Hampshire & Isle of Wight
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Annual Statement of Equality

April 2025 – March 2026

About this report

This report provides an overview of our progress against our Equality Objectives between 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 as outlined in ‘Our Inclusive Service’ strategy.

As the final year of our 4-year objectives, this report also reflects on wider progress we have made towards them.

Our Equality Objectives for 2022 – 2026 are:

- Inclusive
- Representative
- Respectful
- Accessible

We have specific duties under the Equality Act 2010 to publish Equality Objectives every four years and provide an annual update of our progress against these.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

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Our Inclusive Service Objectives

Priority 1
Inclusive

We will create a great place to work for all. We will have a culture where we can be authentic, feel valued and supported to thrive. Our inclusive environment means we value each other's contributions and can attract, recruit and retain the most diverse range of thoughts, experiences, skills and talent.

Examples of success:

- Promoting inclusive leadership throughout the organisation.
- Our people are supportive of inclusion and take actions to be inclusive in their own teams and in provision of services.
- Developing workforce awareness of our responsibilities in relation to legislation.
- Providing training and support to all those who work for, or on behalf of, our Service to achieve their understanding of our values and behaviours and an appreciation of their responsibilities in demonstrating them.

Priority 2
Representative

To become more representative, we will improve the quality of our equality information year on year. We will use data and insight to identify, understand and address disparities and under representation to support our commitment to reflect the diversity of our community.

Examples of success:

- EDI data is transparent and is used intentionally by leaders to drive strategy and inform plans and decision making.
- HIWFRS is an employer of choice across all of our communities.
- Our leaders are personally driving EDI within their own teams and corporately.
- Improved representation of our communities at all levels of our organisation.

Priority 3
Respectful

We will treat each other and those we work with outside our organisation with respect every day. Respect at work means taking personal responsibility for living our values and holding each other to account by having honest, respectful conversations when we do not role model our behaviours.

Examples of success:

- Accountability and measurement are integrated into all decision-making processes through People Impact Assessments.
- Inclusion fosters engagement and an organisational culture aligned with strategy, brand and social responsibility.
- Our values and behaviours are role modelled and diversity and inclusion are embedded into HR and business systems and processes.
- Colleagues conducting themselves in accordance with our Service values and behaviours, the Core Code of Ethics and our Code of Conduct.

Priority 4
Accessible

We will ensure our services are accessible to all parts of our community. We will engage with stakeholders and partners to understand different community needs to deliver accessible, local services.

Examples of success:

- Recognition for being a leader in diversity and inclusion.
- External brand and internal brand are aligned.
- Cultural intelligence* and community insights are integral to learning activities.
- Responsive access to individual needs is central to organisational strategies.
- Organisational diversity flourishes through integration.
- Working with our people to remove barriers that prevent our staff from reaching their full potential.

Equality Objective Performance Overview

% of our workforce are female

% of our workforce is ethnically non-white

% of our workforce have recorded a disability

% of our workforce have recorded their sexuality as not heterosexual

% of our workforce have recorded a religion

Inclusive

- 90% — Completion rate of Banter, Bullying & Harassment training
- 853 — Individuals trained face-to-face in EDI content
- 91% — Completion rate of an Intro to EDI training
- 65% — Completion rate of Healthy Team Cultures training
- 14 — Neurodiversity assessment referrals (down 68%)

Respectful

- 82% — Completion rate of Sexual Harassment Prevention training
- 1183 — HR casework and query volume in 2025/26, down 3% vs 2024/25
- 54 — Number of opened HR disciplinary cases (excluding queries), down 8% vs 2024/25
- 26 — SaySo reports, (down 10% vs 2024/25 (29) and down 24% vs 2023/24 (34))

Representative

- 64% — Disclosure rate: Sexuality
- 280 — Combined network group membership (up 27%) (FireENABLE, FireREACH, FireINSPIRE, FirePROUD, FireFORCES)
- 66% — Disclosure rate: Religion
- 60% — Disclosure rate: Disability

Accessible

Fire Home Safety visits to...

- 5% — ethnicity not White
- 31% — Aged 85 years or older
- 60% — Female

In terms of incident casualties ...

- 5% — of RTC casualties — Are from non-white ethnicities
- 12% — of fire casualties
- 54% — of RTC casualties — are male
- 66% — of fire casualties

In-line with the Home Office approach in workforce diversity statistics, these figures are calculated with those not disclosing the information excluded

Hampshire & Isle of Wight FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Measuring Success & Delivery

THE WAY WE WORK TOGETHER

Our Values and Behaviours and the NFCC's Core Code of Ethics inform our everyday actions and guide us in everything we do.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Service has several overarching strategic priorities, setting key aims, objectives, and priorities to work towards over multiple years.

DECISION MAKING

Our strategy informs the decisions we make in our annual planning cycle, ensuring the actions we take are focused on achieving our objectives and priorities.

Our objectives state both our commitment and the expected impact of achieving them to allow us to regularly review our progress and evaluate their success.

Success is measured through transparent use of EDI data, improved representation and retention of diverse groups, increased staff confidence and engagement, and recognition for leadership in inclusion. Cultural intelligence and community insights will be integral to learning activities and service delivery.

Our commitment to these objectives is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. As part of this duty, we publish equality information annually. Progress upon our Equality Objectives is reported to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority.

The responsibility for delivering these objectives does not sit with one singular department, team or group of individuals. We all have a role to play in shaping our inclusive culture.

The EDI, Wellbeing & Culture Committee, comprised of our Heads of Service Team, provide strategic advice and oversight towards achieving these objectives. Our Network Groups also play a key role, providing advice and championing implementation of these objectives.

These objectives will be integrated into our Annual Planning Cycle, ensuring all Service activities are aligned in their contribution towards them. Consistent benchmarking and assurance through People Impact Assessments, Pulse Surveys, and feedback mechanisms ensures accountability and continuous improvement towards our objectives.

Equality Objective 1 - Inclusive

Key statistics [2025-2026]

Training completion rates:

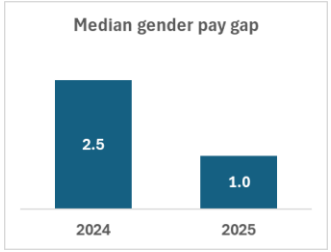
- Introduction to EDI - **91%**
- Banter, Bullying & Harassment - **90%**
- Healthy Team Cultures - **65%**

EDI & Wellbeing casework:

- EDI - **96** active cases
- Wellbeing – **77** active cases

Neurodiversity support:

- Dyslexia Assessments – **3** completed
- Neurodiversity Skills & Support Sessions –**11** completed



Also, as reported publicly via gov.uk, our median gender pay gap has positively reduced

Progress toward this objective [2022-2026]

- We have developed workforce awareness of inclusion in relation to the legislation through consistent messaging and education.
- We have provided face-to-face training to our staff giving a comprehensive overview of EDI and Wellbeing topics.
- Our people continue to take action to build psychological safety within their teams.
- Significant progress has been made in helping individuals with diverse needs access the tools that support them effectively, through the Reasonable Adjustment procedure and Neurodiversity Assessments where required.

Key Initiatives [2025-2026]

- All staff have continued to complete mandatory EDI training which has developed our workforce knowledge and understanding of inclusion.
- The HR team have introduced training for all managers to ensure understanding and consistency of management procedures and recruitment.
- Non-mandatory 'Suicide and Self-Harm Awareness and Deescalation' training to build confidence in supporting individuals in crisis has also been launched by the Wellbeing team.
- Finally, the use of the Personal Support Passport App has been expanded to include wider circumstances such as caring responsibilities and bereavement.

Next steps

- We will take the next step from 'Inclusive' to being 'equitable through understanding individual needs'.
- HIWFRS will continue to provide the tools our staff need, encourage our staff to use them, and proactively identify inequality in the workplace. This will include implementing a menopause action plan and optimising the people impact assessment process.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Key statistics [2025-2026]

Demographic data:

- **20%** of our workforce are female
- **2%** of our workforce is ethnically non-white
- **8%** of our workforce have recorded a disability
- **7%** of our workforce have recorded their sexuality as not heterosexual
- **37%** of our workforce have recorded a religion

Staff Network Groups:

- A total of **280** members across all 5 groups (26% annual growth).

Key Initiatives [2025-2026]

- Established the '*Your Service, Your Say*' resident engagement panel, providing insight into our activities and campaigns. It has around 300 members with two surveys undertaken to date.
- The creation of a 5th Network Group FireFORCES has improved representation and visibility of armed forces personnel and veterans.
- Community Events attended or marked include local Prides, Mela Festivals, Neurodiversity Celebration Week, and International Men's & Women's days

Progress toward this objective [2022-2026]

- We have established baseline workforce data and improved monitoring and reporting of workforce demographics and disclosure rates.
- We have observed improvements in disclosure rates, increased female representation[16,22], and rising staff network group membership[15]. Despite improvements in disclosure rates information across all protected characteristics, several (disability, religion and sexuality) have lower rates of disclosure, below that of other English FRSs.
- We have continued to build our understanding of barriers to representation within HIWFRS to inform further targeted and evidence-led positive action initiatives.

Next steps

- Efforts to improve the disclosure of protected characteristics will continue, with communications and greater engagement across the Service's network groups.
- The new objective 'Representative of our Communities' will build on the observed progress of this objective, expanding activity to include representation through engagement and understanding as well as employment, alongside strengthening positive action initiatives for both Operational and Support Staff recruitment.

In-line with the Home Office approach in workforce diversity statistics, these figures are calculated with those not disclosing the information excluded

Equality Objective 3 - Respectful

Key statistics [2025-2026]

- 1183 HR cases and queries in 2025/26, down 3% vs 2024/25 (1214).
- 54 new (opened) HR disciplinary cases, down 8% vs 2024/25 (59).
- Sexual Harassment Prevention training - **82%** completion rate
- **26** SaySo reports submitted, down 10% vs 2024/25 (29) and down 24% vs 2023/24 (34)

Key Initiatives [2025-2026]

- High completion rates of the mandatory Sexual Harassment Prevention training have strengthened awareness of legal responsibilities and individual roles in fostering an open and inclusive culture.
- The Service has achieved White Ribbon accreditation and is progressing delivery of its action plan, demonstrating commitment to preventing Violence Against Women and Girls.
- Mental Health First Aiders have been reintroduced to improve access to support, and a refreshed Recognition approach ensures colleague contributions are acknowledged in line with sector best practice.

Progress toward this objective [2022-2026]

- Our Values and Behaviours have been embedded into our processes and systems, including recruitment and promotion pathways.
- Continuing efforts to evolve our culture have ensured all colleagues understand their role in maintaining a respectful workplace.
- Considerable progress has been made in fostering engagement in both organisational and cultural change through measures such as Pulse Surveys, Healthy Team Cultures training, the Wellbeing group and the Culture, Ethics & Behaviour Group.

Next steps

- We will build on the work completed with our new objective to be 'accountable to each other', aligning with one of our three areas of focus 'culture & connectivity'. This will include building on trust and effective collaboration through work on connectivity.
- Future work will support us to hold ourselves and each other to the high standards of the Service through initiatives such as further integrating our equality objectives into planning frameworks and using data from Pulse Surveys to improve confidence in reporting behaviour that falls outside of our values.

Equality Objective 4 - Accessible

Key statistics [2025-2026]

- **32** Stage 2 People Impact Assessments were completed for the change activities and PPGs across the service
- The PSP app continues to be well utilised, with **53** individuals using the new app and sharing with **6** people per PSP on average
- The rate of Fire Home Safety visits remained largely the same between all ethnicities.
- Residents over 85 years of age were **10x** more likely to receive a Home Fire Safety Visit.

Progress toward this objective [2022-2026]

- Clearer reasonable adjustment guidance & process and updating the PSP app have empowered managers to address accessibility challenges within their teams and support individual needs.
- Introduction of Arctic Shores in whole time recruitment has increased the accessibility of our assessments and allowed greater clarity on reasonable adjustments
- Increased utilisation of Fire Home Safety Visit , incident, and workforce data to identify accessibility barriers to inform more inclusive service delivery.

Key Initiatives [2025-2026]

- Updating the Reasonable Adjustment guidance and process has helped remove barriers and support access for staff with different needs.
- Our People & Culture Dashboard advancements now allow us to use our resources in the most effective way to help the staff most in need.
- Personal Supportive Passports (PSPs) have enabled individuals to communicate access needs and receive more consistent support.
- Use of Home Fire Safety visits[29], incident and workforce data has improved understanding of accessibility risks and outcomes.

Next steps

- *Accessible by design* builds on the Accessibility objective by embedding accessibility into planning and delivery from the outset, rather than relying on reactive adjustments. It focuses on anticipating barriers early, reducing the need for individual interventions, and creating more consistent inclusive outcomes for staff and communities.

Appendices

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Equality Objective 1
INCLUSIVE

Inclusive

Hampshire & Isle of Wight
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Equality Objective 1 - Inclusive

Update on progress: 2025/26 data headlines

91% Completion rate of an Introduction to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training session

90% Completion rate of Banter, Bullying & Harassment training session

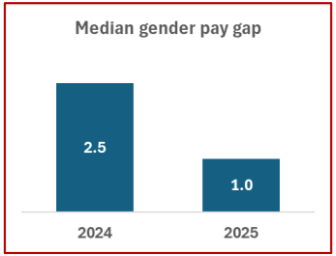
65% Completion rate of Healthy Team Cultures training session. This session was launched January 2025

106 Approximate number of equality, diversity and inclusion face-to-face training courses delivered

853 Individuals who received training

96 Equality, diversity, and inclusion casework volume in 2025/26. This is a decrease of 15% from the previous year. This may be due to changes in the team structure and size. Predominate themes remained Reasonable Adjustment advice and Neurodiversity support

77 Wellbeing casework volume in 2025/26 – this is a 12.5% decrease from 2024/25. The majority of cases were related to mental health. Anxiety, low mood, PTSD, bereavement and work-related stress were key themes.



Also, as reported publicly via gov.uk, our median gender pay gap has positively reduced.

This means that in the Service women's median hourly pay was 1.0% lower than men's – this means they earned 99p for every £1 that men earn when comparing median hourly pay. In 2024, the median hourly pay was 2.5% lower than men's

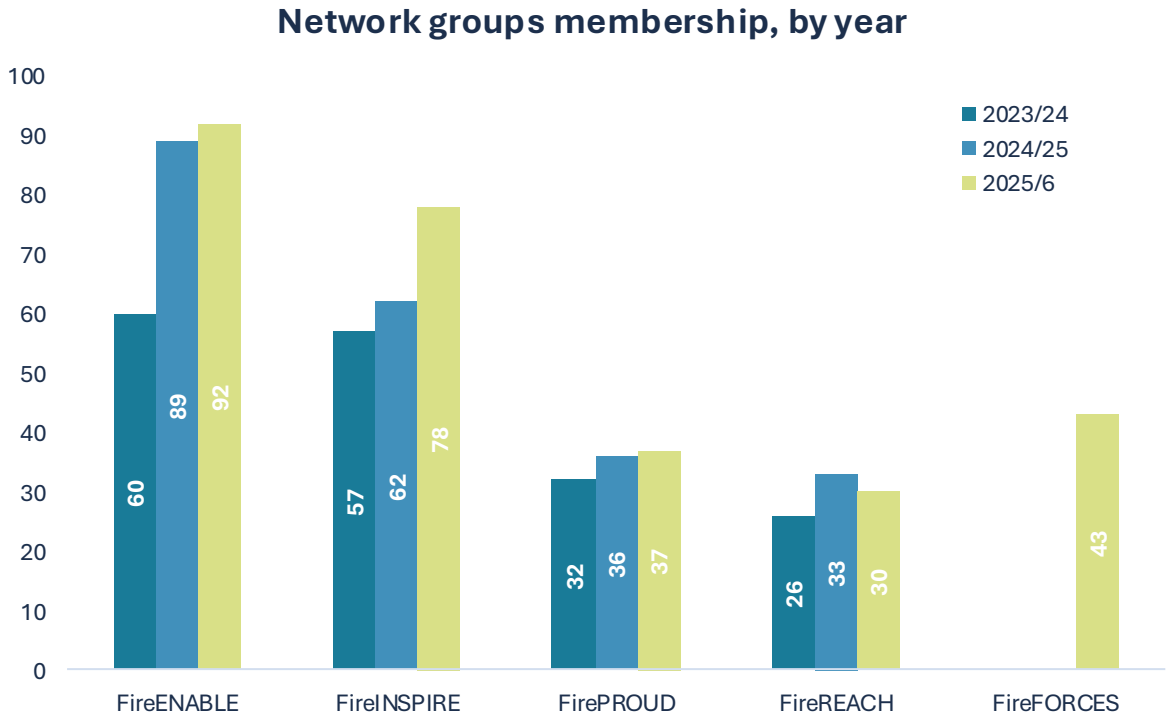
Equality Objective 2
REPRESENTATIVE

Representati
ve

Hampshire & Isle of Wight
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Staff network group membership over time



Staff network groups are useful ways for people with similar characteristics or passions, to meet, discuss their lived experiences and share community-specific insights together.

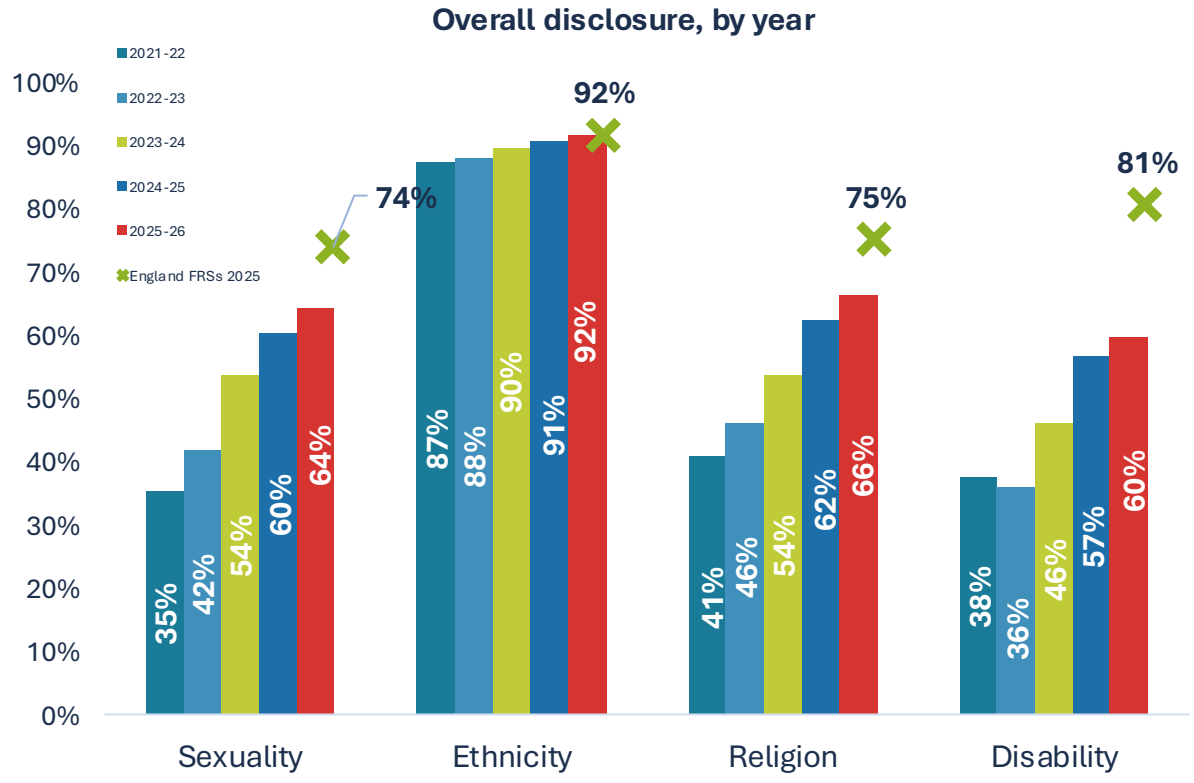
The network groups are powerful tools in which people can come together and feel comfortable disclosing personal characteristics to peers and undoubtedly assist the Service in terms of increased disclosure rates.

Since 2023, there has been a marked rise in network group membership and engagement, following their official relaunch in May 2023. The groups input into Service changes, attend external events, and release internal comms campaigns.

In 2025/26, the Network Groups saw a 26% rise in membership from the previous year, representing a positive continual improvement of network membership, particularly boosted by the creation of FireFORCES in September 2025.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Continued 2025/26 data headlines: diversity disclosure rates



We are making progress in our overall disclosure rates, but we remain behind the national average on all but ethnicity disclosure.

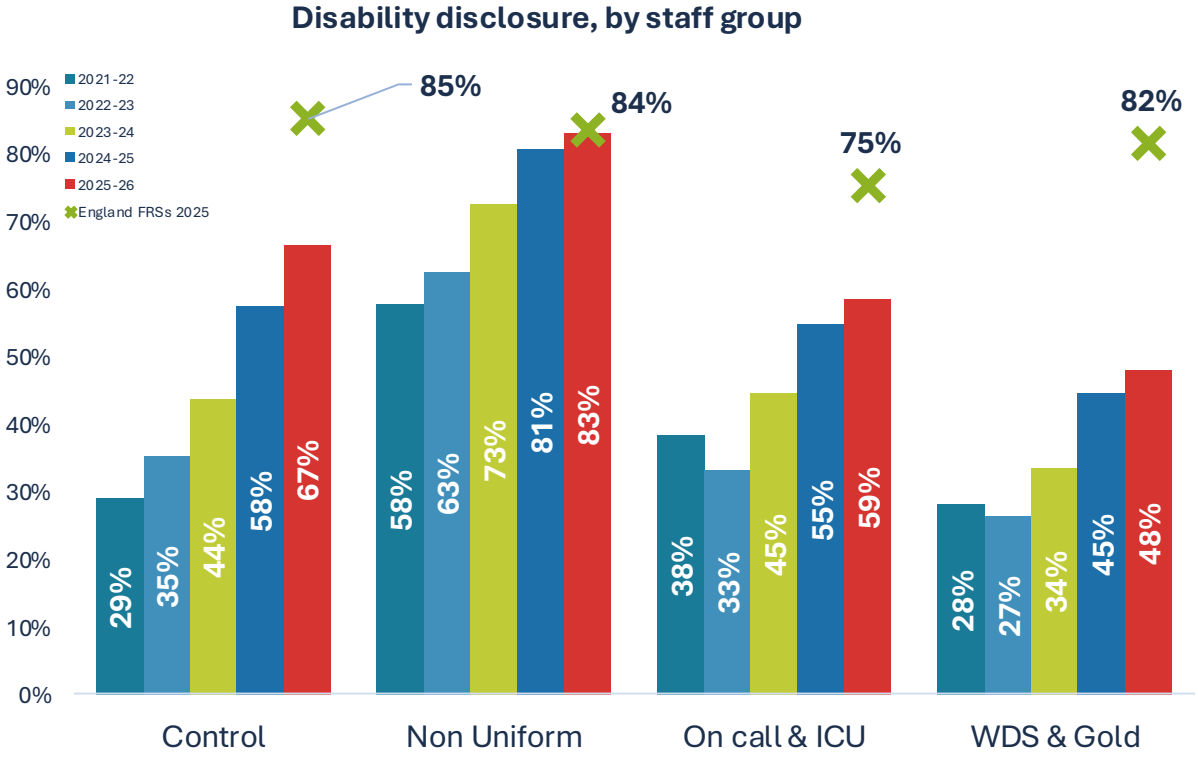
Internal messaging continues to be released periodically encouraging colleagues to update their details and explaining the organisational benefits that a high level of disclosure bring to the Service, such as the ability to identify roadblocks to certain groups for applying.

Disclosure and the importance of equality data is also now included in every induction course for trainee firefighters.

More information about how to update personal details will continue to be released to help further increase the disclosure rates.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Continued 2025/26 data headlines: diversity disclosure rates (2)



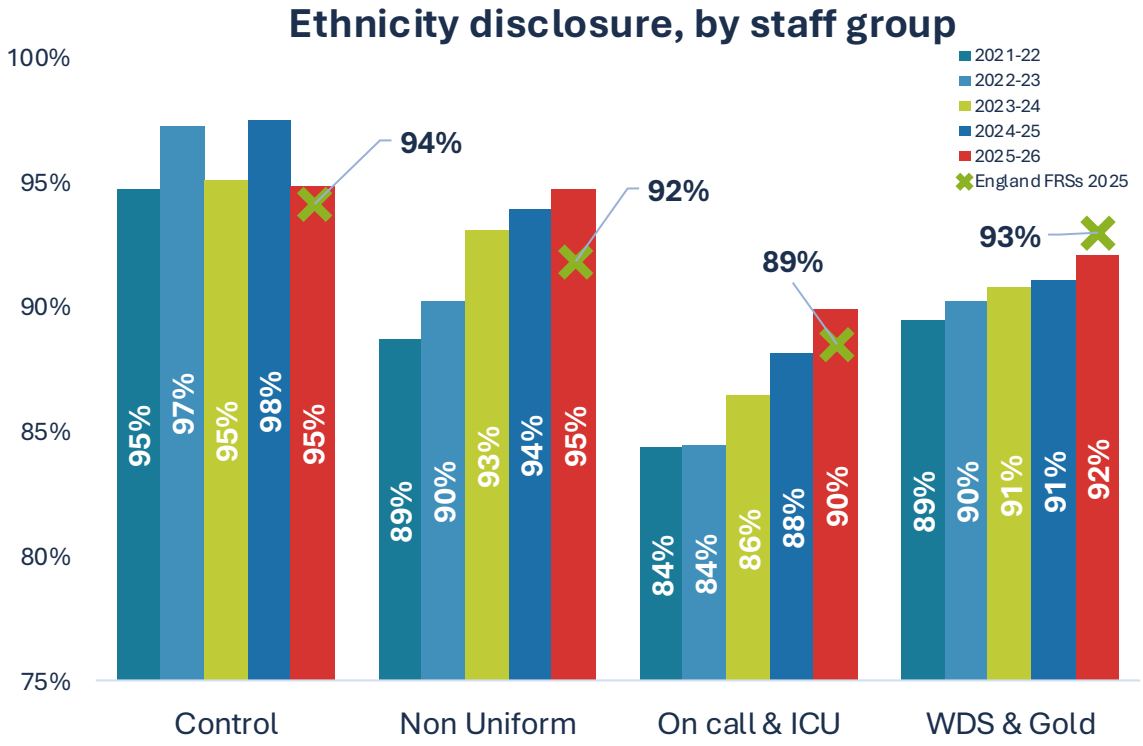
The number of staff disclosing whether they have a disability or not remains on an upwards trend each year. The disclosure rate remains below than the national average across all staff groups, with Non Uniform colleagues being closest to that average..

Efforts to reduce stigma and improve the disclosure rate across all protected characteristics are ongoing, including periodic Service-wide communications and inclusion in mandatory training sessions.

Disability specific disclosure is further being encouraged through the FireENABLE Network Group, promoting the Reasonable Adjustment process, and by completion of the voluntary Disability, Neurodiversity & Ableism training session.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Continued 2025/26 data headlines: diversity disclosure rates (3)



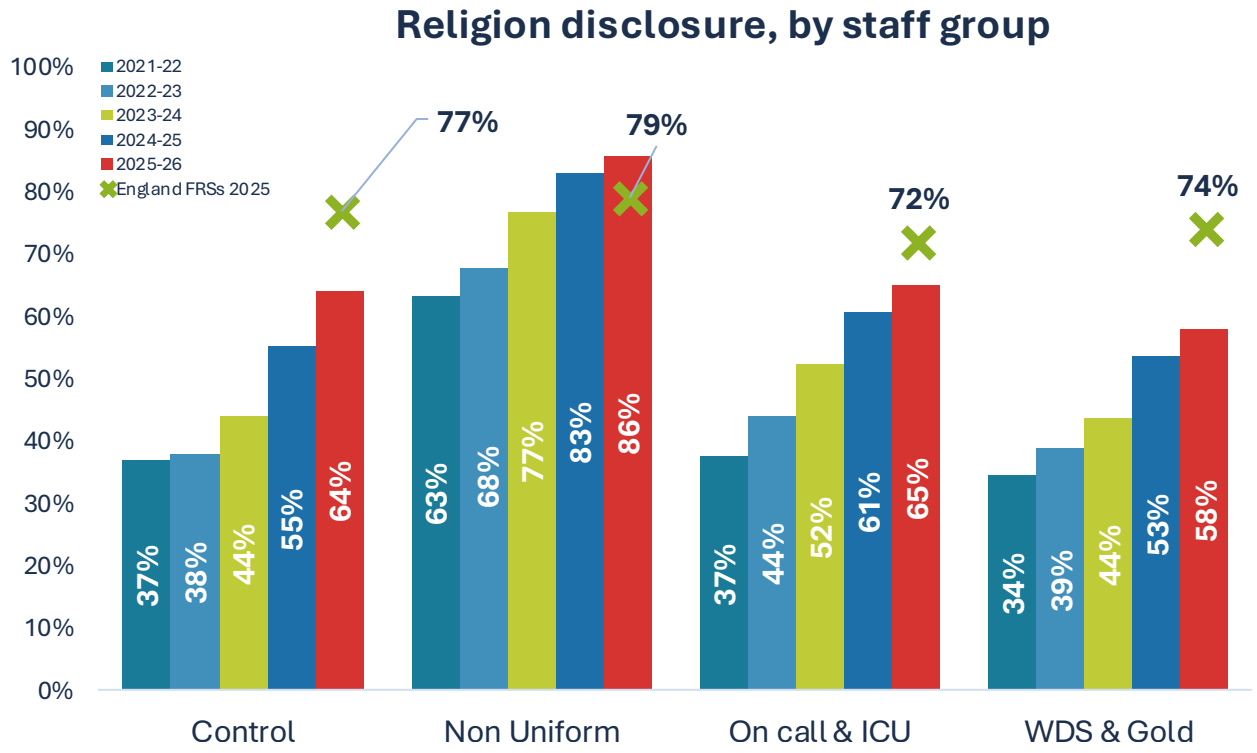
Ethnicity disclosure rates continue to improve each year across most contract types.

Due to the low numbers of personnel in Fire Control, there is greater susceptibility to fluctuations in the disclosure and diversity rates, accounting for the drop through staff attrition.

These disclosure rates are higher than the national average in all categories except WDS & Gold colleagues.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Continued 2025/26 data headlines: diversity disclosure rates (4)

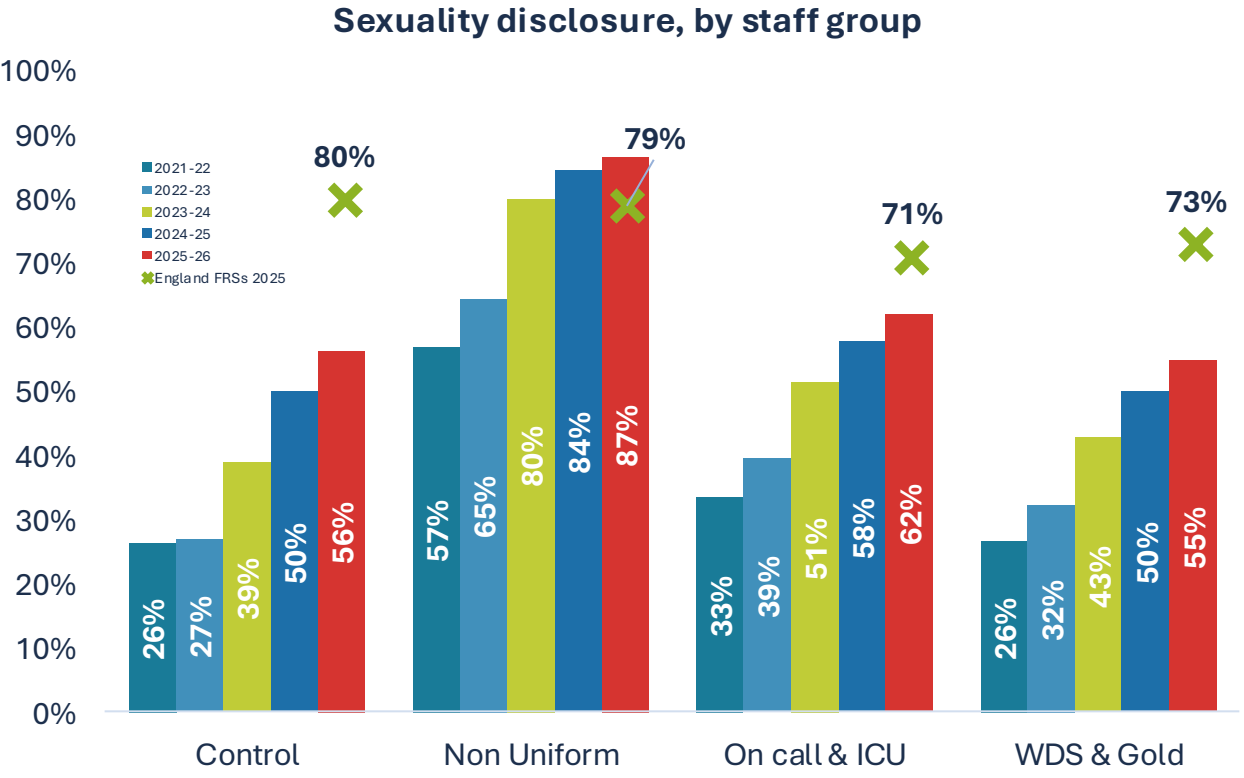


Similar to prior disclosure trends, we are continuing to make progress in our religion disclosure rates. However, it lags behind the national average in all staff groups, except for non uniform colleagues.

Periodic disclosure reminders alongside ongoing efforts by the FireREACH staff network group aim to continue this improvement in religion disclosure rates.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Continued 2025/26 data headlines: diversity disclosure rates (5)



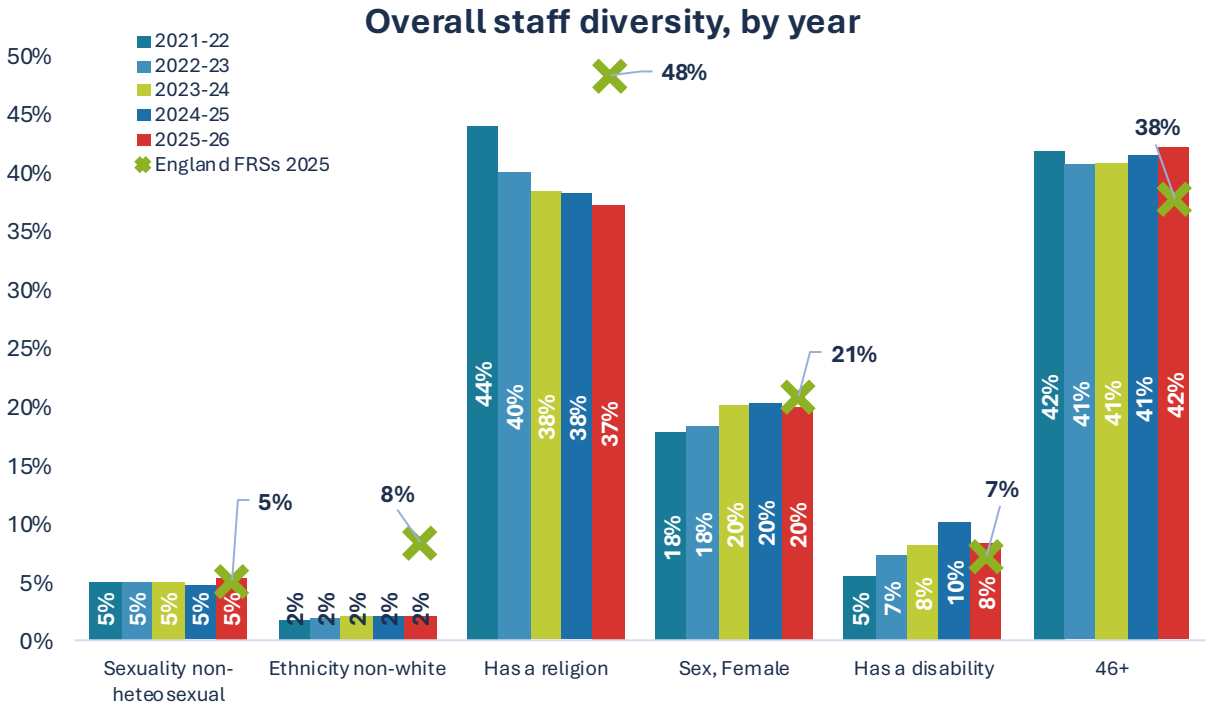
The sexual orientation data shows that the number of staff disclosing their sexual orientation has increased across all staff groups over the last 12 months.

HIWFRS Non-Uniform staff show a higher disclosure rate than the latest available national average, whereas all other staff groups have significantly lower disclosure rates.

The rate of increase across all staff groups over the last few years has been significant.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Continued 2025/26 data headlines: staff group diversity

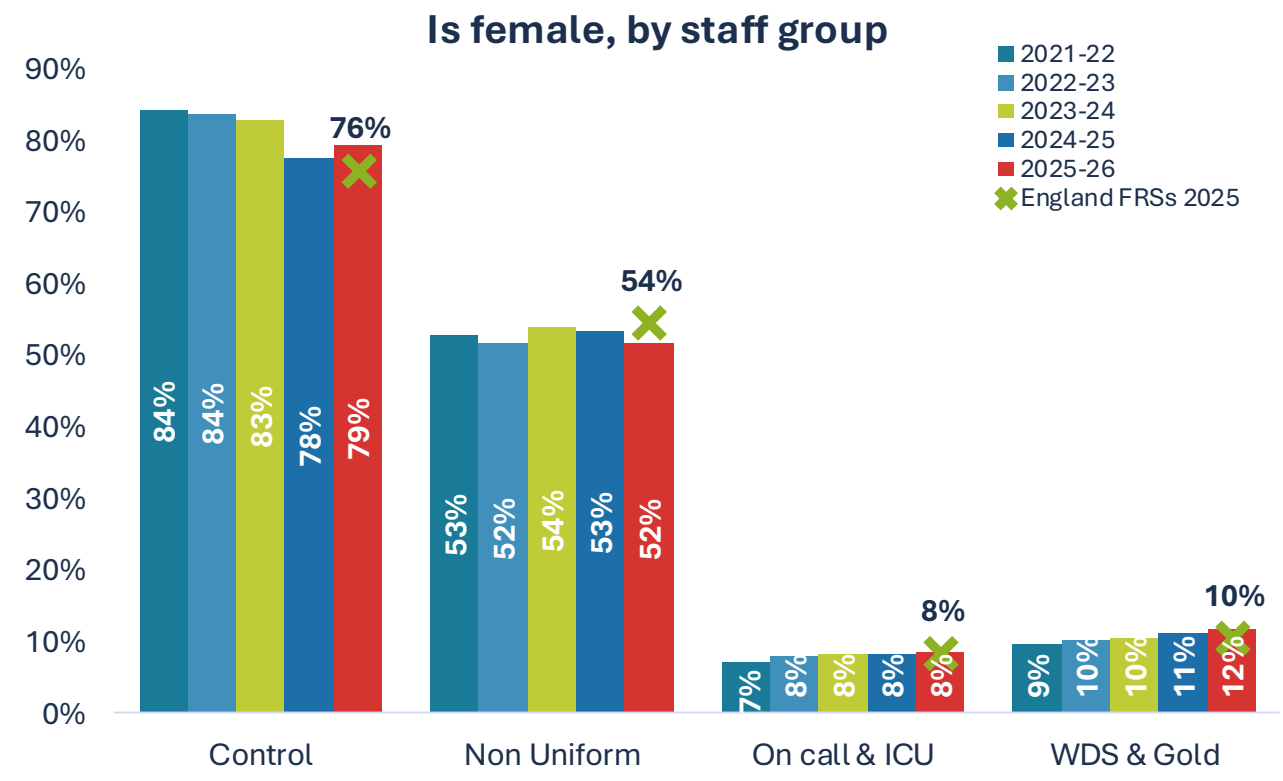


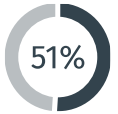
The overall data shows that the number of staff, across most protected characteristics, has increased or remained consistent over the last 12 months, except for staff with any religion and those with a disability. The data compares favourably against other English FRSs, apart from the proportion of non-white staff and those expressing a religion.

This may in part be reflected by the demographics of Hampshire & the Isle of Wight's communities. Such differences across counties make the percentage of ethnically non-white employees difficult to track. In comparison to the 2021 Census, the H&IOW community is made up of roughly 7% ethnically non-white people.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Continued 2025/26 data headlines: staff group diversity





Of the H&IOW community are female (Census 2021)

Over the last year the proportion of female staff has increased in all areas apart from in non-uniform roles. In these non-uniform roles however, the Service employs a higher proportion of female staff than when compared to the H&IOW Census data [2021].
Additionally, HIWFRS compares similarly favourably with the national average for FRSs.

Like other English FRS, our On-call and Wholetime staff are predominantly male. However, the fraction of females in these roles are increasing, albeit slowly, year on year.

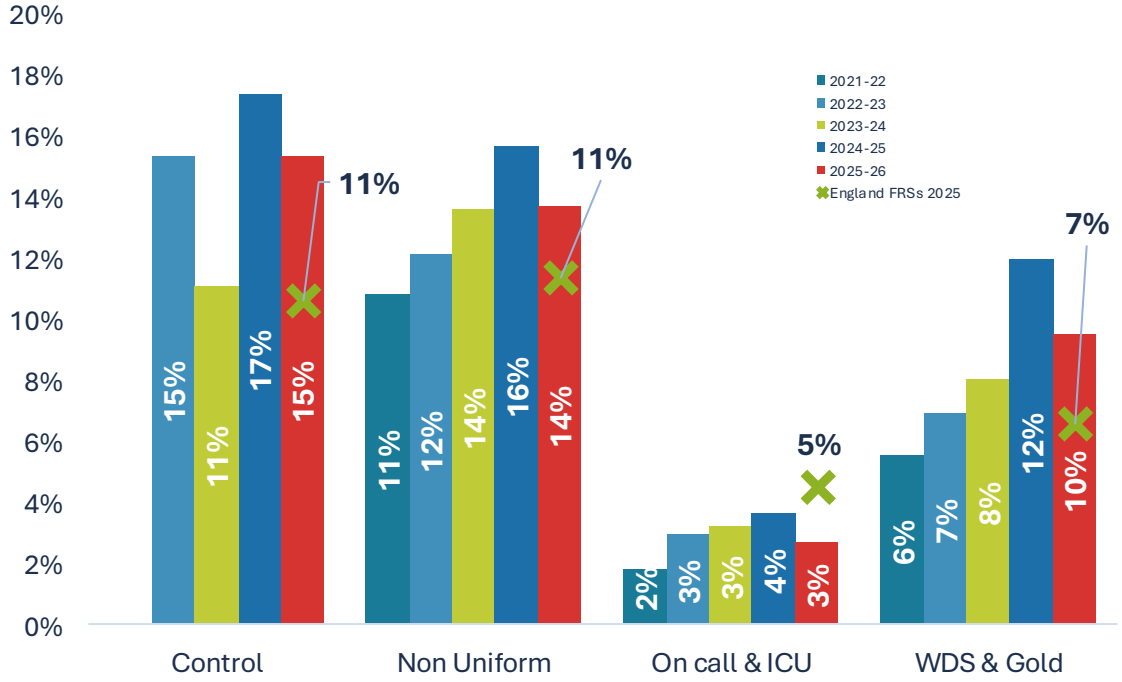
Further ongoing positive action efforts for both recruitment and promotion seek to improve the rate of increase and reduce attrition of the proportion of female colleagues.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Continued 2025/26 data headlines: staff group diversity (2)

Of the H&IOW community has a disability (Census 2021)

Has a disability, by staff group



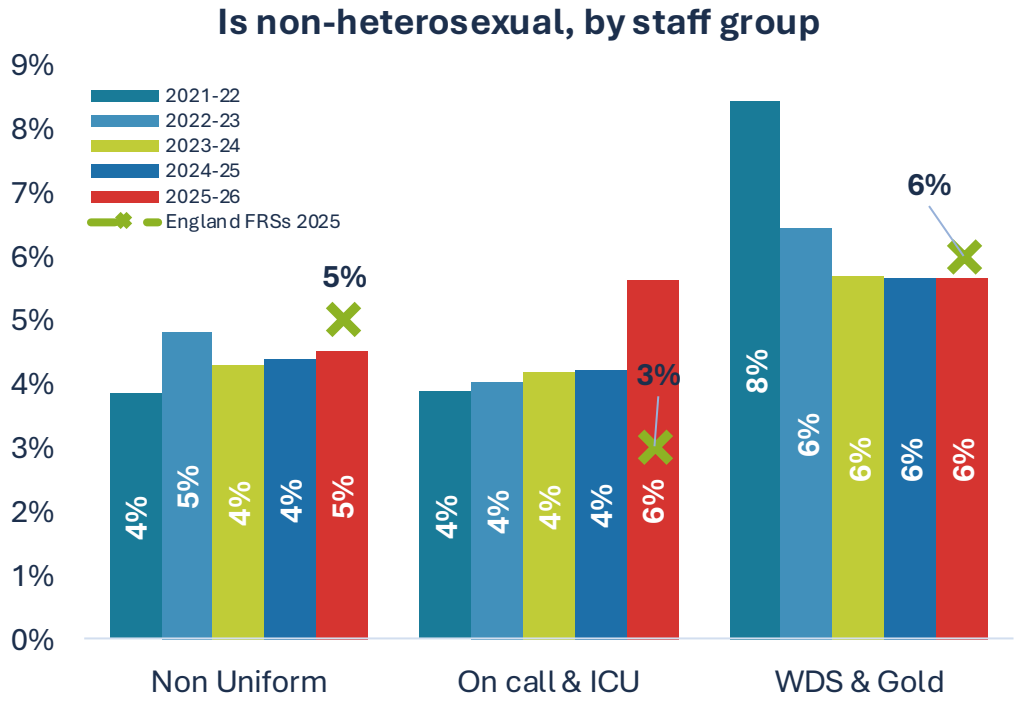
8% of the total workforce has recorded a disability, which is less than the 17% within the wider H&IOW community. However, this is in line with other England FRSs, apart from On-Call staff. The low proportion of disabled On-Call staff decreases the overall percentage significantly. (This rises to 12% of staff with a disability, if On-Call colleagues rates are excluded)

Due to the demanding nature of operational roles, and the stigma around mental or physical disabilities, operational colleagues with a disability may not feel comfortable in disclosing this. Lower disclosure rates are observed in physically demanding roles compared to more desk-based roles. Therefore, efforts are ongoing to improve the disclosure rates, intending to gain a more accurate understanding.

Efforts to remove the stigma, either from visibility of FireENABLE or conversations within teams, may further increase both the disclosure and reported rates of disability.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Continued 2025/26 data headlines: staff group diversity (2)



Of the H&IOW community disclosed a sexuality other than heterosexual (Census 2021)

There has been an increase in the number of non-heterosexual colleagues across most staff groups.

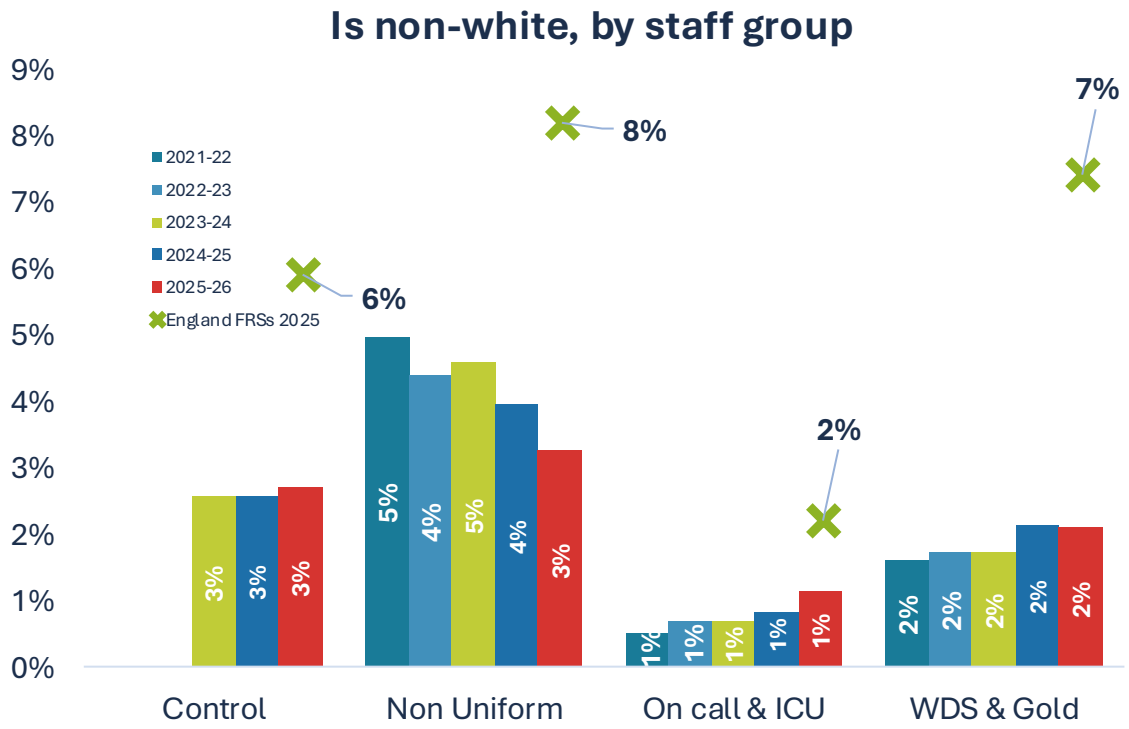
Rates remain below the 2022-23 level for non-uniform colleagues, and below 2021-22 level for Wholetime colleagues.

The wider H&IOW community is approximately recorded as 3% non-heterosexual, which the Service exceeds across all staff groups.

Due to the low number of contracts in Control, and to prevent identification, they have not been included in this data series.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Continued 2025/26 data headlines: staff group diversity (3)



Of the H&IOW community is ethnically non-white

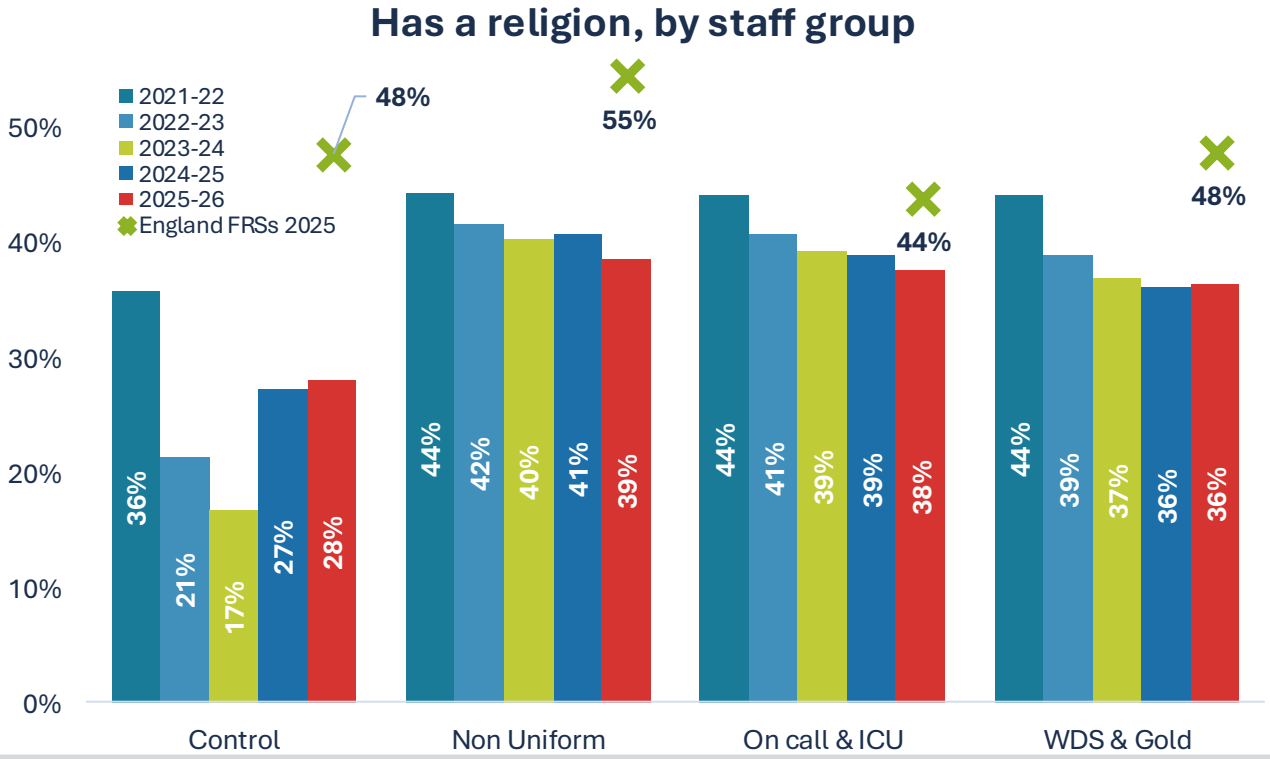
There continues to be a steady rise in the percentage of non-white colleagues in the overall workforce, except for non-uniform staff, when compared to the H&IOW community.

However, the Service's ethnic diversity rate remains below the national average and the wider H&IOW community. Further work is ongoing to consolidate and strengthen Positive Action initiatives within Wholetime, On-Call, and Non-Uniform attraction and recruitment practices.

It is also worth noting, in recent years, the government reporting changed from proportion of non-white British (e.g. White Polish) to the proportion of non-white staff. This manifests as a lower proportion of non-white staff compared to previous equality statements.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Continued 2025/26 data headlines: staff group diversity (3)



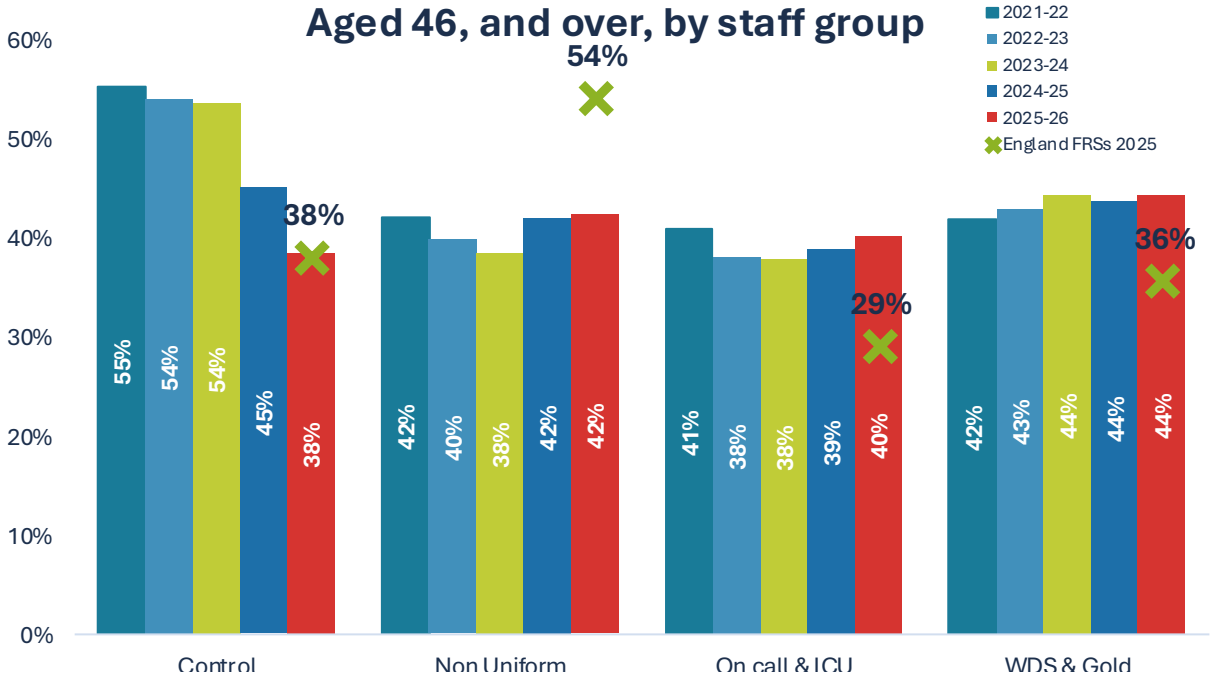
Of the H&IOW community is religious (Census 2021)

Fewer staff are reporting having a religion and HIWFRS is below the national average and the wider H&IOW community rates.

However, between the 2011 and 2021 census, the percentage of people in England stating "no religion" jumped 12 percentage points (an increase of 8 million people).
This may indicate why HIWFRS is experiencing decreasing rates across the board for staff stating a belief in a religion, with it being a national trend rather than an FRS centric trend.

Equality Objective 2 - Representative

Continued 2025/26 data headlines: staff group diversity (4)



Of the H&IOW community has an age of 46 years or older based on 2021 Census data

The percentage of the workforce aged 46 and over has stayed consistent over the last four years and is broadly consistent with the national and local average. The percentages are typically lower in the staffing groups where we see higher staff turnover rates.

Equality Objective 3
RESPECTFUL

Respectful

Hampshire & Isle of Wight FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Equality Objective 3 - Respectful

Update on progress: 2025/26 data headlines

1183 HR team casework and query volume in 2025/26, down 3% versus 2024/25

54 Number of opened HR disciplinary cases (excluding queries), down 8% vs 2024/25

The volume of all HR cases and queries has declined very slightly (by 2%) compared to 2024/25. Furthermore, when looking at just newly opened disciplinary cases – they too have reduced slightly (by 8% from 59 in 2024/25 to 54 in 2025/26).

The Service – in response to some staff survey feedback – is increasing the transparency around the outcome of closed disciplinary cases through six-monthly communications of aggregated case outcome data, to build trust in colleagues that action is taken in response to cases that are raised with HR.

110 Total of SaySo reports since 2022/23

26 Total SaySo reports in 2025/26, down 10% vs 2024/25 (29) and down 24% vs 2023/24 (34)

Themes from the 2025/26 reports included: code of conduct (6); management or supervision (3); and process, procedure and/or policy (3). Furthermore, abuse – sexual; abuse – emotional; equality; health & safety; and recruitment, selection and/or vetting all had two concerns each.

2024/25 which had the following more prominent themes: Abuse (8); Management or Supervision (5); Health & Safety (5); Code of Conduct (5); Safety – Personal (4).

200 Peer to Peer nominations (down 26% compared to last year)

40% Female nominees (down from 41%)

2.4% Non-White nominees

1.7 : 1 Green : Grey book nomination ratio

In green book, the percentage of female nominees stand at 52%, while in grey book these stand at 21%. Support staff stand at 52% female, while grey book is roughly 10% female.

Equality Objective 4
ACCESSIBLE

Accessible

Hampshire & Isle of Wight FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Equality Objective 4 - Accessible

Update on progress: 2025/26 data headlines

This data looks at Safe and Well visits, Fire casualties, RTC casualties and 'Special Service call' casualties through the lenses of ethnicity, gender, and age between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2026. This data is compared to Hampshire and Isle of Wight population data to highlight any over-representation in these areas.

The rate of home fire safety visits was broadly similar across different ethnic groups

The rate of fire casualties was broadly similar across different ethnic groups

The rate of Road Traffic Collision casualties was broadly similar across different ethnic groups

The rate of Special Service calls was broadly similar across different ethnic groups

The rate of home fire safety visits was 8% higher for females compared to the H&IOW community

The rate of fire casualties was 16% higher than the H&IOW community for those whose gender was recorded as male

The rate of Road Traffic Collision casualties was 7% higher than the H&IOW community for those whose gender was recorded as male

The rate of Special Service calls was 5% higher than the H&IOW community for those whose gender was recorded as male

85+ The rate of home fire safety visits compared to the general population was 10 times higher for those 85+ and 5 times higher for 80-84 compared to the H&IOW community.

66+ The rate of fire casualties was significantly lower in those aged under 21, and slightly higher than the H&IOW community for all other adult groups

21-30 The rate of Road Traffic Collision casualties 5% higher for those aged 21-30 compared to the H&IOW community, and lowest in those aged under 21.

60+ The rate of Special Service calls was 17% higher than the H&IOW aged 60+ and 3% higher for those below 21.

THANK YOU