

## Wholetime Recruitment

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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#### 1 Purpose of Report

This report provides the Standards and Human Resources Committee with an update on the recruitment programme for wholetime fire fighters undertaken in 2016.

#### 2 Recommendations

The Standards and Human Resources Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of the report, and
- b) Agree to use the statistical information gathered to shape positive action and strategy for future recruitment.

#### 3 Background

In March 2015, Senior Management Team agreed the recruitment of 12 wholetime firefighters to take place in 2016, this was to provide a resilient staffing model and improve corporate health issues identified following a lack of recruitment over a six year period

#### 4 Recruitment details

Between April 2016 and August 2016, the Service undertook a wholetime recruitment programme. The timeline was driven by the planned departure of watch based staff from Hereford and Worcester Fire Service (HWFRS) seconded into Shropshire during 2014.

In order to develop some consistency across the region, the recruitment team worked closely with West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) utilising their experience, guidance on what scoring mechanisms should be adopted, application of pass marks and positive action.

An additional benefit of using the online system supported by WMFS has been the generation of quality statistics, providing gender, ethnicity and disability breakdown along with drop-out rates through each element of recruitment (see Appendix A).

Given the importance of selecting from as wide pool as possible, the Service did not apply postcode restrictions. The Application Stage remained open for a 14 day period during which time 1,529 individuals completed the application.

The wholetime recruitment process can be broken down into a number of component elements.

## **Element 1**

### **Stage 1. Online Application**

To reduce the internal burden of dealing with large scale applications, the Service utilised an online application system supported by WMFS. There were two elements to this initial sift; firstly an application form, which if successfully completed allowed individuals to move to the second element, the Online Written Assessment.

The breakdown of applicants was 80% male totalling 1,334 individuals (4% were black and minority ethnic (BME) = 61 individuals).  
11% female totalling 186 individuals plus 9% gender not declared.

227 people failed the application stage, leaving 1,302 to advance through to Stage 2.

### **Stage 2. Online Written Assessment**

This incorporated four online tests designed to identify strengths in numeracy, literacy, situational judgement and risk assessment. This element proved to be the area with the highest dropout rate, only 283 applicants successfully completed all four tests.

The breakdown of successful applicants following Stage 2 male 254, BME 17, female 28, 1 not declared.

## **Element 2**

### **Job Related Tests (JRTs)**

The JRTs element of recruitment had the largest impact on the resources within the Service. Over a six day period, with the support of a minimum of 10 staff per day, 120 of the applicants who scored the highest through the online tests were invited to undertake the JRTs.

To ensure those who attended for JRTs were the same individuals who completed the online assessments, applicants were required to re-sit the numeracy and literacy elements prior to undertaking the JRTs.

Following marking, 43 applicants failed to achieve the necessary minimum standard, or achieve a score within a tolerance of - 2 from their online result and were subsequently sifted out.

Following completion of the JRTs, 61 applicants were successful.  
The breakdown of successful applicants was male 58 (BME 4), female 3.

A number of applicants did not respond to JRT invitations, 18 males and 7 females. This is now being followed up with the females concerned to see if the reasons can be identified.

### **Element 3**

#### **Interview and Fitness Test**

Over 10 days, two interview panels interviewed 57 of the top performing applicants. Given a high dropout rate during fitness tests, applicants also undertook fitness tests after their interview. This reduced the dropout rate at medical.

Interviews were based on personal qualities and attributes (PQAs), with panels being chaired by Area Managers or Group Managers, with the support of Station Managers and HR Officers. The breakdown of successful applicants following interview; male 49 (BME 4), female 3.

### **Element 4**

#### **Medical**

12 top performing applicants at interview were invited to attend for medicals and, upon successful completion, were offered a contract of employment.

The subsequent composition of the recruits' course was 11 males and one female, including eight retained personnel and none who were from the BME community.

## **5 Organisational Learning**

Following completion of the recruitment programme, what learning has been generated?

Given the number of applications (over 1,500 applications for 12 posts), it remains clear that the role of a firefighter is considered an attractive career. Following the delivery of a number of Positive Action days in the run up to recruitment, the Service experienced a disappointingly low number of applications from females and those from the BME communities (245 out of 1,529). This remains a challenge for the Service moving forward.

A significant proportion of applicants were from a retained background; this may lead to a situation whereby the Service recruits the best prepared individuals as opposed to the best individuals.

There were issues highlighted around medicals being undertaken prior to job offers, this restricted the Service's ability to have a reserve list of applicants.

Recruiting individuals from across the country opens up a wider recruitment pool, however the Service may encounter a negative retention rate compared to the recruitment of people from within the County boundary. This could be further exacerbated given the number of recruits with an RDS background currently employed by other fire services.

## **6 Costings**

The overall cost of delivering the recruitment programme is estimated at around £32,170. A breakdown can be seen in Appendix B.

## **7 Conclusions**

Wholetime recruitment is one of the most important activities the Service undertakes, with the potential for individuals to remain in the Service for a forty year period. As such the Service has invested a considerable amount of time, finances and staff in ensuring its success. Through the recruitment the Service has achieved one of its background aims, to support a resilient staffing model moving towards 2020. In terms of improving corporate health, this will not be evident within the short term and should be seen as a medium to long term objective.

## **8 Legal Comment**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **9 Initial Impact Assessment**

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

## **10 Equality Impact Assessment**

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Equality Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

## **11 Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

Wholetime Recruitment - Analysis of Statistics

### **Appendix B**

Wholetime Recruitment Costs.

## **12 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.

## Wholetime Recruitment – Analysis of Statistics

Stage	Gender Breakdown			Ethnicity Breakdown			Disability Breakdown		
	Male	Female	Prefer not to say/Not Declared	White	BME	Prefer not to say/Not Declared	Yes	No	Prefer not to say/Not Declared
Initial Registration to site (1,679)	80% (1,345)	11% (187)	9% (147)	87% (1,462)	4% (61)	9% (156)	2% (35)	90% (1,506)	8% (138)
Completed Application (1,529)	87% (1,334)	12% (186)	1% (9)	95% (1,450)	4% (61)	1% (18)	2% (35)	98% (1,494)	0
Did not Complete Application (150)	7% (11)	1% (1)	92% (138)	8% (12)	0% (0)	92% (138)	0	8% (12)	92% (138)
Application Successful (1,302)	87% (1,136)	12% (159)	1% (7)	95% (1,236)	4% (52)	1% (14)	2% (27)	98% (1,275)	0
Application Unsuccessful (227)	87% (198)	12% (27)	1% (2)	94% (214)	4% (9)	2% (4)	4% (8)	96% (219)	0
Successfully passed written assessments (283)	89.7% (254)	9.9% (28)	0.4% (1)	93% (263)	6% (17)	1% (3)	1% (4)	99% (279)	0
Failed 1 or more written assessments (1,019)	86% (882)	13% (131)	1% (6)	95.5% (973)	3.4% (35)	1.1% (11)	2% (23)	98% (996)	0
Failed Risk Assessment (427)	89% (380)	10% (43)	1% (4)	94% (400)	4% (20)	2% (7)	2% (9)	98% (418)	0
Failed Situational Judgement (641)	85.8% (550)	13.7% (88)	0.5% (3)	95% (609)	4% (24)	1% (8)	2% (16)	98% (625)	0
Failed Verbal Assessment (434)	85% (369)	14% (62)	1% (3)	95% (412)	4% (18)	1% (4)	3% (12)	97% (422)	0

Stage	Gender Breakdown			Ethnicity Breakdown			Disability Breakdown		
	Male	Female	Prefer not to say/Not Declared	White	BME	Prefer not to say/Not Declared	Yes	No	Prefer not to say/Not Declared
Failed Numerical Assessment (654)	85% (557)	14% (93)	1% (4)	96% (625)	3% (22)	1% (7)	3% (17)	97% (637)	0
Attended JRTs & Re-sit of Assessments (124)	94% (116)	6% (8)	0	90% (111)	9% (12)	1% (1)	1% (1)	99% (123)	0
Successful at re-sit of assessments (81)	94% (76)	6% (5)	0	89% (72)	10% (8)	1% (1)	0	100% (81)	0
Unsuccessful at re-sit of assessments (43)	93% (40)	7% (3)	0	91% (39)	9% (4)	0	100% (1)	0	0
Successfully passed JRTs (61)	95% (58)	5% (3)	0	93% (57)	7% (4)	0	NA	NA	NA
Failed JRTs (20)	90% (18)	10% (2)	0	75% (15)	20% (4)	5% (1)	NA	NA	NA
Failed Equipment Carry (2)	0	100% (2)	0	100% (2)	0	0	NA	NA	NA
Failed Confined Space (13)	100% (13)	0	0	69% (9)	31% (4)	0	NA	NA	NA
Failed Ladder Climb (2)	100% (2)	0	0	50% (1)	50% (1)	0	NA	NA	NA
Failed Casualty Evac. 0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Failed Ladder Lift 0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Failed Equipment Assembly (11)	100% (11)	0	0	82% (9)	9% (1)	9% (1)	NA	NA	NA

Stage	Gender Breakdown			Ethnicity Breakdown			Disability Breakdown		
	Male	Female	Prefer not to say/Not Declared	White	BME	Prefer not to say/Not Declared	Yes	No	Prefer not to say/Not Declared
Attended Interview & Fitness (57)	95% (54)	5% (3)	0	93% (53)	7% (4)	0	NA	NA	NA
Successfully passed fitness (53)	94% (50)	6% (3)	0	92% (49)	6% (4)	0	NA	NA	NA
Unsuccessful at fitness (4)	100% (4)	0	0	100% (4)	0	0	NA	NA	NA
Successfully passed interview (52)	94% (49)	6% (3)	0	92% (48)	8% (4)	0	NA	NA	NA
Unsuccessful at interview (1)	100% (1)	0	0	100% (1)	0	0	NA	NA	NA
Top 12 offered positions	92% (11)	8% (1)	0	100% (12)	0	0	NA	NA	NA

## Withdrew from Process

28 people withdrew from the process:

21 Men

7 Women

Of the 21 men, 18 failed to respond to invites to JRTs, one declined the invite to JRTs and 2 declined the invitation to interview.

All 7 women failed to respond to invites to JRTs

Of the 28 who withdrew from the process, the ethnicity breakdown was:

27 White

1 BME

Of the 27 White individuals, 26 failed to respond to invites to JRTs and 2 declined the invitation to interview

The one BME individual declined the invitation to interview

### Wholetime Recruitment Costs

Stage	Employees involved	Cost
Online site	WMFRS	£7,000
JRTs	1 x SM (6 days)	£916
	6 x WM (Training) (6 days)	£4,819
	3 x GST (6 days)	£2,409
	3 x RSO (6 days)	£2,070
	1 x HRO (6 days)	£584
	1 x HRA (6 days)	£433
	2 x GD (6 days)	£399
	Interview	2 x GM (8 days)
2 x SM (10 days)		£3,056
1 x AM (2 days)		£413
2 x HRO (10 days)		£994
2 x HRA (10 days)		£722
Fitness		1 x Instructor (10 days)
Medical	1 x OHN (3 days)	£690
	1 x OHP (3 days)	£2,850
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>£32,170</b>