

Freedom of Information request reference number: 8095.2

Date of response: 22/02/2024

Request:

This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which relates to the number of complaints made by firefighters and staff members, both current and former, who filed complaints in their stations regarding the following between November 2022 and November 2023:

- *Bullying*
- *Harassment*
- *Racial discrimination*
- *Unfair treatment*
- *Negligence*
- *Inappropriate behaviour*
- *Assault*

From November 2022 till November 2023, I would like to know the number and nature of these complaints. Ideally, this data would be presented in an Excel (.xls) format. The data can be presented in the following layout or something similar:

- *Complaints being broken down by months ranging from November 2022 till November 2023*
- *Omitting any personal data, a description of the claimant in the following sub-headings or similar: former employee, former firefighter, firefighter, staff member etc.*
- *Description of the complaint received.*
- *Date of complaint filed.*
- *Decision/Outcome date (if applicable) with a description including proposed actions, disciplinary actions, mediation sessions, tribunal hearings, settlements and/or any other actionable.*

I would like to receive this request electronically. If a substantive response to this request is not possible within a reasonable time frame, or the request is too broad or vague, I would be grateful if you could contact me and provide assistance as to how I could refine the request.

Our Response:

On the 16 November 2023, the LFB contacted you to ask you to clarify your request as your request was unclear, we asked:

1. *What is meant by 'filed in their stations'?*
2. *What is the difference between 'complaint received' and 'complaint filed'?*
3. *Where are you asking for 'complaints broken down by month' are you looking for the date of the complaint or the date the investigation began?*

You replied on the 17 November 2023 and provided some clarity to your request, you confirmed:

"I am unsure how the complaints process works at LFB. To clarify what I mean by "filed in their stations", if a staff member or firefighter were to file a complaint, I would assume they would file the complaint to

their line supervisor, HR representative, senior authority figure or equivalent at their place of work or "station.

*Complaint received - refer to complaints made by firefighters, staff members etc but received no general response, no acknowledgement
Complaint filed - refer to complaints that have received an automated or general response stating that it would be looked into but there has been not outcome as of yet. I am looking at both the date of the complaint and the date the investigation began. This can be separated by two columns if you intend to present the data in .xls format."*

Following the publication of the Independent Culture Review report, the LFC has been working to improve our workplace culture one of the recommendations at that time was to set up an external complaints service for our staff. The External Complaints Service focused on cases relating to discrimination, harassment and bullying and was running parallel with our internal disciplinary process for all other matters. Further information on the External Complaints Service can be find [here](#) this includes published data on the number of complaints and outcomes.

I can confirm we do hold disciplinary/complaints data however the current LFB Case Management system has a variety of options for recording a disciplinary case and the recording will depend on the individual case for example this could be 'inappropriate behaviour,' 'assault,' 'Harassment, etc' or one of several of the other categories, depending on the nature of the complaint. The categories are selected by the individual HR Adviser who is dealing with the case. To find out more details of the case including confirmation of the category type you would need to undertake a manual check of each individual record and review the allegations.

Working through a random selection of cases, our People Services department (HR) have confirm it takes more than two/three minutes to review cases and record the key information – this extends for complaints with a number of documents and attachments where the complainant is not always clear (for example, if the complainant is only referenced in an outcome letter as being from a member of the public). Within a grievance, there are no searchable fields to draw this information from and each file must be manually reviewed to consider the origin of any complaint. Please see the estimated table below based on the number of records identified for discipline and grievance using data recorded over a year:

Number of records/documents to review	Approx number of minutes to review each record	Total minutes to review all records/docs	Total hours (obtained from minutes)	Hourly rate (set by ICO)	Total cost
668	3	2004	33.4	£25.00	£835.00

Your request exceeds the fees limit in that to locate and extract the information would take longer than the 18 hours or cost more than £450 (each hour is costed at a set rate of £25 per hour) Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, if any part of the request exceeds the cost threshold, then the whole request will excess costs and there is no obligation to answer any part of the request.

The LFB routinely publishes high level people data on the London Data Store the reports relate to the LFB internal complaints process including disciplinary and grievance. The data covers workforce composition, including senior management/top earners data, recruitment outcomes, leavers, sickness and absence (including levels of stress, anxiety and depression (SAD), grievance, discipline, and includes breakdowns for gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual identity (orientation) and age (where such data is available) you can access the report [here](#) .

We have dealt with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. For more information about this process please see the guidance we publish about making a request [on our website](#).