



## Freedom of Information Request FOI 18 28

### Female firefighters

#### Query:

Under the Freedom of Information Act, please supply answers to the following:

1. What percentage of your operational workforce is female?
2. How has this figure changed over the last 5 years?
3. Do you adhere to the Equality Challenge Unit's Athena SWAN Charter?
  - If "No", does the organisation follow an alternative charter with similar principles that recognises and awards commitment to and progress on gender equality and diversity?
4. What targets does the organisation have regarding increasing the percentage of operational female staff at firefighter level?
5. List any specific initiatives in place during the selection and recruitment process to attract females to the organisation. Please explain.
6. How is the organisation addressing the imbalance in the number of females in an operational firefighting role?
7. What percentage of the workforce are female in the following categories of managerial roles
  - Supervisory
  - Middle management
  - Senior management
8. What targets does the organisation have regarding increasing the percentage of operational female managerial staff?
9. How is the organisation addressing the imbalance in the number of female operational managerial staff?
10. Does your organisation allow job sharing or flexible working patterns to encourage recruitment and retention of female operational staff?
11. List initiatives in place that encourage an inclusive environment and positive culture within the workplace.
12. State how you evaluate the success/failure of these practices.

#### Response:

1. What percentage of your operational workforce is female?

**4.8% (49)**

2. How has this figure changed over the last 5 years?

**In 2013 there were 47 women in an operational workforce of 1031. Which is 4.5%**

3. Do you adhere to the Equality Challenge Unit's Athena SWAN Charter?

**No**

• If "No", does the organisation follow an alternative charter with similar principles that recognises and awards commitment to and progress on gender equality and diversity?

**In order to progress on gender equality and wider inclusion Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS) works with a number of external organisations including: Women in the Fire Service (WFS); the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA); Quiltbag and Stonewall. We take part in the annual Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and also measure ourselves against the Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework, which is overseen by the Local Government Association (LGA). More locally, in HR, historically we had 'Two Ticks' accreditation and we are currently working towards accreditation for 'Disability Confident'.**

**DWFRS is also represented at a national level on the National Fire Chiefs Council Equalities Professionals Group.**

**Internally we recognise peoples contribution to equality, diversity and inclusion through our annual staff awards ceremony.**

4. What targets does the organisation have regarding increasing the percentage of operational female staff at firefighter level?

**Although no formal targets are set for recruitment of female firefighters the Service uses positive action to encourage females and those from underrepresented groups to apply for roles. DWFRS has recently undertaken a round of recruitment of wholtime firefighters where as part of our positive action, we developed our own campaign #BeOneOfUs, aimed at attracting underrepresented groups**

5. List any specific initiatives in place during the selection and recruitment process to attract females to the organisation. Please explain.

**Six 'Have a go' days were organised at locations across Dorset and Wiltshire targeted at attracting women and members of the BM&E community, however people outside these groups who turned up were also included. These were held at Weymouth fire station, Poole fire station, Springbourne fire station, Salisbury fire station, Swindon fire station and at Trowbridge fire station. Participants were encouraged to take part in the grip strength test, the bleep test and a drill ground practical test to try out the skills required as a firefighter. The aim was to provide a safe environment for women to turn up and try the tasks with likeminded people. We had approx. 100 participants attend across the six days.**

**The campaign was advertised through emailing and dropping off posters and leaflets to various sports clubs and gyms across the two counties. Fire stations were also given leaflets and posters for crews to drop in at clubs in their areas. A PR and social media campaign, was launched in the month leading up to the events, targeting up to 6 million women with sporting interests between 18 and 45.**

**There were no advantages given to women in the selection and recruitment process. The top 16 candidates have been offered positions, which includes 2 women.**



6. How is the organisation addressing the imbalance in the number of females in an operational firefighting role?

**Through an ongoing positive action project plan. This covers the campaign documented in Q5 and other issues such as family friendly policies and station facilities. The project plan is cross referenced to recommendations from the Inclusive Fire Service Group. Further work will be done through sports clubs, gyms and schools and better mentoring of women's needs are to be considered.**

7. What percentage of the workforce are female in the following categories of managerial roles

- Supervisory
- Middle management
- Senior management

**Supervisory - Watch Managers - 4.3% (6)**

**Middle Management - Station Managers, Group Managers - 4% (2)**

**Senior Management - Area Managers and above - 0**

8. What targets does the organisation have regarding increasing the percentage of operational female managerial staff?

**There is a corporate target to increase the diversity of our operational workforce, by ensuring that 20% of recruitment is from under-represented groups, but there isn't anything specific for managerial levels.**

9. How is the organisation addressing the imbalance in the number of female operational managerial staff?

**We have plans in place to monitor trends, which include the percentage of female firefighter recruits, a management breakdown by staff group and gender and promotion statistics broken down by age and gender.**

**We are streamlining our approach to promotions, and are in the process of introducing Promotion Boards to assess uniformed candidates as part of our Development Pathways Procedure, which encourages the development and progression of staff at all levels. The development of our staff is further enhanced with a leadership development approach and strategy which is currently being refined.**

10. Does your organisation allow job sharing or flexible working patterns to encourage recruitment and retention of female operational staff?

**Requests for flexible working are considered on a case-by-case basis and are accommodated where this is possible.**

11. List initiatives in place that encourage an inclusive environment and positive culture within the workplace.

- **Support networks for staff and volunteers - Firepride (LGBT), Firepride Allies, BAME, Women, Mental Health, Disability, Men.**
- **LGBT and ME conference held on an annual basis on IDAHOBiT Day in May.**
- **All new starters to the organisation attended face to face Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training to raise awareness of Service values and behaviours.**



- **Equality, Inclusion and Cultural Change (EICCM) manager writes regular articles once a month in the service FireWire magazine to raise awareness.**
- **EICCM identifies equality and inclusion events and activities throughout the year and encourages staff and volunteers to get actively involved e.g. LGBT Pride events, Women in the Fire Service development events, etc**

12. State how you evaluate the success/failure of these practices.

**We identify the numbers of staff and volunteers actively involved in the networks and events.**

**We monitor the number of staff and volunteers who sign up to be Firepride Allies and Mind Blue Light Champions.**