



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

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| Report Title: | |
| People Services Performance Report Q4 2021-22 | |
| Report to: | Date: |
| People Board Commissioner's Board Deputy Mayor's Fire and Resilience Board | 17 May 2022 8 June 2022 28 June 2022 |
| Report author: | Name: Anna Tapp Job Title: Planning and Management Information Manager |
| Report classification: | |
| For Information | |
| The subject matter for this report deals with the following LFB strategic priorities: | |
| The best people and the best place to work | |
| The data contained in the report, and accompanying commentary, gives insight into key people related areas and provides an overview of performance against these. It also details actions being taken to enable LFB to support its people and to be the best place to work. | |
| Report number – LFC-0712 | |
| Not for Publication | |
| PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DECISION-MAKER | |

Executive Summary

The report provides detail on a range of people data including workforce composition, absence and recruitment. It sets out the challenges presented by the data and improvements since the previous report and sets out areas of focus and action going forward. Following a request from November 2021 People Board, the Q4 report also contains data on self-isolation rates and vaccine statuses.

Recommended decisions

That the Commissioner's Board notes the performance data in this report together with the supplementary data in Appendix 1 and 2.

The report is presented to the Deputy Mayor for information.

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This bi-annual report provides information and commentary on a range of key performance outcomes for the six months to the end of Q4 2021-2022. Data referred to in the body of the report can be found in Appendix 1 – Key People Data unless referenced to Appendix 2.
- 1.2 Further to the Q1-Q2 2021 – 22 report, London Fire Commissioner (LFC) continues to work to end the use of the acronym 'BAME'. Following discussion between People Services, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Black and Ethnic Minority Members (BEMM) representative, the Chair of Fairness and Employee Support Groups, a preferred term of 'minority ethnic' has been proposed to the Greater London Authority (GLA) for progression with their own networks.

2 Objectives and Expected Outcomes

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Board on performance against various key People Services' areas.

3 Establishment and Vacancies (Table 1)

- 3.1 Operational staff vacancies have increased over the year due to the firefighter recruitment freeze (lifted in January 2022) and higher than usual retirements. Establishment Board closely monitors operational vacancies. Future forecasts show that vacancy levels will begin to improve from June 2022 onwards, as trainees and firefighter transferees start to be posted to station. Agreement of the pension framework is likely to see high numbers of staff retiring (between 180 and 260 depending on the implementation date) which will offset some of these gains. However, agreed savings targets require vacancies of 296 to be maintained for operational staff in 2022-23.
- 3.2 Improvement in the number of fire and rescue staff (FRS) vacancies has slowed down since 2021-22 Q3, in part due to an increase in permanent FRS staff leaving the brigade with joiners failing to keep pace.
- 3.3 Commensurate pay is also a factor in filling vacancies as the organisation does not offer market rates for specialist roles such as General Counsel's Department (GCD) and Information Technology (IT). This can result in posts taking longer to recruit to and being filled with agency staff. A review of FRS pay structure has been committed to, with high level options to be presented by the end of 22/23.

4 Workforce Composition (Tables 2-4)

- 4.1 The percentage of operational staff from under-represented groups has increased slightly over the year (Table 2). However, staff numbers across all groups have decreased over the year due to retirements and other leavers (apart from an increase of 1 for the staff identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB)). In the same period there have only been 49 joiners. As the majority of leavers are white men the workforce composition has changed leading to increases in the percentages of under-represented groups.

- 4.2 With firefighter recruitment restarting, an improvement in firefighter numbers should be seen in 2022-23. Outreach activity has also restarted with people attending online information sessions to then be progressed to assessment. 783 individuals have been passed through to the LFC assessment centre via Outreach - of these 42 percent are women and 46 percent are people from BAME groups.
- 4.3 As shown in Table 3 there have been small increases for some FRS under-represented groups.
- 4.4 For Control staff (Table 4) there has been a small increase in BAME workforce composition from 13.5 percent to 14.3 percent. Due to concerns about workforce composition in Control, the Equity, Change and Togetherness Panel was formed in 2021 to identify ways to improve diversity. Further detail is provided in 11.6.
- 4.5 In the draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) the gender and ethnic diversity targets, plus stretch targets, have been agreed for trainee firefighter intakes. Stretch targets for gender and ethnicity have also been agreed for the FRS Top Management Group. These targets will be reflected in the Corporate Performance reporting.

5 Workforce composition: comparison data (Table 5)

- 5.1 People Board previously requested that benchmarking and comparator data is included in this report. Therefore, a range of data is provided in Table 5 for the London working age population census data, English Fire and Rescue Services (FRS), the Metropolitan Police (MP) and the Greater London Authority (GLA).
- 5.2 The information in Table 5 shows that the percentage of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff (LGB) in the Brigade compares favourably with the London working age population percentage of people from this group, with all staff groups exceeding the London figure of 3.8 percent. For BAME outcomes, LFC staff representation in all staff groups is below the London population (37 percent). The FRS group is closest to the London population figure, at 29.3 percent.
- 5.3 When compared to other FRS, London has the highest representation across all under-represented groups for operational staff.
- 5.4 Comparators to the Metropolitan Police (MP) are provided. This shows a higher percentage of women in their police officer group at 31 percent compared to LFC at 9.4 percent if compared to LFC's operational workforce (all ranks). Although the barriers to joining LFC will be different to the MP, it does demonstrate the continued work required by LFC to attract more women.
- 5.5 The MP Control staff group has a more diverse ethnic make-up (36.4 percent), compared to LFC Control (14.3 percent).
- 5.6 If comparing GLA data to LFC's FRS workforce, given the roles will be broadly similar, the GLA has slightly better outcomes for BAME and LGB under-represented groups but a lower representation of disabled staff. Their workforce is 60 percent female compared to LFC at 50.7 percent.

6 Workforce composition: senior management (Tables 6 – 8)

- 6.1 The percentage of BAME operational staff in senior management has decreased slightly. Four employees have retired from this group and whilst there were positive outcomes in the Group

Commander process in this period, the Station Commander round saw no BAME staff being appointed from 4 applicants (86 applicants in total and 28 appointed).

- 6.2 There has been an increase in the percentage of FRS BAME staff in senior management from 11.8 percent to 15.3 percent.
- 6.3 There are no BAME staff reported in Control senior management; a group of 12 people.
- 6.4 Action being taken to improve these outcomes is detailed in the Recruitment section at 12.

7 Sickness absence (Tables 9-13)

- 7.1 Sickness rates have increased for operational staff (5.34 percent to 8.21 percent) and FRS staff (2.88 percent to 3.71 percent). Control staff sickness has remained between 6.3 to 6.7 percent. All sickness levels are above target, with one of the main reasons being Covid-19.
- 7.2 Table 12 shows that there has been a greater increase in short-term sickness than long-term sickness. It has doubled for operational staff (1.5 percent to 3.3 percent) and FRS staff (0.6 percent to 1.1 percent). This is likely due to Covid sickness resulting in short-term absences.
- 7.3 Sickness due to stress, anxiety and depression (SAD) (Table 13) has decreased over the last 12 months for all staff groups particularly for FRS and Control (40.72 percent to 27.92 percent for FRS, 35.4 percent to 13.27 percent for Control).
- 7.4 This is believed to be a result of a range of influences, including the government/media coverage "normalising" Covid-19 so people feel less anxious; the LFC new Working with Choice policy; having more Mental Health First Aiders (100+); communications to the workforce about mental health awareness information and a general better understanding of mental health by managers.

8 Comparison data

- 8.1 Comparison data has been provided by the Metropolitan Police (Table 14). The rolling 12-month sickness rate for police officers is 4 percent, 11.6 percent for MP Control, 4.9 percent for MP support staff and for PCSO it is 6.8 percent. LFC FRS and Control sickness is therefore lower than MP and operational sickness is higher if compared to police officers or PCSOs.
- 8.2 The National Fire and Rescue Service Sickness Absence Report Q3 2021-22 reports that LFC has the 3rd highest operational sickness rate (out of 38 reporting FRS). LFC's sickness rate is 15th out of 30 reporting FRS for Control and 22nd out of 38 for FRS staff. This shows that there is scope for improvement when compared to other FRS. However, it is noted that some FRS have not reported Covid sickness in their returns which makes a direct comparison difficult.

9 Covid-19 information

- 9.1 At the previous People Board on 25 November 2021, it was requested that data be included in this report on employee vaccine status and self-isolation numbers. Current figures show that 949 staff are fully vaccinated and 13 have responded that they are not. Therefore, most staff have chosen not to disclose this information.

- 9.2 Self-isolation data is provided on page 12, Appendix 2 and shows that peak levels of self-isolation in 2021-22 were in Q2 and Q3 (8553 and 8179 lost working days). Q4 saw a reduction (4922) although still higher than Q1 (3010). The only staff now expecting to be self-isolating is prior medical procedures.

10 Grievance and Discipline (Appendix 2, p 14-15)

- 10.1 25 percent of grievances (2 of 8) raised by operational staff in the period were by BAME staff (all men). This is higher than the BAME workforce composition of 14.8 percent. All other grievances from operational staff were from white men.
- 10.2 Discipline cases for BAME operational staff were 19 percent of cases (4 out of 21) which is a higher percentage than BAME operational workforce composition. However, this has reduced since the Q2 report where this figure was 30.1 percent.

11 Recruitment

Firefighter (Table 15)

- 11.1 Three processes are reflected in Table 16 (with a detailed breakdown on p.17 of Appendix 2). A small number of candidates are still completing final stages in each one. The majority of outcomes for under-represented groups were less than the applicant representation. Some differences were small, whereas other outcomes dropped off more. For example, in Process FF0008 female applicants represented 31.5 per cent of the total but only 17.6 per cent of successful candidates.
- 11.2 LFC has engaged consultants to carry out an external review of the current firefighter process (particularly for adverse impacts to any protected characteristic), and to support the re-design of a new, up to date selection process. It is estimated this project will be ready to implement from September 2022.

Junior officer

- 11.3 There were no junior officer processes in the period. Leading Firefighter and Sub Officer processes are currently in progress. Station Officer will be advertised in May.

Senior officer (Table 16)

- 11.4 There were recruitment processes at Station Commander, Group Commander, Deputy Assistant Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner in the period. Outcomes for female applicants were positive; 5.1 percent of applicants being female, and 5.5 percent successful. There was a slight drop for BAME and LGB applicants compared to the percentage successful and a greater drop off for disabled applicants with 11.8% applying and 4.4% successful.

Control (Table 17)

- 11.5 There were a small number of appointments in the period. Outcomes for LGB and Disabled applicants were positive with 8.1 percent of applicants from both groups and 12.5 percent appointed. BAME applicants represented 47.6 percent of applicants but only 25 percent of those appointed.

- 11.6 The Equity Change and Togetherness Panel (ECTP) has carried out positive action with the Outreach team for recent recruitment rounds which will result in a more diverse group of recruits starting in June. The ECTP is looking at how to continue this engagement, improve on positive action and support individuals once they have joined, such as providing a MHFA buddy and exploring some of the barriers for new people such as a 9-5 training course for a shift-based job.

FRS (Tables 18-19)

- 11.7 Overall, for grades FRS B to FRS E, the number of females appointed was less than applicant representation; 44.7 percent of applicants compared to 37.6 percent appointed. BAME outcomes dropped off more with 49 percent applying and 29 percent successful. The outcome for BAME was better at FRS B with applicants of 45.6 percent with 47.6 percent appointed. Therefore, a drop off of applicants, when compared to appointments, was at FRS D and FRS E.
- 11.8 At the senior level of FRS F to Director, outcomes for female applicants, LGB and disabled applicants were excellent. For example, 31.4 percent of applicants were female with 56 percent appointed. BAME applicants had a less positive outcome with 36.2 percent applying and 24 percent appointed.

12 Recruitment action and performance measures

- 12.1 People Services is currently recruiting to its Head of Recruitment and Resourcing role. This post will be key in leading on the recruitment and resourcing strategy for the LFB, working with stakeholders to design and deliver recruitment campaigns to ensure the Brigade attracts and retains diverse talent at all levels of the organisation. This role will put in place strategies to start to address under-representation in various parts of the organisation.
- 12.2 The LFC Risk Register includes a new risk on workforce planning for FRS and Control and will be a focus going forward, with controls put in place to better manage this risk.
- 12.3 Over the next few months, the new People Partners will be taking up their roles and will be working with departments to look at their diversity. They will work closely with the Recruitment and Resourcing manager using data analysis to ensure better diversity outcomes.
- 12.4 Going forward People Services will be establishing a set of performance measures which will include a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) against the recruitment plan. These will be put in place once the Head of Recruitment and Resourcing is in role.

13 Equality comments

- 13.1 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience are required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when taking decisions. This in broad terms involves understanding the potential impact of policy and decisions on different people, taking this into account and then evidencing how decisions were reached.
- 13.2 It is important to note that consideration of the Public Sector Equality Duty is not a one-off task. The duty must be fulfilled before taking a decision, at the time of taking a decision, and after the decision has been taken.
- 13.3 The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the requirements to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), race (ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, and sexual orientation.
- 13.4 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision-takers in the exercise of all their functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 13.5 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic where those disadvantages are connected to that characteristic
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
 - encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- 13.6 The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- 13.7 Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
- tackle prejudice
 - promote understanding.
- 13.8 As part of ongoing CRMP discussions, LFC is introducing stretch targets which will expand on the current diversity targets around recruitment.

14 Other Considerations

Workforce comments

- 14.1 The subject of this report is Workforce data. As this is an information report there has been no prior staff side consultation on its contents. There is ongoing staff side engagement on a number of themes within this report, e.g. establishment and vacancies, recruitment, Covid sickness, and the report will be shared with staff side in advance of Fire and Resilience Board on 28 June 2022.

Sustainability comments

- 14.2 There are no sustainability implications associated with this report.

Procurement comments

- 14.3 There are no procurement implications associated with this report.

Financial comments

- 14.4 This report provides an update on performance across the People Services department. This includes vacancy levels set out at paragraph 3 of this report.
- 14.5 The report sets out a number of issues that will impact and be considered as part of the regular financial position reporting. These include the impact of FRS and Operational staff vacancies and increasing staff absences due to sickness, which has a direct impact on overtime levels.

Legal comments

- 14.6 This is a performance monitoring report for information only, therefore no direct legal implications arise.
- 14.7 Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the London Fire Commissioner (the "Commissioner") is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office.
- 14.8 Section 327A (5) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 ('GLA Act') requires the Commissioner to secure that the London Fire Brigade is efficient and effective. The Mayor must hold the Commissioner to account for the exercise of its functions in accordance with Section 327A (8) of the GLA Act.
- 14.9 The Performance Report (Q4 2021/22) sets out in detail how key areas of the People Services Department including workforce composition, attendance and discipline and grievance are performing.

List of Appendices

| Appendix | Title | Open or confidential |
|----------|--|----------------------|
| 1. | Key People Data - People Services Bi-Annual Performance Report Q3 - Q4 2021-22 | Open |

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|----|---|------|
| 2. | Full Dataset - People Services Bi-Annual Performance Report Q3 - Q4 2021-22 | Open |
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Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – NO

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| <p>ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:</p> <p>Drafting officer Anna Tapp has drafted this report and confirms the following:</p> <p>Assistant Director/Head of Service Kate Bonham has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to Board for consideration.</p> <p>Advice The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal;</p> <p>Hameera Darr, Legal Advisor, on behalf of General Counsel (Head of Law and Monitoring Officer)</p> <p>David O'Sullivan, Financial Advisor, on behalf of the Chief Finance Officer</p> | <p>Drafting officer to confirm the following (ü)</p> |
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Appendix 1: Key People Data

All data referred to in the body of the report is contained in this appendix.

Table 1: Vacancies by occupational Q4 2020-21 to Q4 2021-22

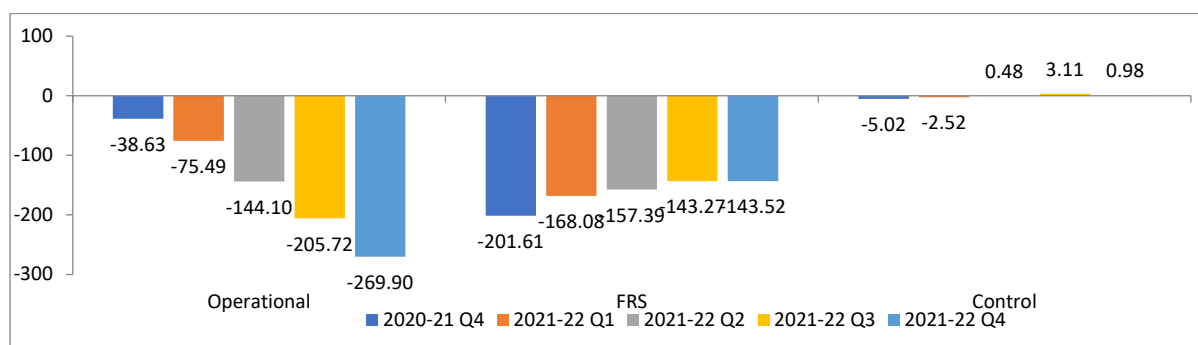


Table 2: Operational Workforce Composition, from Q4 2018-19

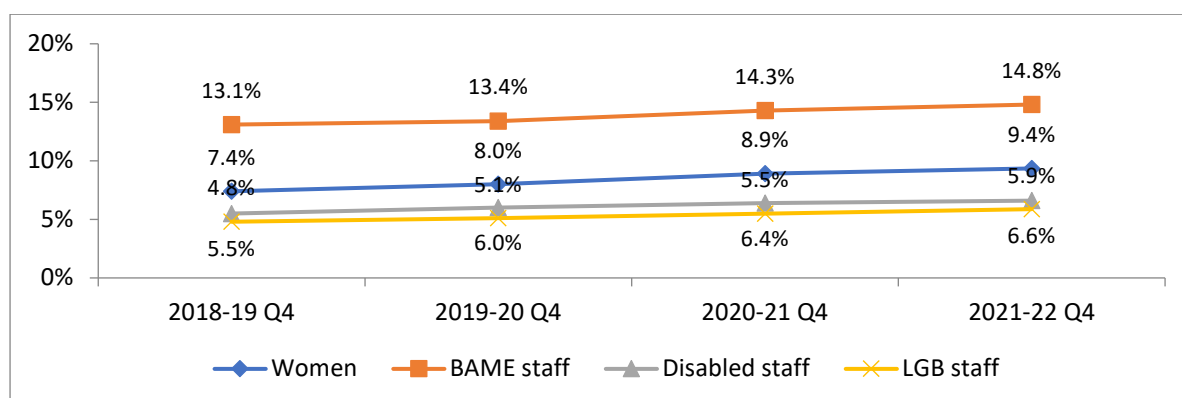


Table 3: FRS Workforce Composition, from Q4 2018-19

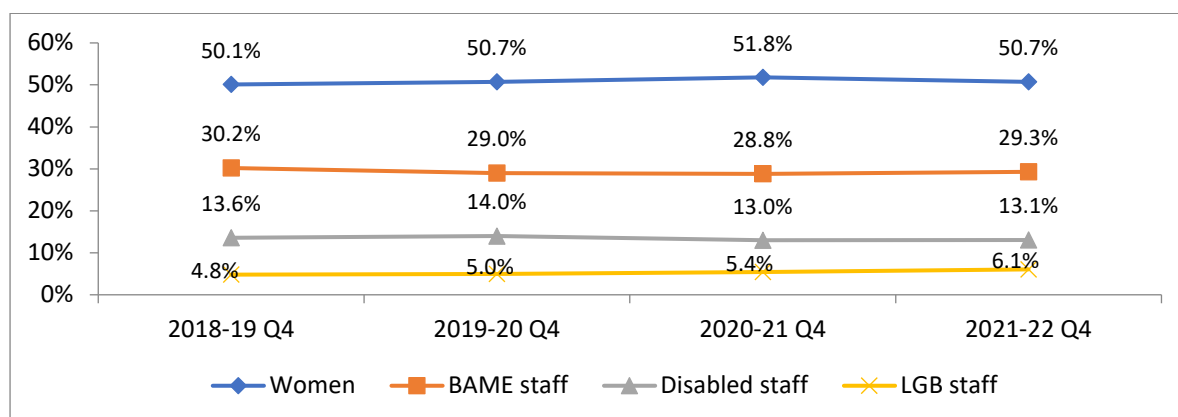
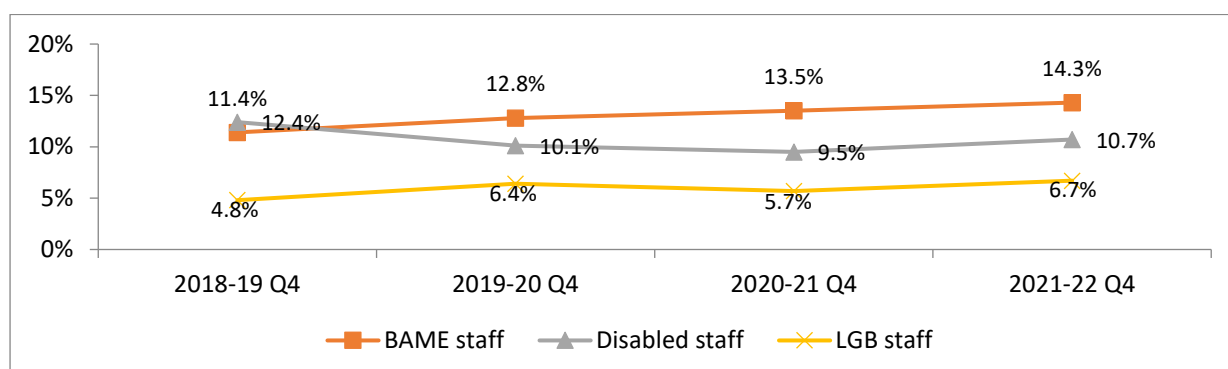


Table 4: Control Workforce Composition, from Q4 2018-19



For display purposes female Control is not shown. Female composition is 76.8 percent compared to 76.9 percent in Q4 20/21.

Table 5: Workforce Comparison Data

| | London Working Age Pop. | England FRSs - operational | England FRSs - all staff | Met Police - Officers | Met Police - support staff | Met Police - Control | GLA - all staff |
|----------|--|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| BAME | 37.0% | 4.7% | 5.3% | 16.3% | 25.3% | 36.4% | 31.0% |
| Disabled | 16.0% | 4.0% | 5.1% | 0.1%* | 1.9% | 1.2% | 7.0% |
| Female | 49.5% | 7.5% | 18.0% | 31.0% | 56.5% | 72.1% | 60.0% |
| LGB | 3.8% | 3.4% | 3.4% | 2.8%* | 1.2% | 1.5% | 8.0% |
| | Source: ONS Annual Population Survey 2019 (LGB) and 2020 | Source: Fire and Rescue Workforce and Pension Statistics March 2021 | | Source: HR Dept, Met Police Mar. 22 | | | Source: GLA Workforce Report Sept 21 |

Table 6: Workforce Composition Senior Management: Operational

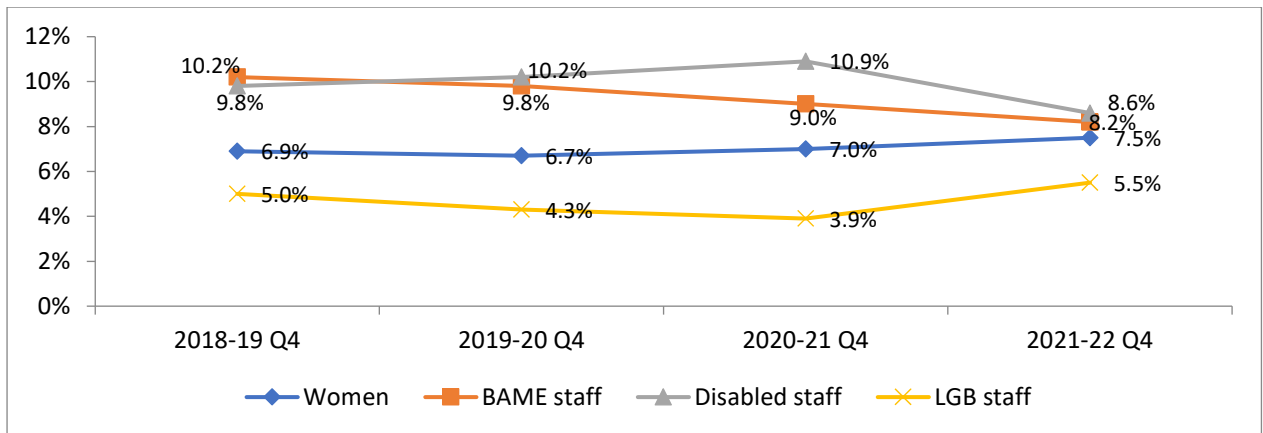


Table 7: Workforce Composition Senior Management: FRS

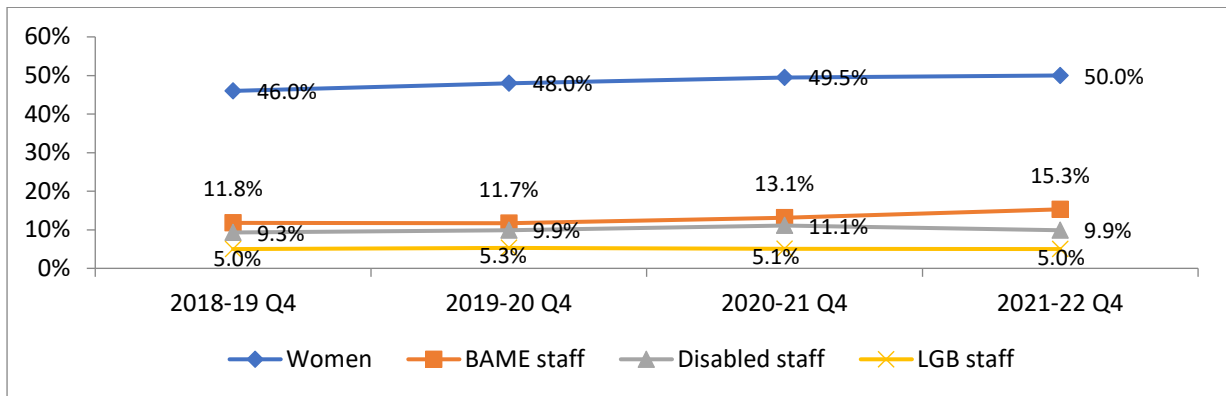


Table 8: Workforce Composition Senior Management: Control

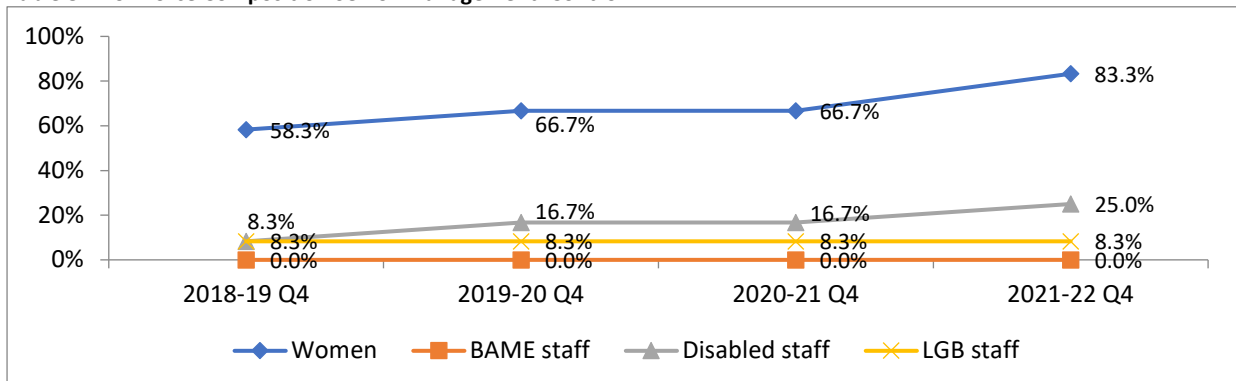


Table 9: Operational sickness, rolling 12 months

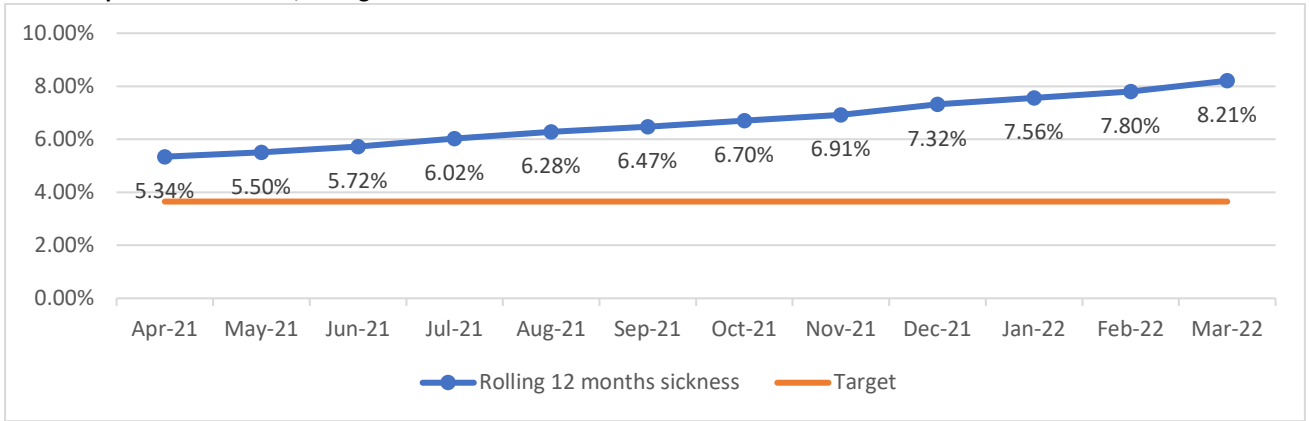


Table 10: FRS sickness, rolling 12 months

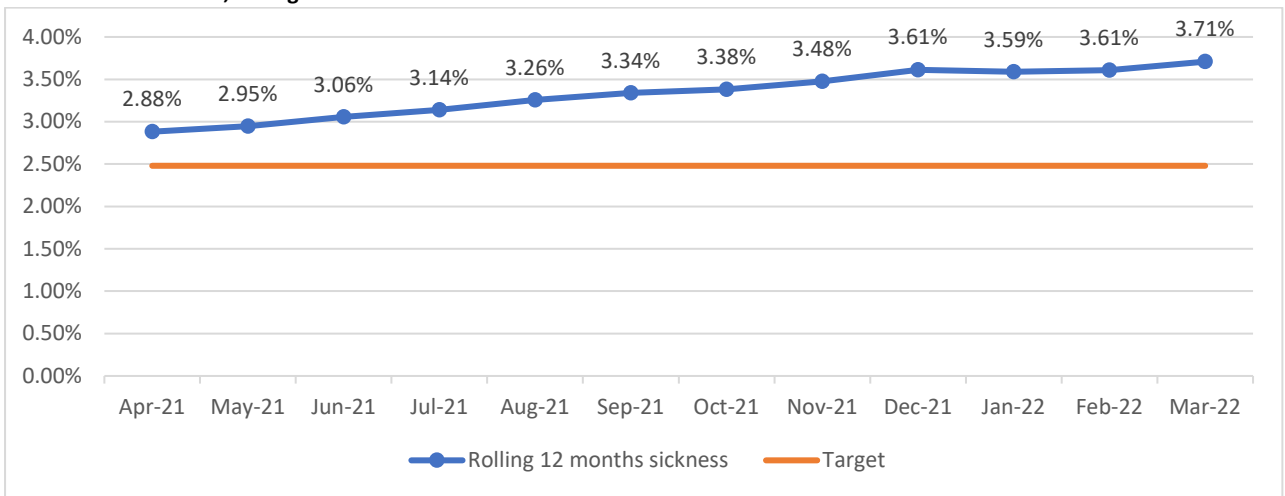


Table 11: Control sickness, rolling 12 months

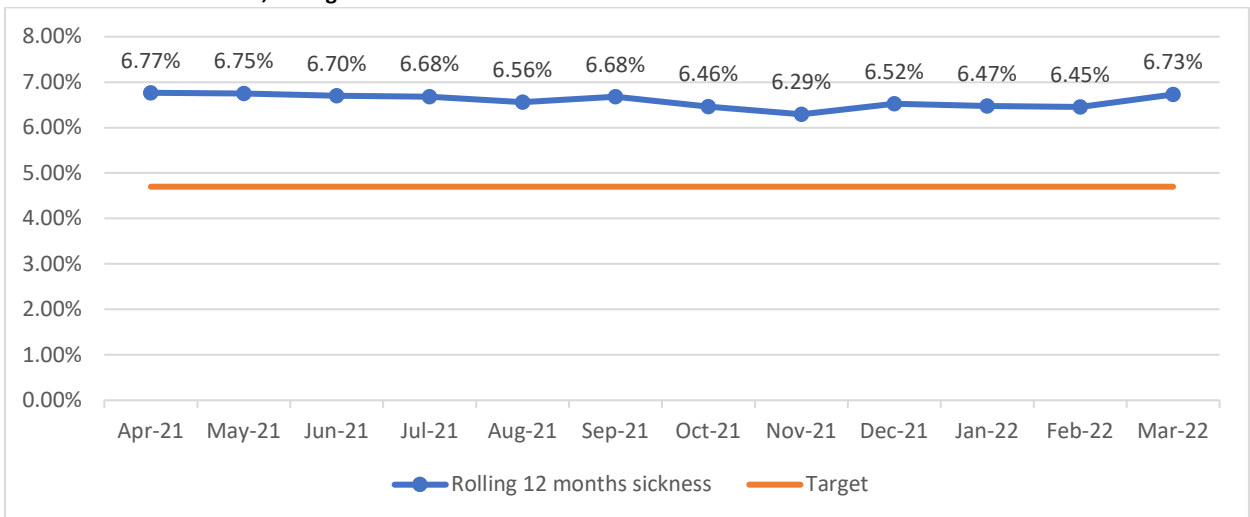


Table 12: Sickness by long-term/short-term: all staff groups

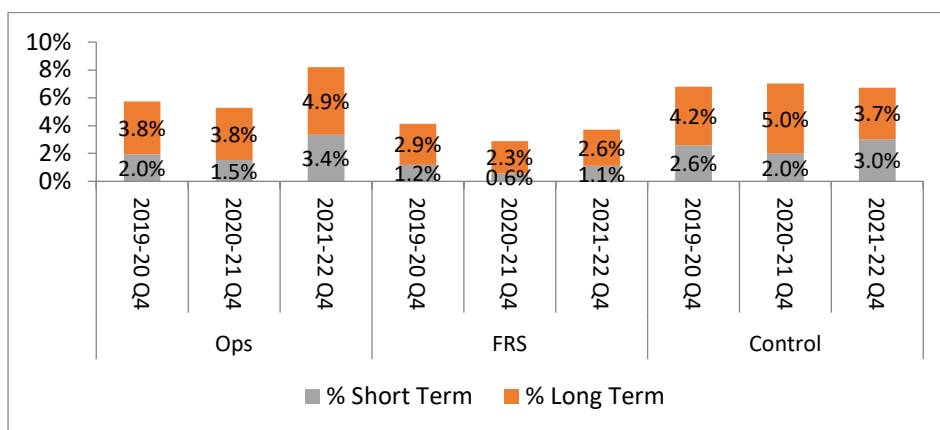


Table 13: Sickness due to Stress, Anxiety and Depression (SAD) by occupational group

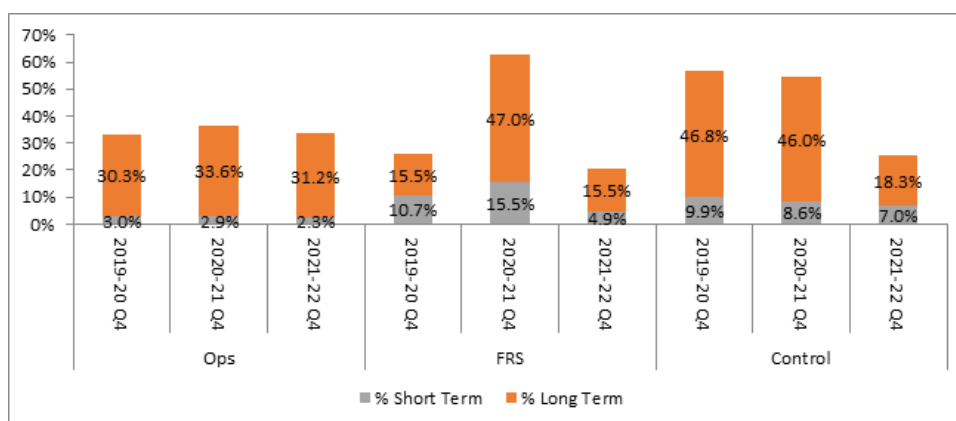
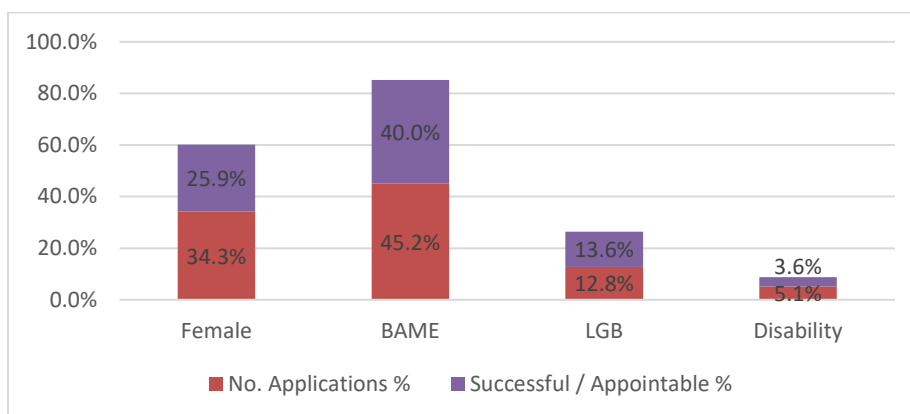


Table 14: Metropolitan Police rolling 12-month sickness

| Rolling 12 months sickness | % Time lost total |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Police Officers | 4.0% |
| Police Control Staff | 11.6% |
| Other Support Staff | 4.9% |
| PCSO | 6.8% |

Table 15: Firefighter recruitment outcomes

Process FF0007 (August 2019), Process FF0008 (March 2020), Process FF0009 (August 2020)



(Process FF0007 (August 2019), Process FF0008 (March 2020), Process FF0009 (August 2020))

Table 16: Senior officer recruitment outcomes

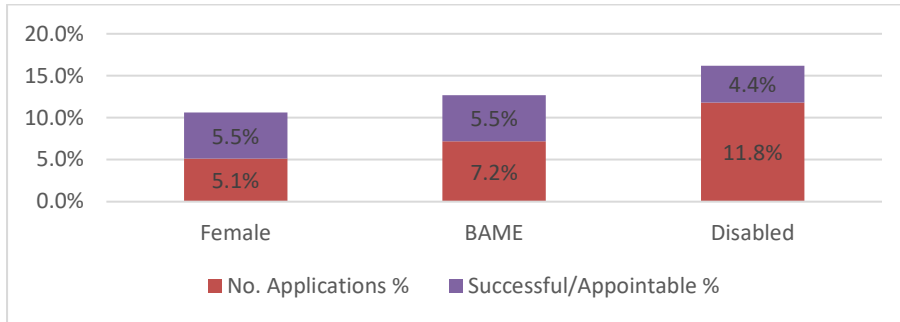


Table 17: Control staff recruitment outcomes

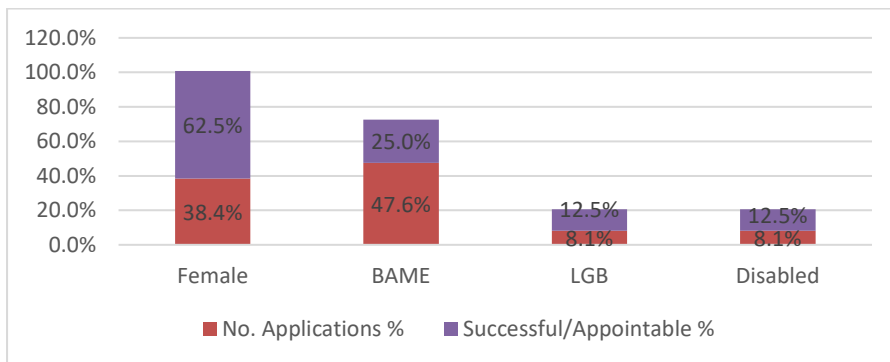


Table 18: FRS staff B-E recruitment outcomes

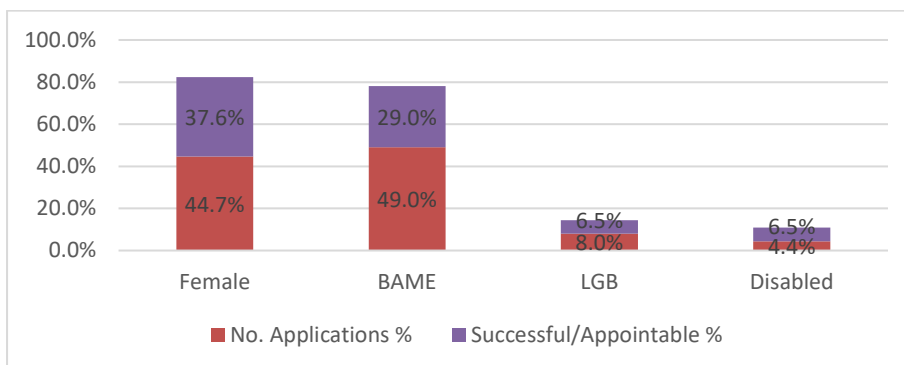
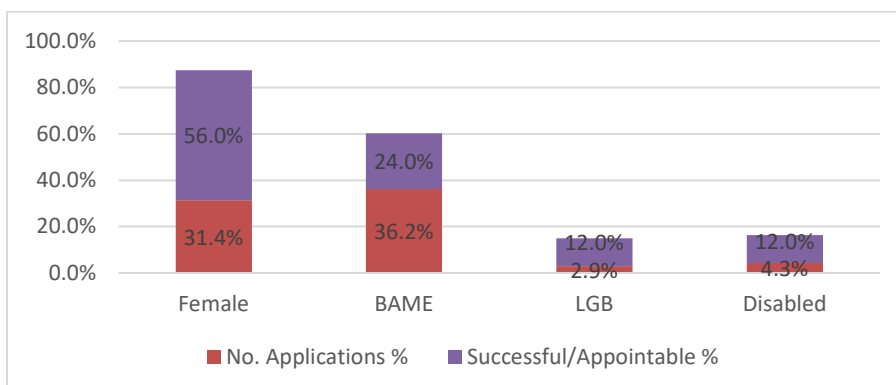


Table 19: FRS staff F – Director outcomes



A further breakdown by individual grade and rank can be found in Appendix 2. Some LGB outcomes have been removed due to small numbers of declarations.