

Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2024/2025

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بڑے حروف کی چھپائی یا بریل میں درکار ہو تو برائے مہربانی بلا ، یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان جھجک ہم سے رابطہ کریں

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Introduction

Equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded into everything we do as a public service provider; it drives how we treat each other as members of the Fire Service; how we treat our partners; and how we interact with and deliver services for our diverse communities.

Cleveland Fire Authority (CFA) is pleased to share this Annual Equality, Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing Report which provides data and information about the workforce at Cleveland Fire Brigade and the work they do on a day-to-day basis to meet the differing needs of the diverse communities we serve. The information within this report aims to demonstrate how we are meeting the requirements as set out within the Equality Act 2010 and specifically, the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics
- Foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not

Public Authorities are required to publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty on an annual basis.

Our commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and this duty is central to our culture, behaviours and core values. This is delivered through several of the organisation's strategic plans, which are driven through our inclusive leadership 'One Vision-One Team' approach.

The Authority considers the impact of its policies and decisions on staff and the communities who are protected under the Act. The Authority and its employees, strive to positively contribute to advancing and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and are committed to:

- Developing and supporting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion to help build stronger communities.
- Creating a work environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation for all.
- Advancing equality of opportunity for, and foster good relations with staff, visitors, contractors, service users and members of the public regardless of age, sex, race, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or marriage and civil partnership, or those disadvantaged by unreasonable conditions or requirements.

Strategy

Our strategy drives the actions required against our equality objectives to achieve our equality outcomes and flows throughout all aspects of our work.

In terms of service delivery this particularly relates to our risk management, prevention, protection and emergency response strategies. In other areas it is specifically linked with our community and staff engagement and learning and development strategies. There are several key documents that underpin our work in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion including:

- Culture and People Plan 2022 - 2026
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Discipline Policy and Procedure
- Flexible Working Policy and Procedure
- Annualised Hours Policy and Procedure
- Pay Policy Statement

Our EDI strategy is embedded in our Culture and People Plan and is one of four key themes that seeks to maximise performance in realising our corporate goal: 'Professional, Proud, and Passionate People'. It is key in driving the actions required to achieve our equality outcomes and is across all aspects of our work. Our People Objective: 'To diversify our staff, promote inclusion and create a fair, equal and great place to work' drives the work we do to achieve our outcomes of :

- Continuing to ensure compliance with all equality, diversity and inclusion Legislation.
- Continuing to have people policies, processes and practices that provide equality of opportunity and are free from discrimination.
- Recruiting a workforce that increasingly reflects the communities we serve.
- Creating a working environment where our employees feel they can be themselves and where they can grow to be the best they can be.

A great place to work

Creating an inclusive culture starts with having the right values and ethical behaviours in place. Our Values and Ethical Behaviours Framework is well-embedded in Cleveland Fire Brigade and is the building block upon which our culture is based.

Together with the Code of Conduct, our Values and Ethical Behaviours Framework set out those standards that uphold our organisational culture. Strong ethical behaviour will influence how our staff and those that use our service view us, and the way in which we conduct our business.



The achievement of Cleveland Fire Authority's vision, mission and goals is built on having a safe and healthy workforce that is truly motivated and working together for a common and meaningful purpose. Keeping people safe from harm and creating safer, stronger communities is not just about what we do (our technical competence) or what we know (our knowledge and experience), it is all underpinned by our culture (how we do things) which is made up of our systems, structures, working practices; all which centre around our shared values.

Aligned to the Core Code of Ethics for Fire & Rescue Services (England), we believe that by living our values every minute of every day and demonstrating the behaviours set out in this framework, we can all contribute to developing our 'one vision, one team' approach and create a constructive and supportive working culture that makes Cleveland Fire Brigade a great place to work.

Cleveland Fire Brigade have continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). During its 2018/19 inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, the service was rated 'Good' in all areas, including Ensuring Fairness and Promoting Diversity. Oversight of EDI activities is provided through a quarterly EDI Board, chaired by the Chair of Cleveland Fire Authority and attended by senior leaders and representatives from with women's, cultural diversity, LGBTQ+ and disability staff networks.

The service has actively engaged with diverse communities across Teesside, attending Pride events to promote fire safety, prevention initiatives and recruitment opportunities. It has also supported individuals from a range of backgrounds and abilities through its work experience programme, while outreach activities have included visits to local mosques to discuss home safety, prevention strategies and careers within the fire service.

In addition, Cleveland Fire Brigade have worked to raise awareness of career opportunities by attending local school and college careers fairs and challenging misconceptions about working in the fire service. The service continues to collaborate with local and national partners, sharing best practice through networks such as the Tees Valley Inclusion Network and the Local Government Equalities Network, while also contributing to the National Fire Chiefs Council's EDI agenda. Collaborative working also takes place with neighbouring fire and rescue services sharing best practice and learning from each other.

The organisation further supports staff development and inclusion through membership of organisations such as the Asian Fire Service Association and Women in the Fire Service. Staff regularly attend events hosted by these organisations and share learning and good practice across the service.



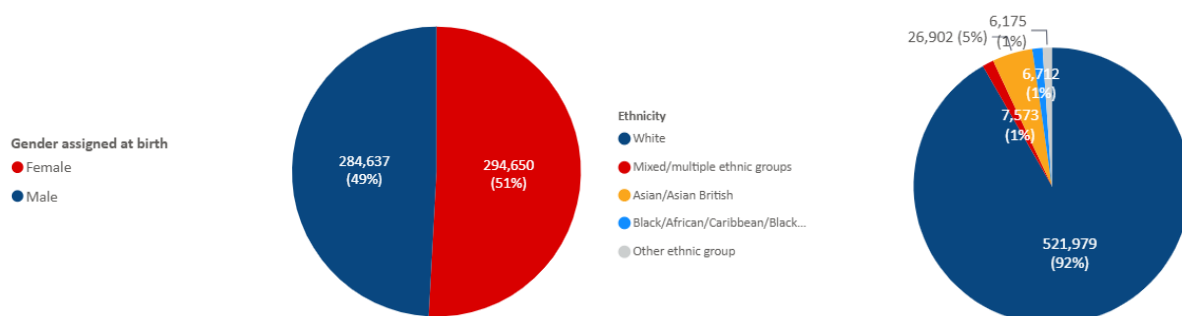
Our Community

Cleveland is an area in the Northeast of England and incorporates the authorities of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees.



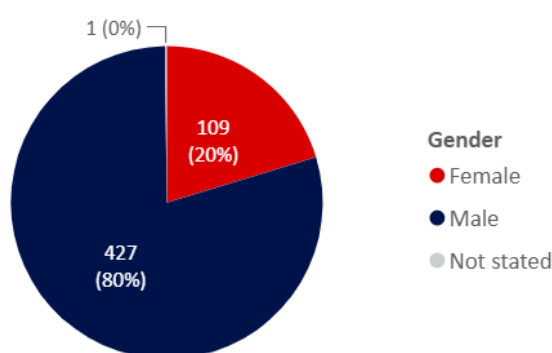
The population within the Cleveland Fire Authority area is 579,284* (* ONS Census via LG Inform 2025). 10% of the population identify as having a disability that limits their day-to-day activities a lot.

Our latest community profile information tells us the following facts about the ethnicity and gender within the Teesside area compared with our workforce profile. The population identifying as from an ethnic minority group and gender are:



Our Workforce

Our workforce data is taken from our HR management system as of 31st March 2025. Our data in relation to gender is based on gender identity. Gender identity is a person's innate sense of their own gender whether male, female or something else, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth. 0.2% of our workforce identify as transgender. Figures produced by the Home Office indicate that 74% of fire and rescue staff are male and 26% are female. This shows we are slightly below the national figures for female staff.



3.6% of our workforce have declared that they have a disability. This is significantly lower than the percentage of the community (10%) who have shared they are living with a disability.

It is not mandatory for our staff to share personal data regarding their ethnicity with us, so this means we might not always have the entire picture. We do encourage all our staff to feel safe and comfortable to share their data with us and this is reflected in the increase in the number of our people who have shared their ethnicity information with us. Gathering this data is important because the more accurate picture we have the more powerful reports like this are and the more meaningful our interventions can be.

Gender and ethnicity pay reporting requires our organisation to make calculations based on employee ethnicity and gender. This is established by using our existing Human Resources and Payroll records. Our Human Resource management system enables us to capture and extract a range of key personnel information including data regarding ethnicity and gender. The system has a 'self-service' element that allows staff to update their personnel details at any time.

We also have a bespoke Community and Workforce Profile tool which allows us to easily view our staff profile across the equality protected characteristics. At the touch of a button, we can change this view to that of our local communities and see the demographics of people who live in those areas. This is an invaluable tool to help us

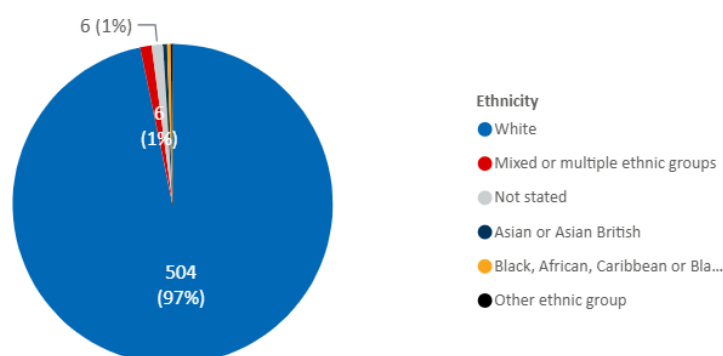
better target our prevention and recruitment campaigns to areas which have underrepresented groups.

Due to the reporting of ethnicity pay gap figures being voluntary, there are no national average figures reported to benchmark our ethnicity pay gap. However, annual figures published by the Home Office, as of 31st March 2025, relating to Fire and Rescue Service workforce diversity data suggests that across all UK fire services, 6.3% of staff are from ethnic minority groups.

Understanding the diversity of our workforce is important to us in ensuring that we create the most representative workforce to deliver services. Due to the reporting requirements and provisions, Cleveland Fire Brigade can only report the ethnicity pay gap for staff who declare their ethnicity.

Our workforce is spread across various sites and fire stations in Teesside and comprises of 521 employees as of 31st March 2025. Only 1.2% (6) of our staff have not shared their ethnicity data with us.

From those that have shared their ethnicity data:



Ethnicity	Head count	%
Asian or Asian British	2	0.4%
Black, African, Caribbean or Black British	2	0.4%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	6	1.2%
Not stated	6	1.2%
Other ethnic group	1	0.2%
White	504	96.7%
Total	521	100.0%

We acknowledge that we still have work to do to create a workforce which better reflects our local communities. We hope that our 'ethnicity and gender picture' will change and continue to grow.

Gender Pay Gap

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 came into force in March 2017. The regulations impose a requirement on public authorities to publish gender pay gap information relating to employees. Our gender pay gap information is published on both Cleveland Fire Brigade's own external website as well as the dedicated Government website.

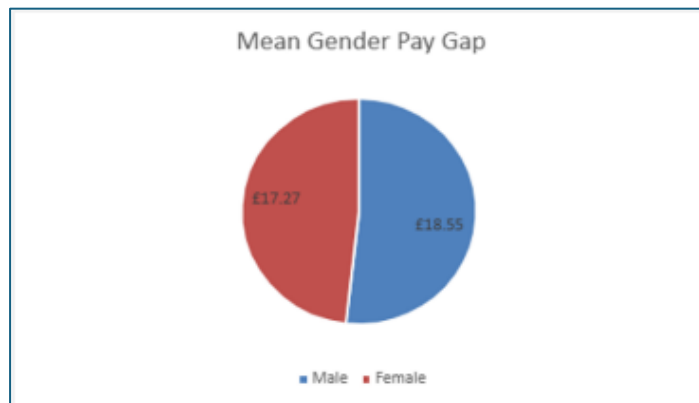
The gender pay gap refers to the difference in average pay between men and women working in an organisation. The reporting of the gender pay gap is different from equal pay reporting although they both deal with pay that women receive in the workplace. Equal Pay means that men and women doing the same job must receive equal pay. It is possible to have equality of pay, but still have a gender pay gap. We have a pay grade structure in place to ensure equal pay for those staff carrying out the same job, on the same grade with progression due to competence and not gender.

Gender pay reporting involves carrying out calculations that show the difference between the average earnings of men and women in our organisation. We use the results to assess the levels of gender equality in our workplace, the balance of male and female employees at different levels and how effectively skills are maximised. The gender pay gap is expressed as a percentage of the difference in the hourly rate of pay between males and females. There are two calculations: the mean (average) and the median (the middle point in the sample).

Measuring the gap

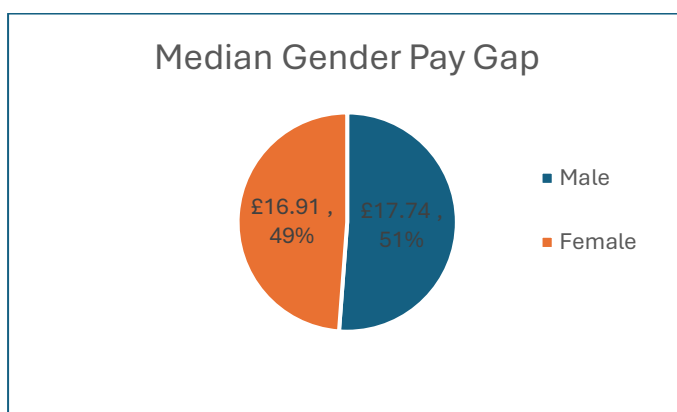
The table below shows that there is a gender pay gap of 6.9% (£1.28) across the organisation, meaning that male staff are paid more than female staff on average. This is slightly higher than last year's figure of 4.5% (£0.79).

Description	Mean Hourly Rate
Male	£18.55
Female	£17.27
Mean Gender Pay Gap	6.9%
Pay Gap	£1.28

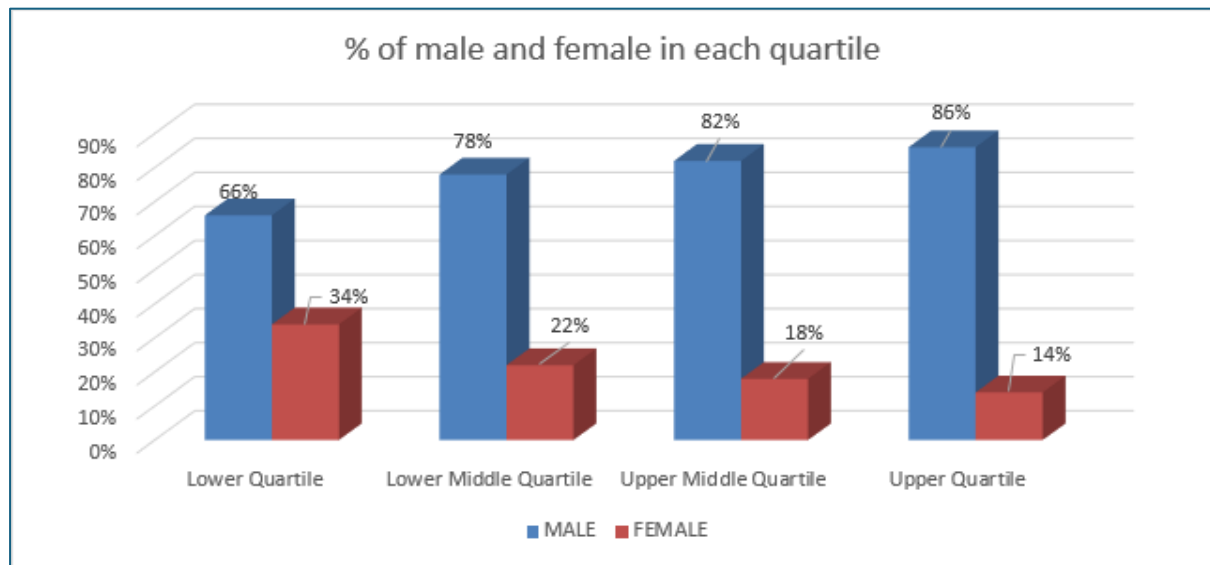


The table below shows that overall, for median hourly pay, there is a negative gender pay gap of 4.68% which is a decrease from last year’s figure of 5.0%.

Description	Median Hourly Rate
Male	£17.74
Female	£16.91
Median Gender Pay Gap	4.68%
Pay Gap	£0.83



The organisation recognises that occupational segregation within the organisation is a contributor to the gender pay gaps identified. This reflects the distribution of employees across different roles and grades and may also be influenced by wider societal and labour market factors affecting recruitment, progression and representation within the fire service. The organisation will continue to challenge barriers to employment and progression through positive action initiatives, dispel myths surrounding careers in the fire service, and promoting ourselves as an inclusive employer of choice.



Ethnicity Pay Gap

Cleveland Fire Brigade is firmly committed to reporting on 'Ethnicity Pay Gap'. Although not mandatory, we aim to continue to voluntarily report to demonstrate, as part of our wider equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, that we will ensure fairness and equality in our workplace.

Here in Cleveland Fire Brigade, we firmly believe that this is the right thing to do, and we will ensure that we will do everything we can to address any disparities in the diversity of our workforce and will strive to remove any barriers to the recruitment and retention of those under-represented groups. We continue our work in creating and maintaining a workplace which is fair and more inclusive; a place where everyone feels welcome and able to be their best; and one which makes Cleveland Fire Brigade truly an employer of choice.

Ethnicity pay reporting is an important part of being a transparent organisation. The data contained within this report, shows that we pay our employees according to their role, regardless of gender or ethnicity. We do acknowledge that we still have more work to do to improve under representation of minority ethnic groups across the whole of the workforce. Increasing the diversity profile of our staff is one of our strategic priorities over the next four years, as set out within our Culture & People Plan 2022-2026.

We are working hard to better understand, and where possible eliminate or reduce barriers to attracting, recruiting and retaining people from culturally diverse backgrounds with the aim of building a workforce which better reflects the communities we serve. Having a diverse workforce will enable us to better understand our community's needs, allow us to think in new and different ways and to approach problems differently and help us to improve our services.

We are proactively seeking opportunities to encourage cultural diversity at all levels and are working towards closing the ethnicity gap through positive targeted action beginning with our recruitment processes and ensuring that our policies provide equality of opportunity for all.

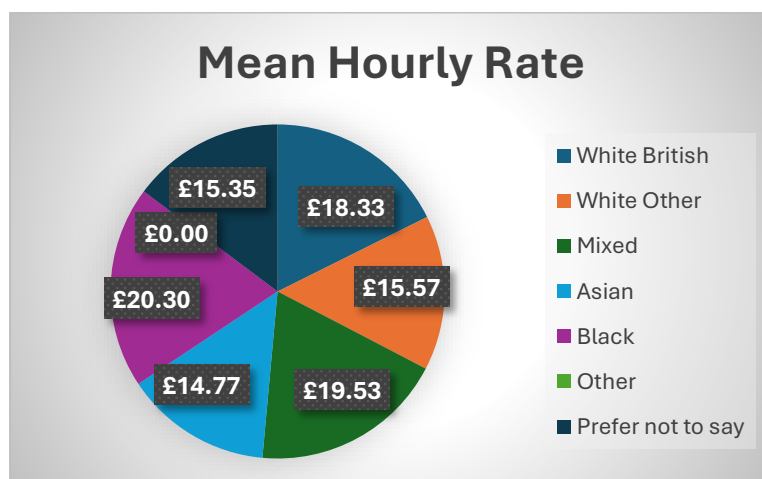
Measuring the gap

The mean ethnicity pay gap is the difference between the mean (or average) hourly rate of pay of full pay relevant employees who have identified as being in different ethnic groups. The pay gap has been calculated using White British as the comparator.

For mean hourly pay there are different results depending upon Ethnic Group, for example there are negative pay gaps of 15% for those staff who have identified as White other and negative pay gap of 19.37% for those staff identifying as Asian.

However, there are positive gaps of 10.80% for those identifying as Black, and 6.55% for those identifying as mixed race.

Description	Mean Hourly Rate	Ethnicity Pay Gap
White British	£18.33	
White Other	£15.57	-£2.75
Mixed	£19.53	£1.20
Asian	£14.77	-£3.55
Black	£20.30	£1.98
Other	£0	£0.00
Prefer not to say	£15.35	-£2.98

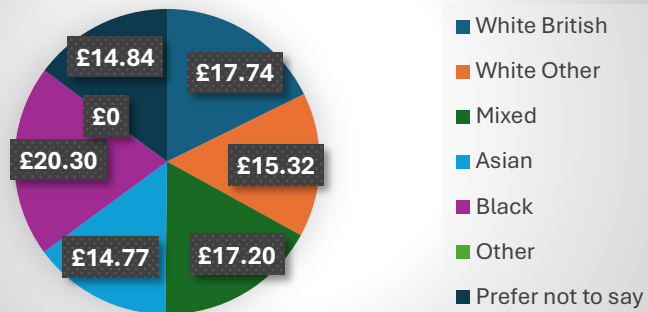


The median is the middle value in a list of values sorted in ascending order from lowest to highest. It is the data value at which 50% of data values are above it and 50% of data values are below it. The pay gap has been calculated using White British as the comparator.

Like the Mean calculation, there are different results depending on ethnicity. For example, there are negative pay gaps of 13.64% for those staff who have identified White Other, 3.04% for those identifying as mixed race and 16.74% for those identifying as Asian. However, there is a positive gap of 14.43% for those identifying as Black.

Description	Median Hourly Rate	Ethnicity Pay Gap
White British	£17.74	
White Other	£15.32	-£2.42
Mixed	£17.20	-£0.54
Asian	£14.77	-£2.97
Black	£20.30	£2.56
Other	£0	£0.00
Prefer not to say	£14.84	-£2.91

Median Hourly Rate



Addressing the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap

The organisation considers that the gender and ethnicity pay gap can best be addressed by ensuring our recruitment, development and promotion processes are free from discriminatory elements, and encourage applications from all parts of the organisation and the community. To help address under-representation within our workforce we are:

- Further developing our understanding of local community data and creating connections to identify any potential barriers to employment, busting myths and showcasing the service and its work.
- Forming partnerships with other organisations to develop benchmarking criteria and identify best practice.
- Forming partnerships with other organisations and charities to develop positive links to under-represented groups to help target positive action.
- Continue to ensure that appropriate provision is provided for all genders, including mental and physical health including the menopause and suitable domestic provisions and they are continuously reviewed.
- Acknowledging the role of those who become primary carers for children and family members. That our policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to be family friendly.
- Continue to enhance our employer brand as an inclusive employer by the words and pictures used on our adverts and social media.
- Ensuring where possible we have employees from under-represented groups supporting our positive action and recruitment activity, such as 'have a go days', point of entry physical tests and interview panels.
- The Recruitment and Selection policy and procedure will be reviewed in 2025 to ensure it remains free from discriminatory elements and actively encourages and supports applicants from all sections of the workforce and wider communities.
- Increase the number of Positive Action campaigns we undertake to encourage applicants from all sections of the community to seek employment with the organisation. Use data and evaluation to target under-represented groups.
- Working alongside, supporting and empowering our staff networks to identify and address any barriers to careers within the Fire Service and any barriers to staff progression.
- Ensure that there are equality impact assessments attached to all policies, procedures and activities including recruitment, promotion and positive action activity.

By ensuring that equality is at the heart of our pay grading, recruitment, selection, and development, the organisation will ensure equality of pay and opportunity for all employees, and seek to develop an engaged, high-quality workforce that is representative of our communities in all functions and at all levels of the organisation.

In October 2024, we celebrated Black History Month. We welcomed Kofi and Gina from Transformers Hartlepool. This is a local charity dedicated to promoting diversity and strengthening community togetherness. Staff had a great time embracing a different culture and learning about African values, traditions, norms and even traditional afrobeat dance.



Diversifying our Workforce

Cleveland Fire Brigade is committed to achieving a workforce that is representative of the community it serves, and in doing so, encourages individuals from ethnic minority groups and communities to engage with recruitment opportunities, as permitted within UK employment equality legislation.

We want to recruit talented people with a diverse range of skills and experiences, who share our values and passion in making a difference to our local communities. Recruiting from the widest pool of people will mean we can employ individuals who understand different cultures and lifestyles and are willing to use those skills to the benefit of the community and the organisation. We use 'Positive Action', which is a lawful approach within the Equality Act 2010, to develop activities which are specifically targeted to encourage applications for employment from those groups who are currently under-represented within our workforce.

Whilst we have had some success, we acknowledge that we are not yet fully representative of our local community in some parts of our workforce and will continue our work to address this imbalance through a variety of actions. Moving forward we will be making improvements to our career's portal on our website so that it is easier to access recruitment details and resources to help all potential applicants in the recruitment processes. We are also committed to continuing our work to identify barriers in all aspects of our recruitment processes as well as working to 'bust myths' that may exist, for example, how a firefighter can still observe their Muslim faith during Ramadan. Our activities are targeted to encourage applications for employment from those groups who are currently under-represented within our workforce.

Cleveland Fire Brigade has continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). During its 2018/19 inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, the service was rated 'Good' in all areas, including Ensuring Fairness and Promoting Diversity. Oversight of EDI activities is provided through a quarterly EDI Board, chaired by the Chair of Cleveland Fire Authority and attended by senior leaders and representatives from staff networks, including Women, Cultural Diversity, LGBTQ+ and Disability groups.

The service has actively engaged with diverse communities across Teesside, attending Pride events to promote fire safety, prevention initiatives and recruitment opportunities. It has also supported individuals from a range of backgrounds and abilities through its work experience programme, while outreach activities have included visits to local mosques to discuss home safety, prevention strategies and careers within the fire service.

In addition, Cleveland Fire Brigade has worked to raise awareness of career opportunities by attending local school and college careers fairs and challenging

misconceptions about working in the fire service. The organisation continues to collaborate with local and national partners, sharing best practice through networks such as the Tees Valley Inclusion Network and the Local Government Equalities Network, while also contributing to the National Fire Chiefs Council's EDI agenda.

The organisation further supports staff development and inclusion through membership of organisations such as the Asian Fire Service Association and Women in the Fire Service. Staff regularly attend events hosted by these organisations and share learning and good practice across the organisation.

Equality Impact Assessments

The organisation has an Equality Impact Assessment Policy and Procedure to ensure that equality issues are considered at the formative stages of policy development, activities and services. It ensures that each policy, procedure and activity supports the service's commitment to equality.

Equality Impact Assessments are a risk assessment tool used in evidence-based policy making and service planning; and therefore, are an integral part of good decision making by the organisation. They assist us in fully understanding the relevance and effect of policies, services, activities, and practices and in identifying the most proportionate and effective responses. Delivery of public services depends on an understanding of the diverse communities to be served, our workforce and taking account of diverse needs.

Equality Impact Assessments need to be conducted in relation to the nine protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. A key point of an impact assessment is that equality is considered as an integral part of the planning and development of policies and services.



Disability

The organisation is recognised as a disability confident leader. In November 2020, we were awarded Level 3 'Disability Confident Leader' status by the Department of Works and Pensions. Today, we continue to be accredited as a Disability Confident Leader following our successful re-submission in April 2024, meaning that we are assured that our policies and procedures support disabled people in the workplace.

As a Disability Confident Leader, we have subjected our self-assessment of this standard to external challenge and validation. We are also taking an active leadership role in encouraging and helping other employers on their journey to becoming Disability Confident Employers.



We welcome and encourage job applications from those who have a disability, and this is evidenced within all recruitment materials. To date, our workforce profile compared with our community profile tells us that: 3.6% of staff have shared that they have a disability. 10% of the local community identify as having a disability that limits their day-to-day activities a lot.

We have numerous arrangements in place to support our staff who have, or during their employment with us develop, a disability. These include access to an extensive range of occupational health services including the provision of management advice and risk assessments relating to reasonable adjustments which can be offered to help people in the workplace. By continuing to demonstrate our commitment to supporting current and future staff with regards to disabilities, we hope that our workforce data will increase to better reflect that of our local community.

Achievements

An overview of our work in 2024/2025 with regards to disability.

Over the last year we have continued to work to ensure that our workplace attracts applications from those people who have a declared disability, and to continue to support our staff who have declared their disability to us. Here are just some examples of what we have achieved:

- Continued to develop and update guidance documents which support staff and line managers to better understand the different types of conditions and how to access the most appropriate resources.
- Maintained Level A (96.7%) Accessibility Compliant against the 'Web Content Accessibility Guidelines', which is a standard to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities.
- Carried out risk assessments to identify reasonable adjustments for staff in their workplace, such as provision of screens for PC monitors to support staff with Dyslexia.
- Introduced in ear hearing aids for operational staff with hearing impairments.
- Continued to support the service's Disability Staff Network
- Promoted several national campaigns relating to disability including neurodiversity awareness.
- Facilitated and supported work placements for students from specialist educational provisions for those with neurodiversity's and learning difficulties.

Students from specialist educational provision, Catcote Academy during a work placement with us



Mental Health

The organisation is committed to supporting staff mental wellbeing.

We follow the below simple framework organised into 5 areas that we use to support the mental health of staff:

Prioritise mental health in the workplace by developing and delivering a systematic programme of activity.

- Proactively ensure work design and organisational culture drive positive mental health outcomes.
- Promote an open culture around mental health.
- Increase organisational confidence and capability.
- Provide mental health tools and support.
- Increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting.

We continue to carry out a self-assessment aligned to the actions to drive continuous improvement within the organisation to support the mental wellbeing of our staff.

Achievements

Over the last year we have continued to work to ensure that we promote and support the mental health of our staff. Here are just some examples of what we have achieved:

- 18th April 2024 we hosted a health, fitness and wellbeing conference.
- Promoted Mental Health Awareness Month (May) and Mental Health Awareness Day (October)
- Continued to deliver Trauma Risk Management (TRIMS) support to our staff involved in dealing with emergency incidents.
- Continued to provide specialist support and counselling through our Occupational Health arrangements.
- Continue to promote a dedicated crisis support line ran by the Firefighters Charity ('Suicide Crisis Line')
- Time to Talk campaign, an opportunity for staff to have conversations about mental health and listen to each other openly.
- Cadence approach and Cadence Wellbeing Scorecard

Wellbeing

Employee health and wellbeing is a strategic priority, and we have several things in place to support staff.

For many years we have acknowledged what is widely known that being in work is good for people's health and wellbeing; and that a healthy workforce is beneficial to employers too. By creating a positive, safe and healthy work environment for staff we can increase morale, improve work-life balance and, in turn, positively impact the performance of our service.

We are passionate about the health and wellbeing of our people and have, for a long time, committed resources aimed at helping to prevent people being absent from the workplace due to health reasons. Our strategies have focussed on robust sickness absence management and improved support for people's physical health and mental health, which unfortunately is becoming one of the top causes for ill health across the fire and rescue services sector and others.

Our understanding of the wellbeing needs of our workforce emanates from a range of data and intelligence sources. These include the analysis and benchmarking of employee health and wellbeing information, engagement and insight from staff, information from our Occupational Health provider and learning from others.

We have a well-established 'Health and Wellbeing Board', chaired by a member of the service's Executive Leadership Team, which meets on a quarterly basis and delivers on actions focusing on physical health, mental health and health promotion. We have a dedicated Health and Fitness Co-ordinator and have also trained a number of our staff at each location across the service as Health and Fitness Advisors, all with the aim of providing targeted health and wellbeing activities, interventions and support.

As part of our assurance model, we have subjected our health and wellbeing arrangements to external assessment which includes the 'North East Better Health at Work Award'. This award recognises the efforts of employers in the North East and Cumbria in addressing health issues within the workplace. For the last 5 years we have continued to maintain our 'Ambassador' status and in 2024 we achieved the 'Maintaining Excellence' status.



Better Health
at Work Award
Maintaining Excellence

Achievements

Over the last year we have continued to work to ensure that we promote and support the health and wellbeing of our staff. Here are just some examples of what we have achieved in 2024/2025:

- 18th April 2024 we hosted a health, fitness and wellbeing conference which included topics such as dealing with addiction, nutrition and the real world, and the health of women in the fire service.
- Achieved 'Maintaining Excellence' status, awarded by North East Better Health at Work Awards
- Promoted several health and wellbeing campaigns such as 'Dry January', World Sleep Day and World Menopause Day
- Implemented improvements to Firefighter fitness testing to better aid decision making in relation to the safe undertaking of emergency response activities.
- Entered teams into the 'British Firefighter Challenge' (Male, Female and Mixed categories)
- Continued to develop a bespoke portal on the service's intranet site, to host a range of resources and support information for staff.
- Improved nutritional information available to staff e.g. 'My Recipes' along with a section in the Health, Fitness and Wellbeing conference on nutrition and the real world
- Procurement and implantation of a new Occupational Health provider
- Participated in research with Lancaster University on trialling an online 'Menopause Toolkit'.
- We celebrated International Women's Day in March and International Men's Day in November, which included showing our support across social media platforms.

Our Staff Networks

We are clear that all staff have a part to play in ensuring we always provide an inclusive environment and a great place to work.

Equally, we understand the important role our staff networks play in helping us to create that inclusive environment, achieve change, and provide support on the employee journey for new and existing staff. As part of our strategy to create a truly inclusive workplace, employees have established staff networks with the aim of bringing people with shared characteristics together, as well as involving those who wish to support and learn about that particular community (known as Allies). We currently have four staff networks, Women, Cultural Diversity, LGBTQ+ and Disability.

Aimed at building upon our achievements within each of these areas, these groups provide an opportunity for staff to connect, share thoughts and ideas, socialise and celebrate their diversities whilst supporting one another in a safe environment. The with groups discuss issues of relevance to their communities, identify ways to engage the wider workforce in inclusion activities and ensures the organisation makes decisions which consider the impact on equality.

Staff Networks are run by the members, with support from the service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Human Resources Advisor. Each Network has selected their own Chair and established Terms of Reference which govern the remit of the group. The networks meet regularly (at least quarterly), and the Chairs of each network group are members of the service's Equality and Diversity Board. The Board, led by the Chair of the Fire Authority, provides a strategic platform to raise issues and make suggestions for change. The network Chairs also collaborate locally with network Chairs from organisations across the Tees Valley, such as other fire and rescue services, further education providers, Police and the NHS.

Summary

This report outlines our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), staff wellbeing, and compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. EDI remains embedded throughout the service's culture, policies, leadership and service delivery, supported by the Culture and People Plan and its objective to create a fair, inclusive and representative workplace.

The organisation continues to demonstrate strong performance in promoting inclusion. We were previously rated "Good" in all areas by HMICFRS in 2018/2019, including "Ensuring Fairness and Promoting Diversity", and maintains active governance through our quarterly EDI Board and staff networks representing Women, Cultural Diversity, LGBTQ+ and Disability groups. Community engagement activities during 2024/25 included attendance at Pride events, outreach with faith communities, work experience opportunities, school and college careers events, and collaboration with local and national equality networks.

As of 31 March 2025, Cleveland Fire Brigade employed 521 staff. The workforce remains less diverse than the communities it serves, with women, ethnic minority groups and disabled people underrepresented in some areas. The report notes that 3.6% of staff have declared a disability compared with 10% of the local population, while national fire sector data indicates that 26% of fire and rescue staff are female and 6.3% are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The organisation acknowledges further work is needed to achieve a workforce profile that better reflects local communities.

The report also highlights workforce equality measures. The mean gender pay gap was 6.9% in favour of male employees, while the median gender pay gap was 4.68%. Ethnicity pay gap analysis showed varying outcomes across different ethnic groups, reflecting workforce representation and occupational distribution rather than differences in pay for equal work. The organisation remains committed to addressing these gaps through inclusive recruitment, positive action initiatives, policy reviews, targeted outreach and staff development opportunities.

Significant progress has also been made in supporting disability inclusion, mental health and wellbeing. The service continues to hold Level 3 Disability Confident Leader status and has implemented workplace adjustments, accessibility improvements and targeted support for disabled staff. Mental health initiatives included Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), specialist counselling services, wellbeing campaigns and mental health awareness activities. Staff wellbeing is overseen by a dedicated Health and Wellbeing Board, supported by health and fitness advisors across the organisation. During 2024/25, the service maintained its "Maintaining Excellence" status through the North East Better Health at Work Award and delivered a range of health promotion activities.

Cleveland Fire Brigade demonstrate continued commitment to creating an inclusive, supportive and representative organisation. While recognising areas where workforce diversity does not yet reflect the communities served. The service has established clear strategies, governance arrangements and targeted actions to improve equality, diversity, inclusion, mental health and wellbeing outcomes for staff and the wider community.

We are only able to highlight the key areas of our work in relation to equality, within this document. Further information can be found on our website: www.clevelandfire.gov.uk

This report, in addition to other reports referenced, are published on the service's external website at: <http://www.clevelandfire.gov.uk>

Copies of this report are available to all departments, fire stations, partner agencies, local equality organisations and any interested parties on request.

The report will be made available in other languages, large print, Braille, audio, etc. on request. Please contact our Communications Team using the details below, if you require information about this report in an alternative format.

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