

Freedom of Information request reference number: FOIA3673.1

Date of response: 17 April 2018

Request and Response:

Thank you for your request, regarding female operational staff within the UK Fire and Rescue Services, in this case the London Fire Brigade (LFB).

I have addressed each of your points in turn below:

1. *What percentage of your operational workforce is female?*
7.21%

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

+1.43%

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?*

Currently no to both questions, but a Greater London Authority (GLA) Diversity Standard is in development and the LFB is part of this work.

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

The current target for operational female staff at firefighter level is 15%.

5. *List and explain any specific initiatives in place during the selection and recruitment process to attract females to the organisation, at an operational firefighting level.*

- Research was undertaken by 'Future Thinking', to identify the reasons why women do not see the firefighter role as a career. The research data has been used to attract more women into the role. LFB are currently also looking to commission similar research for BAME communities and groups.
- The current recruitment campaign off the back of 'Future Thinking' research, is specifically targeted at increasing female applicants and ties in with the Mayor's 'Behind Every Great City' campaign. The recruitment campaigns are being marketed in diverse communities proactively, using gender and culturally aware marketing and event materials to encourage applications from women. The campaign also focuses on attracting women via digital means, including completely revamping LFB's external website, using visuals and case studies of current female operational firefighters, and social media.
- The newly reformed outreach team undertake positive action work, by running numerous open days at different venues. Some of these are inclusive, and others are open to women only. These events provide direct engagement with potential BAME and women candidates and ensure that they are provided with accurate information about the role and support with the assessments. The benefit of these are that they are offered a comfortable environment in which

- to seek advice and support with the fitness element of the assessments. They can also be provided with an enhanced, bespoke fitness programme to address any development needs.
- The #firefightingsexism campaign launched by the Fire Service Commissioner demonstrates how powerful language can be, using the term firefighter instead of fireman. This has been posted on social media initially to encourage more women to apply, as well as breaking down any stereotypes that the firefighter role is only for men. It is hoped that this will also encourage younger generations to see the role as possible career from an early age. The next step of the campaign is for our Communications department to target the vast array of media to ensure the term firefighter is used, and not fireman.
- Currently a record number of women have applied to become firefighters with over 700 female applicants, as of 16/04/18.
- All of the above is underpinned in the 'Safer Together' inclusion strategy (2016-2026).

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

Please see above responses to question 5. In addition:

The LFB has a number of support groups, who represent under-represented groups, and help raise awareness across the organisation. The Women in the Fire Service (WFS) support group has a number of female operational staff, who act as role models, and the Chair will engage in discussions around female recruitment. WFS will also support women going through promotion, helping to deliver development workshops with recruitment.

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

- Supervisory 6%
- Middle management 6%
- Senior management 17%

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

None currently.

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

- Emails are sent to operational female staff, prior to promotion rounds to promote the awareness of vacancies, and encourage applications.
- Development workshops are delivered by recruitment and the support groups.

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

Yes.

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

- LFB have established a dedicated Inclusion team, consisting of an Inclusion Manager and Inclusion Support Officer, to drive inclusion and the 'Safer Together' strategy.
- The Inclusion team has recently moved into a new Department (People Services) and new team (Cultural Change). The Cultural Change team's aim is to encourage an inclusive environment and positive culture, and again embed inclusion into the organisation.

- Workshops on the 'Safer Together' strategy were also delivered at fire stations.
- The Cultural Change team are currently commissioning unconscious bias training for operational staff, delivered by our training providers Babcock. This ties in with the Mayor's campaign.
- Currently working with other Fire Rescue Services, and are part of the Inclusive Fire Service Group (national), sharing good practice.

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

- The statistics of the number of women applying for the role of female firefighter, as well the numbers that get through the selection and recruitment process, will indicate whether the recruitment campaigns have been successful.
- As above, the same will apply for operational female staff in managerial roles.
- LFB will be assessed by the HMIC Inspectorate in the near future.
- Currently being assessed against the GLA's Diversity and Inclusion Action Standard.
- The actions within the 'Safer Together' strategy are monitored by the Inclusion team, reported to the executive and published on our website.

I hope you find the information provided of use. If you have any further questions do let me know.