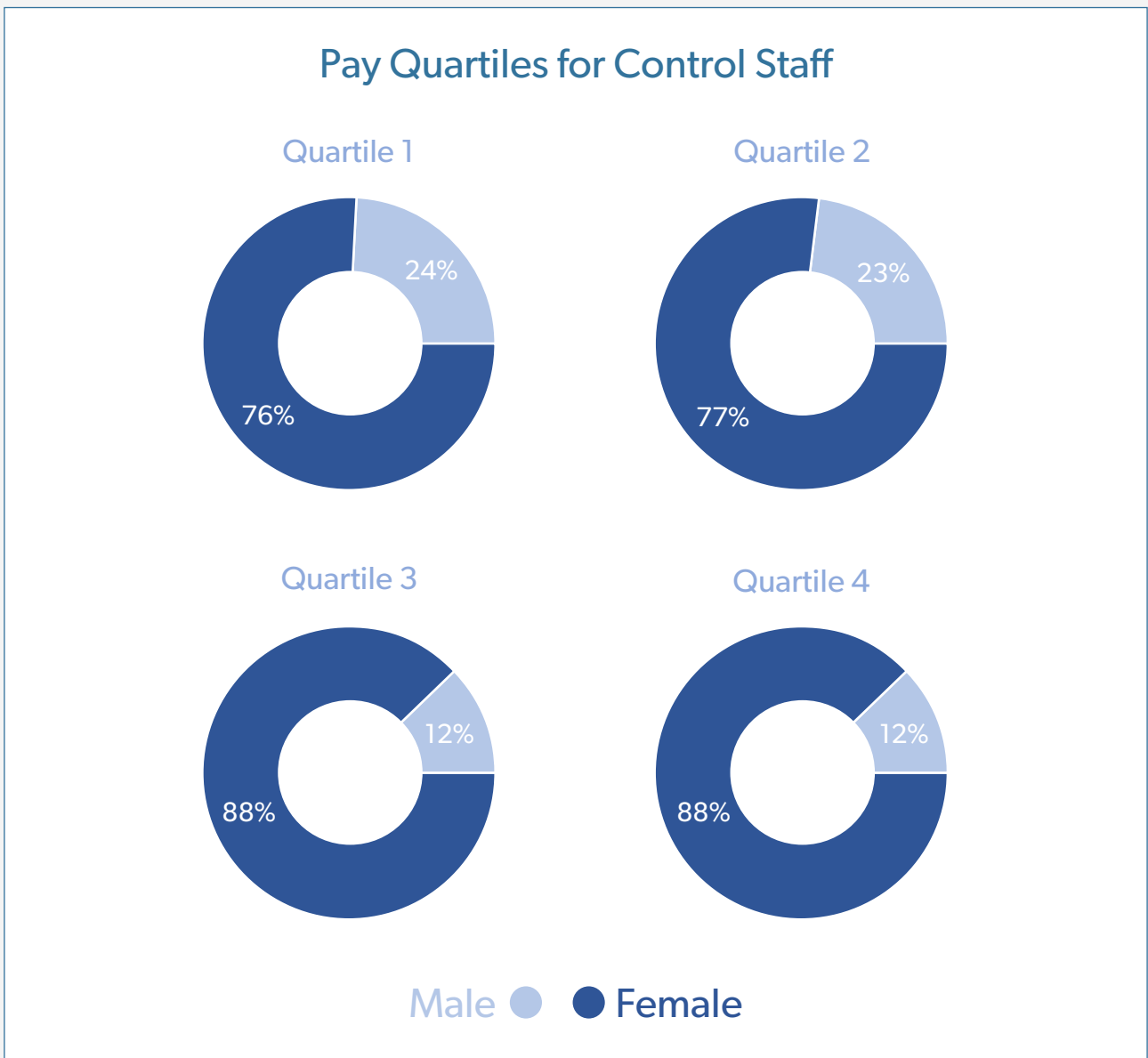


Diagram 4 – Pay Quartiles for Control Staff

4.3 Ethnic Minority Representation

As of November 2024, employees from minority ethnic backgrounds, constituted 1.69% of SFRS’s total workforce. Whilst this is a disproportionately low level of representation, there is a large proportion of information not recorded therefore it is likely the true number

is underreported. SFRS is committed to improving our data to allow for more accurate numbers to be available to analyse, this is further explored in [Section 5](#). A breakdown of the ethnicity of SFRS’s employees is provided within Table 6.

Ethnicity	Headcount	Percentage
Ethnic Minority Groups	127	1.69%
White British	3,826	50.88%
Not Recorded	3,547	47.17%
Prefer Not to Say	20	0.27%
Total	7,520	100%

Table 6 – Staff by Ethnic Group

In terms of representation within the four quartiles of SFRS’s organisational structure, the distribution of SFRS’s employees from ethnic minorities is illustrated in Table 7. This

demonstrates that whilst overall numbers remain relatively low, employees from these communities are proportionately more likely to hold positions within the higher quartiles.

Quartiles	Ethnic Minority Groups		White British		Not Known	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
1	18	0.96%	507	26.97%	1,355	72.07%
2	37	1.97%	989	52.61%	854	45.43%
3	34	1.81%	1,069	56.86%	777	41.33%
4	38	2.02%	1,261	67.07%	581	30.90%
Grand Total	127	1.69%	3,826	50.88%	3,567	47.43%

Table 7 – Pay Quartiles by Ethnicity

4.4 Disability Representation within SFRS

As of November 2024, 69 employees of SFRS had disclosed a disability, constituting 0.92% 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 8.

Disability	Headcount	%
Yes	69	0.92%
No	1993	26.50%
Not Known	5458	72.58%
Total	7520	100.00%

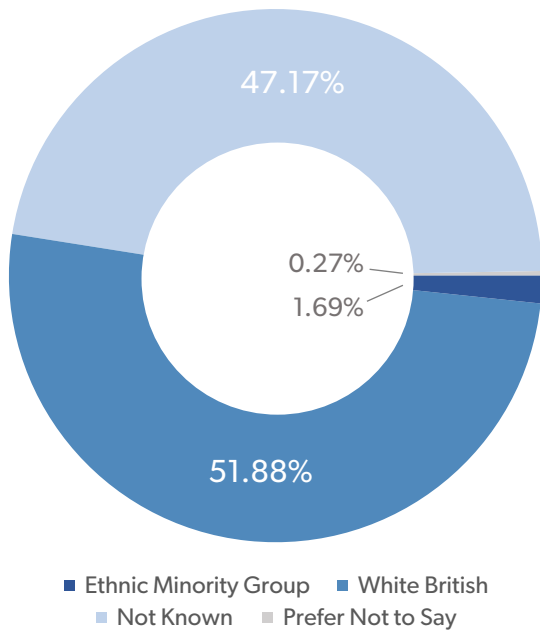
Table 8 – Disability in Staff

In relation to the distribution of employees with disabilities within the four quartiles of SFRS structure, there is a relatively even distribution across the quartiles as illustrated in Table 9.

Quartiles	Yes		No		Not Known	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
1	15	0.80%	281	14.95%	1584	84.26%
2	16	0.85%	425	22.61%	1439	76.54%
3	20	1.06%	653	34.73%	1207	64.20%
4	18	0.96%	634	33.72%	1228	65.32%
Grand Total	69	0.92%	1993	26.50%	5458	72.58%

Table 9 – Disability in Staff Pay Quartiles

Staff by Ethnicity 2025



Median (0.00%)

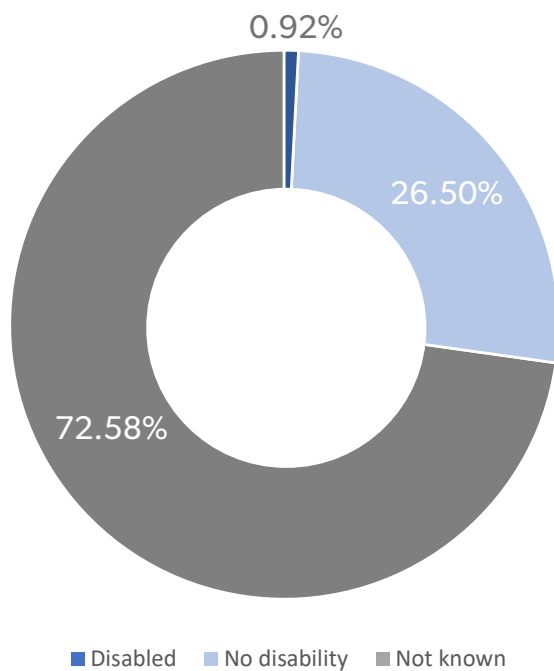
The median pay gap by ethnicity is 0%, meaning the median rate is the same for both groups. The median is the midpoint salary of each group.

Mean (-5.66%)

The mean pay gap by ethnicity is -5.66%, in favour of those from ethnic minorities. The mean is the difference between the average salary for each group.

Diagram 6 – Staff by Ethnicity 2025

Disability in Staff 2025



Median (0.00%)

The median pay gap by disability is 0%, meaning the median rate is the same for both groups. The median is the midpoint salary of each group.

Mean (-5.88%)

The mean pay gap of disabled staff is -5.88%, in favour of staff with a disability. The mean is the difference between the average salary for each group.

Diagram 7 – Disability in Staff 2025



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 and from ethnic minorities, 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 [Section 5](#) 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 2023 Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap Report, one appointment round was held to appoint four Board members. This attracted a total of 65 applications, with 29% of the candidates being female. From this, two females and two males were appointed on 18 December 2023 contributing to the current composition of the SFRS Board.

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. Taking Action

OUR COMMITMENT TO SHAPING A MORE INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

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 current and future business processes:

5.1 Inclusive Employment – SFRS Approach to Developing Policies and Procedures

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

In 2024 the equality and human rights impact assessment process was reviewed and enhancements made to the planning for policy implementation and monitoring policy post-implementation phases. These amendments are intended to improve how SFRS manages any difference between the intended impact of a policy and its actual impact.

5.2 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. Over the last two years, our Support Staff pay scale has been revised to reduce the number of incremental steps. Across the 11 Grades, there was variation to the number of levels within each Grade, and now following the review, each Grade has 3 levels. This provides a consistent and fair structure throughout and allows a quicker progression to the top scale point. For RDS staff, we have also succeeded in standardising terms and conditions which will enhance equality

across the Service and also add further flexibility by providing 5 availability levels. It is hoped that this will allow it to become accessible and attractive, particularly to women and those with caring responsibilities.

5.3 Pregnancy and Maternity

In 2024 SFRS increased maternity and adoption benefits for all staff groups from 18 weeks full pay to 26 weeks full pay. Which is a further step to recognising the value SFRS places on women in the workforce and being an attractive employer.

To better understand the experiences of employees we issued a Pregnancy and Maternity Returners Questionnaire to relevant colleagues. The findings of the questionnaire informed improvements to the maternity section of the Family Leave Policy with checklists for managers to help them better manage the pregnancy period, the maternity leave period and the return from maternity leave.

5.4 Preventing Sexual Harassment

In responding to the Workers Protection Act 2024, SFRS carried out a gap analysis of existing policies and practices against the requirements of the Act. A renewed commitment to preventing and tackling sexual harassment was issued and amendments to

policies implemented. Some initial awareness raising training was circulated with plans for more intensive training to be developed in partnership with colleagues in Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service.

SFRS contributed to the development of the National Fire Chief's Council's Sexual Tackling Harassment Toolkit which is circulated to all UK fire and rescue services.

5.5 Recruitment and Positive Action

SFRS has, in partnership with groups such as Stonewall 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.

SFRS advertises vacancies on Women in the Fire Service, the Asian Fire Service Association and to Stonewall's Proud Employers job websites.

In 2024 SFRS established an internal working group on Neurodiversity to explore, make recommendations and implement improvements to the recruitment and selection process as it relates to individuals with a neurodiverse condition.

To address areas of underrepresentation and achieve a workforce truly reflective of

the diverse communities we serve, SFRS will implement Positive Action initiatives where appropriate. Action will be targeted and will aim to encourage applications for employment, offer a more inclusive employment experience and career progression opportunities, with appropriate support, information and guidance provided to underrepresented groups and to ensuring an inclusive workplace culture which supports all SFRS employees.

We have introduced positive action engagement sessions for women who are considering promotion. This is with the aim of giving women the tools and support to progress within the Service. We are

continuing to review this approach and make improvements based on the positive feedback received in order to build on our activity.

A review of our positive action toolkit and the associated resources will commence to ensure a standardised approach to Positive Action events held across the Service.

Future plans as part of our continued commitment to review and improve our recruitment and selection process will include seeking to understand what would attract underrepresented groups to progress from SFRS supervisory to middle manager roles within uniformed staff groups.



5.6 Partnership Working

SFRS works with partner agencies to progress improvements in the recruitment and employment of women, people from a minority ethnic heritage and individuals with a disability.

Women's Experience Liaison Forum (WELF)

The WELF was established in 2022 to further the aims of making SFRS an inclusive employer by meeting the needs of women in the workplace.

The WELF is chaired by the Deputy Chief Officer and currently has representation from:

- FBU
- Unison
- Women in the Fire Service – Scottish Representative
- People Directorate – Head and Interim Director and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing, Talent (Acquisition) Teams
- Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications Directorate – Head of Communications and Senior Equality Champion for Women
- Prevention, Protection and Preparedness Directorate – Deputy Head

The group has monthly scheduled meetings and maintains an action plan and rolling action log.

The WELF was set up to share information about the real-life working experiences of women in SFRS, action improvement measures and act as a discussion forum on emerging issues such as NJC negotiations relating to maternity pay.

The WELF has met these ambitions of purpose and has further provided valuable opportunities for joint working between management and representative bodies.

Topics of discussion at the WELF are varied, extending to the provision of appropriate PPE, dignified facilities, maternity provisions, general employment practices that may impact women differently compared to male colleagues and learning and development opportunities.

Women in the Fire Service

A key issue highlighted through the reporting of our Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap is the occupational segregation in our workforce. As of November 2024, SFRS have 6,422 male employees and 1,098 female employees. To help address this, SFRS is an active member of Women in the Fire Service (WFS) and currently has 4 representatives liaising between SFRS and WFS.

In addition, SFRS organised its first Women in the Fire Service weekend in 2024. The event attracted approximately 70 participants drawn from across SFRS and other UK fire and rescue services. The event offered delegates the

opportunity to participate in a range of activities including women's health and fitness sessions, career development workshops and train in operational activities. Feedback from delegates was positive and a further event is being prepared for 2025.

Asian Fire Service Association

In 2024 SFRS continued its longstanding relationship with the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA). AFSA offer a range of online training and engagement sessions throughout the year which are promoted to colleagues. In 2023 and 2024 events included sessions for Black History Month.

As members of AFSA's Executive Committee, SFRS also participates in bi-monthly meetings to share notable practice and develop resources for distribution to the UK's fire and rescue services. Resources developed and distributed during 2023 and 2024 included Positive Action & the Fire Service and Top Tips for Ramadan.

Stonewall

SFRS has continued its membership of Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme. In 2023 – 2024 SFRS improved its rating in the Workplace Equality Index from Silver to Gold and ranked in the Top 100 UK Employers in recognition of the efforts SFRS has made in being an inclusive employer.

Inter-agency Working

In addition to working relationships with Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service on a series of topics, SFRS works with a wide range of public sector partners.

Scottish Government co-ordinate two working groups focusing on progressing race equality. SFRS participates alongside other Justice Sector partners in a group examining the capture and use of data to better inform workplace and service practices. A second working group explores race equality in the workplace and has carried out a project on barriers to recruitment.

5.7 Workplace Culture

Scrutiny of Fire and Rescue Services in England and Wales has continued with discrimination, harassment and bullying being found within some Services and reported through several published documents. This includes the London Fire Brigade report, HMICFRS 'Values and Culture in the FRS 2023' paper and the NFCC Cultural Action Plan, as well as the HMICS Thematic Inspection into Organisational Culture in Police Scotland.

SFRS have reviewed our position against this external context and wider media reports, approving a Culture Action Plan that works to improve awareness, training and information to promote our values and professional standards. SFRS have had a long-standing commitment to

equality, dignity and respect, and we recognise the need to both maintain and further improve our processes.

The Culture Action Plan has identified three priority actions as strategic imperatives:

1. Attracting and supporting a more diverse pool of candidates.
2. Developing Managers and Leaders
3. Improving Business Intelligence to inform future actions.

Work has continued on these actions throughout 2024, under the governance of the Culture Development Group. The need for review continues to be shaped by many factors, including service transformation, public cultural and behavioural perceptions of the industry, as outlined above, as well as improvements identified by SFRS from employee relations cases.

The Attraction and Engagement sub-group has been exploring the current attitudes and perceptions of women and people who have an ethnic minority heritage of the fire service. This work will also consider the branding of SFRS.

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.

To provide employees with an opportunity to feedback and share their opinion on a variety of SFRS delivered its Colleague Experience Survey in March 2024, resulting in a 27% response rate.

High level analysis has identified the top areas of performance and for improvement, which have been shared with colleagues, with further engagement and detailed analysis underway to inform Service wide and local actions plans.

To support SFRS's work on organisational culture & values, several sub-groups have been established as part of the Culture Development Group (CDG). Each has identified specific actions and milestones.

Review and development of several SFRS People policies has taken place to ensure these are inclusive, supportive, and reflective of SFRS as an employer of choice.

This included enhancements to SFRS maternity and adoption provisions, agreed as part of the NJC pay settlement.

As part of the Cultural Action Plan, a Confidential Reporting Line was introduced in May 2024, enhancing SFRS' reporting mechanisms, seeking to ensure employees feel comfortable and confident raising issues related to culture and behaviours in the workplace.

The Confidential Reporting Line is operated 24/7/365 and provides an opportunity for employees to share concerns by telephone or online, using encrypted protocols to protect their identity. We regularly communicate the benefits of the Confidential Reporting Line and use posters within all SFRS locations to signpost employees to this critical resource. Any concerns that are reported through Safecall are

subject to investigation through our internal procedures, which includes the application of any associated outcomes that may be deemed appropriate.

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.

5.8 Learning and Development – Representation in Senior Roles

SFRS recognise that women, those with disabilities and ethnic minorities are under-represented at senior level within the Service, and particularly within the uniformed management structure. Reducing occupational segregation and ensuring fair and equal access to learning and development opportunities, regardless of working pattern, is a crucial step in fostering a more inclusive and equitable workplace. 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 which are free from discrimination and open to all colleagues. Our ambition is to continue to expand opportunities for unrepresented groups, and better understand and remove any barriers for these

groups in the context of through engagement with employee networks/ forums and through regular evaluation of our programmes and initiatives. The Service will also continue to provide awareness and development sessions on related topics e.g., unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, and build capacity through our Management and 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.

5.9 Senior Equality Champions

Senior leaders have volunteered to be Equality Champions. The role of the Senior Equality Champions is to promote awareness of equality matters and engage with members of employee networks.

Currently SFRS has Senior Equality Champions for the characteristics of: Women; Care Experience and Carers; Race; Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls & Domestic Violence; Disability; Mental Health; Neurodiversity; Age and Sexual Orientation.

5.10 Employee Networks

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.

5.11 Gathering and Using Employee Information

SFRS acknowledges the need to improve the data held on our employee's protected characteristics such as Ethnicity and Disability. We are committed to 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.

A number of actions have and will continue to be taken to encourage employees to provide personal information and permit SFRS with more comprehensive information on the number of employees. A review of our internal process and systems will look to ensure that information is captured at recruitment stage and recorded into the system to ensure the gap in data does not grow. This will also form part of our criteria when upgrading our systems for future build. For existing staff, internal communications will continue to be 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. Conclusion

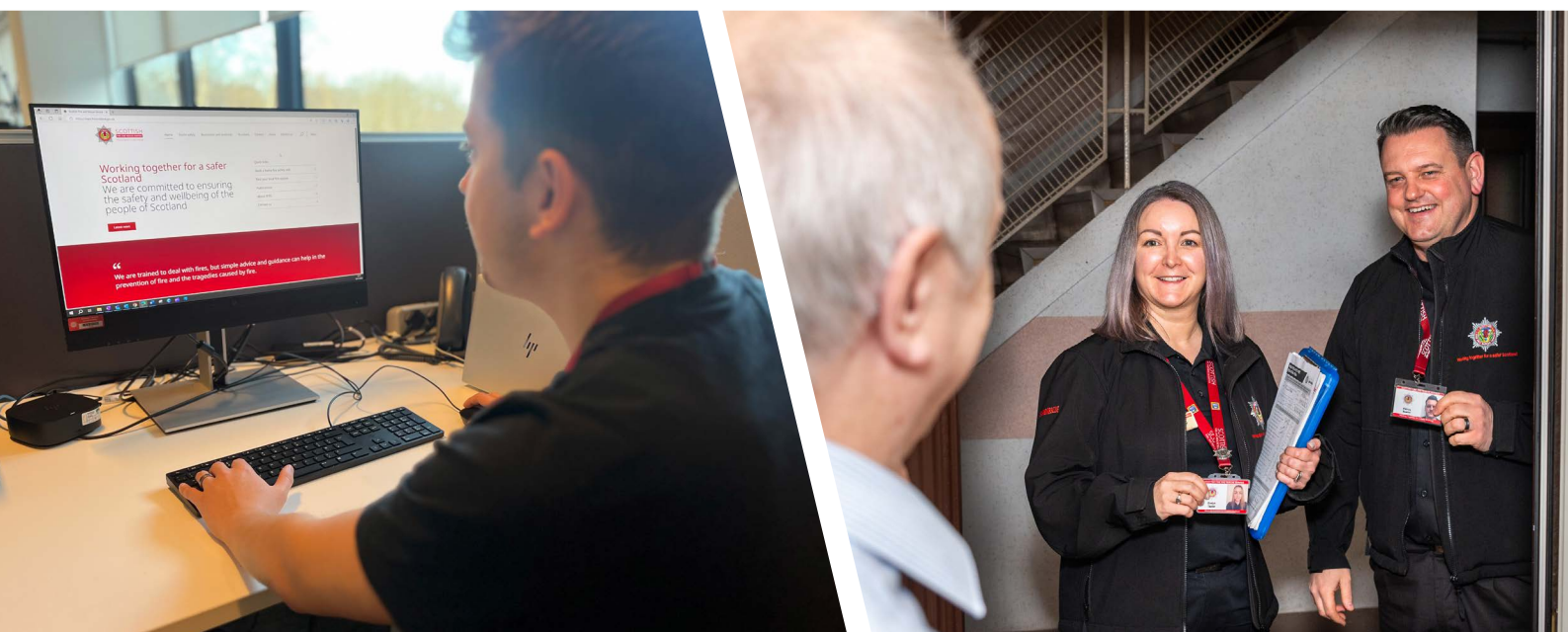
Since its inception in 2013, the SFRS has continually sought to put equality issues at the forefront of organisational priorities, and has recognised equality of treatment and opportunity as a prime objective when developing systems, policies and processes.

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 women achieving career development in our Uniformed 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

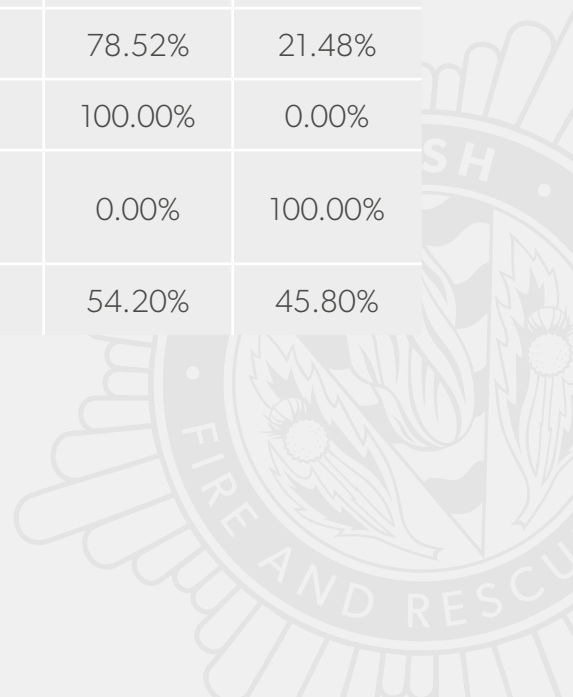
To support the information provided above, SFRS wishes to provide the supporting statistical data on the composition of our workforce.

Gender Representation by Staffing Group

	% of Workforce	Percentage		Headcount		Total
		Female	Male	Female	Male	
All staff	100%	14.60%	85.40%	1,098	6,422	7,520
Uniformed – WT	45.04%	6.35%	93.65%	215	3,172	3,387
Uniformed – RDS	37.13%	7.74%	92.26%	216	2,576	2,792
Uniformed – Volunteer	3.64%	15.69%	84.31%	43	231	274
Uniformed – Control	2.17%	82.21%	17.79%	134	29	163
Support	12.02%	54.20%	45.80%	490	414	904

Gender Representation Amongst Support Staff

Pay Grade	Employees	Headcount		Percentage	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
Deputy Chief Officer	1	1	0	100.00%	0.00%
Director	3	2	1	66.67%	33.33%
Grade 11	8	3	5	37.50%	62.50%
Grade 10	19	8	11	42.11%	57.89%
Grade 9	22	12	10	54.55%	45.45%
Grade 8	51	22	29	43.14%	56.86%
Grade 7	47	19	28	40.43%	59.57%
Grade 6	79	48	31	60.76%	39.24%
Grade 5	136	83	53	61.03%	38.97%
Grade 5 - DEV	1	1	0	100.00%	0.00%
Grade 4	239	91	148	38.08%	61.92%
Grade 3	137	78	59	56.93%	43.07%
Grade 2	149	117	32	78.52%	21.48%
Grade 1	5	5	0	100.00%	0.00%
SFRS Modern Apprentice	7	0	7	0.00%	100.00%
Total	904	490	414	54.20%	45.80%



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	0	25	0.00%	100.00%
Group Commander	73	6	67	8.22%	91.78%
Station Commander	156	7	149	4.49%	95.51%
Watch Commander	608	30	578	4.93%	95.07%
Crew Commander	635	38	597	5.98%	94.02%
Firefighter	1,879	134	1,745	7.13%	92.87%
Total	3,387	215	3,172	6.35%	93.65%



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%



Gender Representation Amongst Uniformed (Retained Duty) Staff

Role	Employees	Headcount		Percentage	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
Watch Commander	309	20	289	6.47%	93.53%
Support Watch Commander	521	31	490	5.95%	94.05%
Crew Commander	1,962	165	1,797	8.41%	91.59%
Firefighter	2,792	216	2,576	7.74%	92.26%
Total	2,810	198	2,612	7.05%	92.95%

Gender Representation Amongst Uniformed (Volunteer Duty) Staff

Role	Employees	Headcount		Percentage	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
Watch Commander	35	5	30	14.29%	85.71%
Crew Commander	40	7	33	17.50%	82.50%
Firefighter	199	31	168	15.58%	84.42%
Total	274	43	231	15.69%	84.31%



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