



Fire and Rescue Service

**Operational Statistics Bulletin for England 2006/07**





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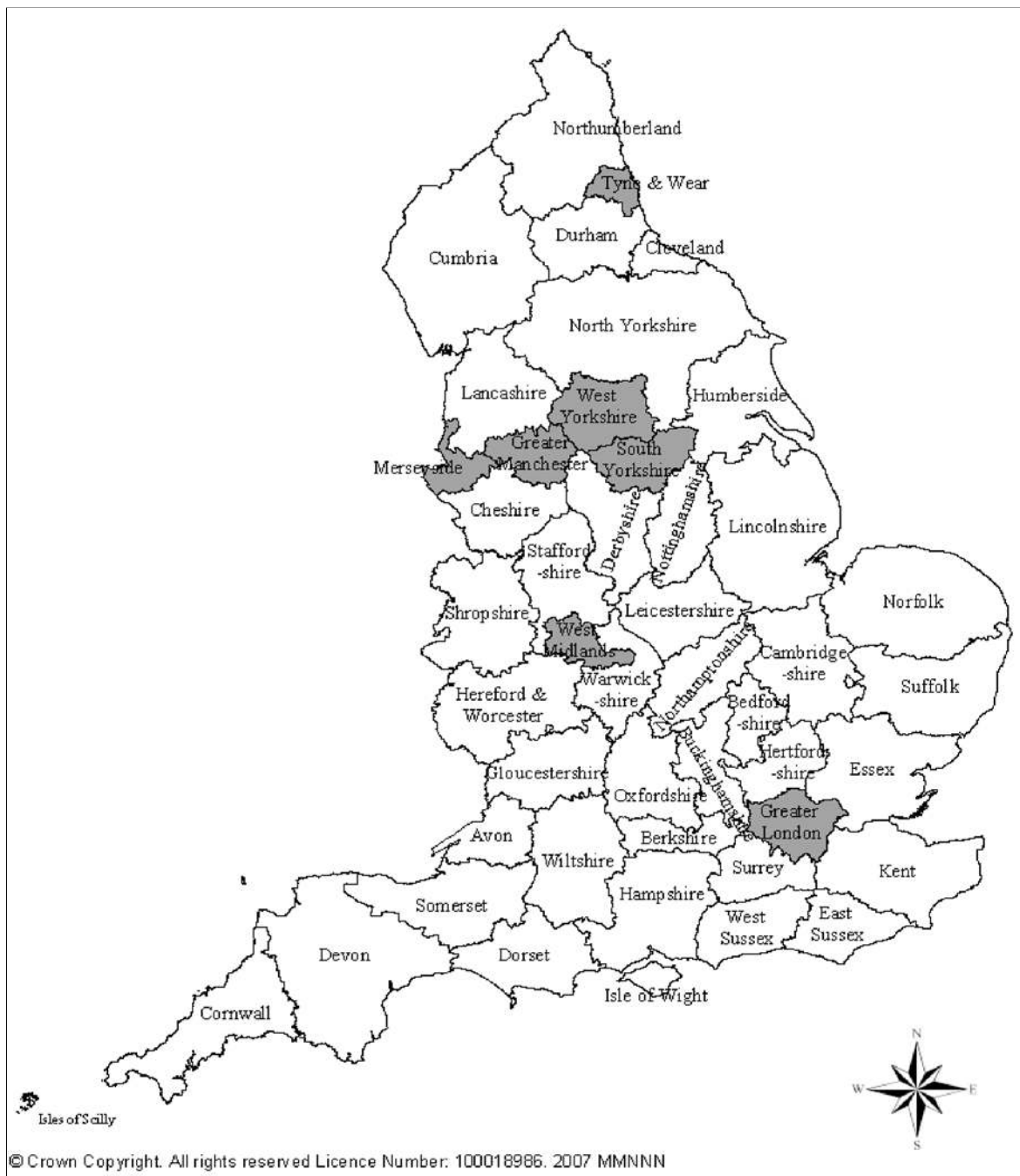
# Introduction

This Bulletin contains operational statistics relating to the Fire and Rescue Services in England for the financial year 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007. It focuses mainly on Personnel, Equality & Diversity, Health & Safety and Operational Activities. The data is sourced from the Fire and Rescue Service Performance and Management Information Database which holds operational statistics received from the Integrated Risk Management Planning Returns from all Fire and Rescue Services in England. Detailed tables accompanying this bulletin are provided in the Appendices at:

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/operationalstatistics](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/operationalstatistics)

*Fire Statistics, United Kingdom, 2006*, an analysis of fire incident statistics in the UK, will be published in May 2008.

## Fire Authorities in England



■ Metropolitan County Fire and Rescue Authorities and London, which is a Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.

## Contents

	Page
<b>Section 1: Fire and Rescue Service personnel</b>	7
Number of staff in post in England and on 31 March 2007	7
Job applications and successful applicants	8
Leavers	8
<b>Section 2: Equality and diversity</b>	10
Gender and ethnic representation in the Fire and rescue Services	10
Recruitment and retention	12
Top 5 per cent of earners	12
<b>Section 3: Health and safety</b>	14
Sickness absence	14
Retirements	15
Firefighters' injuries	16
<b>Section 4: Operational activities</b>	19
Fires and non-fire incidents	19
Fires and fire false alarms	19
Non-fire incidents	20
<b>Glossary of terms</b>	21

## List of tables and figures

<b>Tables</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.1 Number of staff in post at 31 March 2003 – 2007	7
1.2 Number of applicants, 2002/03 – 2006/07	7
1.3 Number of successful applicants and leavers in 2002/03 – 2006/07	8
1.4 Reasons for leaving the fire and rescue service, 2006/07	9
2.1 Profile of fire and rescue service personnel at 31 March 2007	10
2.2 Gender and ethnicity of applicants to the fire and rescue service and proportion successful 2006/07	12
2.3a Leavers by gender – firefighters 2006/07	12
2.3b Leavers by ethnicity – All staff 2006/07	13
2.4 Gender and ethnicity of top 5 per cent earners, 2004/05 – 2006/07	13
3.1 Ill health retirements per 1000 employees, 2004/05 – 2006/07	15
3.2 Ill health retirement by cause in 2005/06 – England	16
3.3 Total injuries sustained by wholetime and retained duty system firefighters during training, operational incidents and routine activities 2002/03 – 2005/06	17
3.4a Total injuries sustained by wholetime and retained duty system firefighters during operational incidents 2002/03 – 2006/07	17
3.4b Total injuries sustained by wholetime and retained duty system firefighters during training for operational incidents 2002/03 – 2006/07	18
4.1 Total incidents to which fire and rescue services responded 2004/05 – 2006/07	19
4.2 Non-fire incidents in England 2004/05 – 2006/07	20
<b>Figures</b>	<b>Page</b>
1 Women firefighters in England 2003 – 2007	11
2 Proportion of minority ethnic staff in England FRS 2002 – 2006	11
3 Shifts/days lost to sickness per person, 1999/00 – 2006/07	14

# Section 1

## Fire and rescue service personnel

### Number of staff in post on 31 March 2007

**Table 1.1: Number of staff in post on 31 March 2003-2007**

	Number of staff in post (FTE) <sup>1</sup>				Total
	Wholetime	Retained duty system <sup>2</sup>	Fire control	Non-uniformed	
2003	31,699	10,716	1,388	5,802	49,604
2004	31,826	10,853	1,435	6,220	50,334
2005 <sup>3</sup>	31,097	11,037	1,448	6,762	50,344
2006 <sup>4</sup>	30,596	11,321	1,470	7,231	50,618
2007	30,558	11,860	1,491	7,390	51,300

1. In full time equivalents (FTEs) except retained duty system firefighters.

2. In 24-hour units of cover.

3. Retained duty system figures not available for Leicestershire, Merseyside, Royal Berkshire and fire control figure not available for Essex, estimates used instead.

4. Retained duty system figures not available for Buckinghamshire, estimates used instead.

- 1.1 There were 51,300 fire and rescue service staff (full-time equivalents) in England on 31 March 2007, representing an increase of 3 per cent over the last five years.

### Recruitment

**Table 1.2: Number of applicants in 2001/02 – 2006/07**

	Wholetime	Retained duty system	Fire control	Non-uniformed	Total
2002/03	31,471	2,646	1,875	15,748	51,740
2003/04	21,587	3,077	1,897	18,101	44,662
2004/05	15,683	3,268	1,132	17,252	37,335
2005/06	15,805	3,582	2,410	21,237	43,034
2006/07	22,961	2,240	1,932	22,833	49,966

- 1.2 Over the financial year 2006/07 there were 43,034 applications with 3,384 successful applications. In some cases, outcome of recruitment from the previous year might be recorded in the current reporting year. In 2006/07, 12 FRSs did not recruit for wholetime firefighters, seven did not recruit retained duty system staff and 15 did not recruit fire control staff for the year.

## Job applications and successful applicants

**Table 1.3: Number of successful applicants and leavers in 2002/03 – 2006/07**

	<i>Wholetime</i>		<i>Retained duty system</i>		<i>Fire control</i>		<i>Non-uniformed</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Successful applicants</i>	<i>Leavers</i>	<i>Successful applicants</i>	<i>Leavers</i>	<i>Successful applicants</i>	<i>Leavers</i>	<i>Successful applicants</i>	<i>Leavers</i>	<i>Successful applicants</i>	<i>Leavers</i>
2002/03	1,489	1,572	1,265	1,302	110	67	1,098	807	3,962	3,748
2003/04	1,282	1,529	1,335	1,406	146	88	1,514	837	4,277	3,860
2004/05	803	1,791	1,227	1,112	117	91	1,372	914	3,519	3,908
2005/06	1,087	1,943	1,172	1,042	136	88	1,242	799	3,637	3,872
2006/07	1,136	1,383	750	1,155	139	92	1,359	988	3,384	3,618

## Leavers

- 1.3 During 2006/07 3,618 staff left the fire and rescue services – about 7 per cent of all staff (this includes staff who leave and join another service).
- 1.4 Wholetime firefighters who left the service in 2006/07 reached 1,383 (about 5 per cent of staff), a decrease of 28 per cent from 2005/06 – mainly due to a reduction in voluntary age retirements. Most wholetime firefighters who leave are voluntary age retirements, see table 1.4.

**Table 1.4: Leavers 2006/07**

<i>Reasons for leaving the fire service</i>	<i>Number of staff leaving</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<i>Wholetime</i>	<i>Retained duty system</i>	<i>Fire control</i>	<i>Non- uniformed</i>	
Dismissal on disciplinary grounds/ poor performance	46	48	3	31	128
Medical discharge	117	16	3	18	154
Resignation to take other employment	180	266	42	441	929
Personal/work commitments*		305			305
Moving away from catchment area*		102			102
Compulsory/voluntary age retirement	824	48	15	124	1,011
Other reasons	216	370	29	374	989
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,383</b>	<b>1,155</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>3,618</b>
					<i>per cent</i>
Dismissal on disciplinary grounds/ poor performance	3	4	3	3	4
Medical discharge	8	1	3	2	4
Resignation to take other employment	13	23	46	45	26
Personal/work commitments*	0	26	0	0	8
Moving away from catchment area*	0	9	0	0	3
Compulsory/voluntary age retirement	60	4	16	13	28
Other reasons	16	32	32	38	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
*Reasons for leaving applicable to retained duty system firefighters only.					

- 1.5 Retained duty system firefighters who left the service in 2006/07 numbered 1,155 (about 8 per cent of staff), an increase of nearly 11 per cent from 2005/06.

# Section 2

## Equality and diversity

### Gender and minority ethnic representation in the fire and rescue services

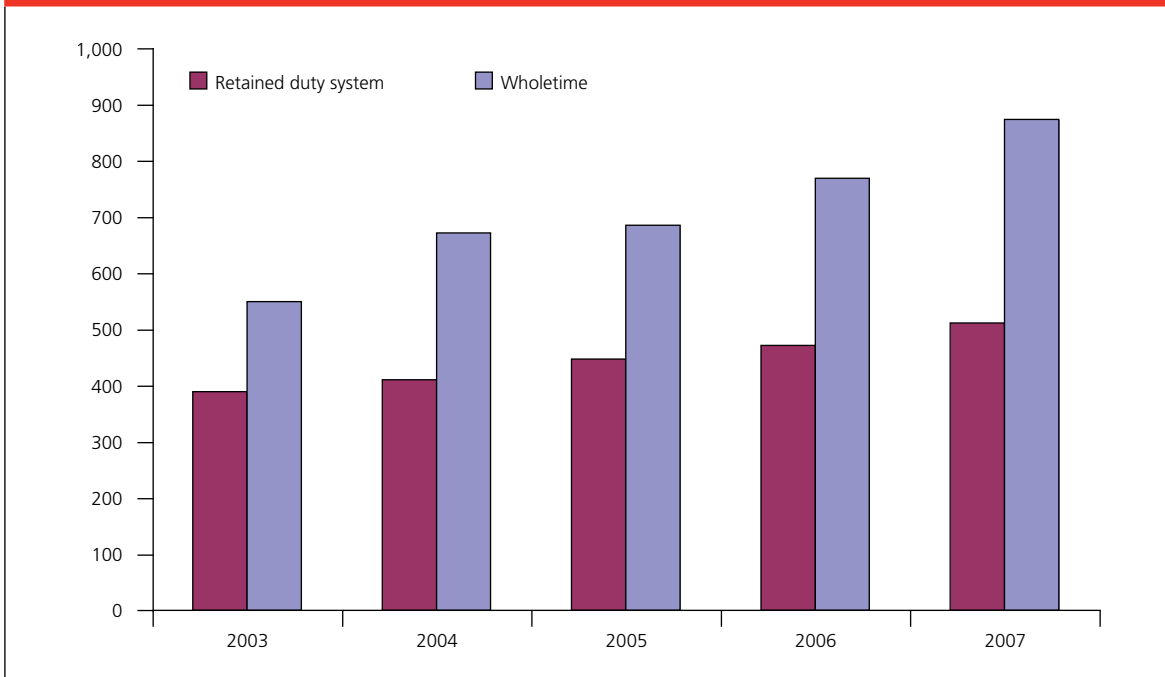
2.1 Operational staff (wholetime and retained duty system firefighters) in England are mostly male and white. At 31 March 2007, males in England accounted for 97.2 per cent of operational personnel. Table 2.1 shows the gender and ethnicity profile in the four duty categories in England at 31 March 2007, women formed 3.1 per cent of the operational workforce – see figure 1 and appendix 6.

**Table 2.1: Profile of fire and rescue service personnel at 31 March 2007**

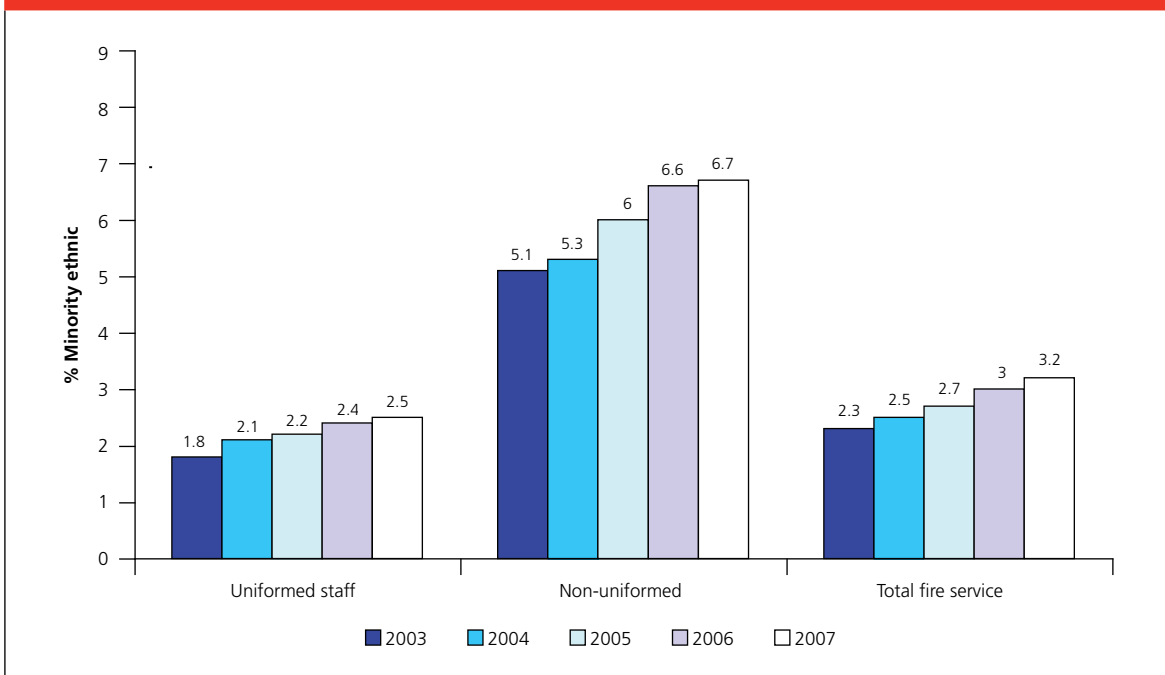
	<i>Wholetime</i>	<i>Retained duty system</i>	<i>Fire control</i>	<i>Non-uniformed</i>	<i>Total</i>
Male	29,931	13,701	331	3,612	47,575
Female	873	511	1,226	4,849	7,459
White	28,100	12,726	1,497	7,626	49,949
Ethnic minority	1,064	97	23	571	1,755
Not stated	1,640	1,389	37	264	3,330
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,804</b>	<b>14,212</b>	<b>1,557</b>	<b>8,461</b>	<b>55,034</b>

2.2 Over the past five years ethnic minority staff in the fire service have increased from 2.3 per cent in 2003 to 3.2 per cent at 31 March 2007, see figure 2.

**Figure 1: Women firefighters in England 2003–2007**



**Figure 2: Proportion of minority ethnic staff in England FRS 2002–2006**



## Recruitment and retention

- 2.3 In 2006/07, 7 per cent of applications were successful. 7.5 per cent of white applicants were successful compared to 4.5 per cent for minority ethnic applicants, see table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Gender and ethnicity of applicants to the Fire and rescue service and the proportion successful, 2006/07**

	<i>Whole time</i>		<i>Retained duty system</i>		<i>Fire control</i>		<i>Non-uniformed</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Applicants</i>	<i>% successful</i>	<i>Applicants</i>	<i>% successful</i>	<i>Applicants</i>	<i>% successful</i>	<i>Applicants</i>	<i>% successful</i>	<i>Applicants</i>	<i>% successful</i>
Male	20,815	5.0	2,240	30	861	5.8	10,638	5.5	34,893	7.0
Female	2,146	4.3	247	28	1,071	8.3	12,444	7.0	15,926	7.1
White	20,660	5.3	1,963	35	1,701	7.4	18,904	6.8	43,539	7.5
Minority ethnic	1,728	2.8	59	19	98	6.1	1,933	5.5	3,822	4.5
Not stated	573	1.0	465	12	133	5.3	2,245	2.7	3,458	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,961</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>2,487</b>	<b>30.2</b>	<b>1,932</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>23,082</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>50,819</b>	<b>7.1</b>

## Leavers

- 2.4 During 2006/07 a total of 85 women firefighters left the fire service – nearly 10 per cent of serving women firefighters. Most of the women firefighters who left were from the retained duty system (73 per cent). All women firefighters who left in 05/06 were White, see appendix 4.
- 2.5 Ethnic minority staff who left the fire service in 2006/07 numbered 81 – nearly 8 per cent of all ethnic minority staff, and 14 per cent fewer than in 2005/06.

**Table 2.3a: Leavers by gender – firefighters 2006/07**

	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
Dismissal on disciplinary grounds/poor performance	5	89	94
Medical discharge	2	131	133
Resignation to take other employment	21	425	446
Personal/work commitments*	23	284	307
Moving away from catchment area*	5	97	102
Compulsory/ voluntary age retirement	0	876	876
Other reasons	29	551	580
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>2,453</b>	<b>2,538</b>

**Table 2.3b: Leavers by ethnicity – All staff 2006/07**

	White	Ethnic minority	Not stated	Total
Dismissal on disciplinary grounds/poor performance	106	7	5	118
Medical discharge	140	2	10	152
Resignation to take other employment	847	30	65	942
Personal/work commitments*	257	1	49	307
Moving away from catchment area*	88	0	14	102
Compulsory/ voluntary age retirement	963	7	47	1,017
Other reasons	875	34	71	980
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,276</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>3,618</b>

\*Reasons for leaving applicable to retained duty system firefighters only.

- 2.6 In 2006/07 of the top 5 per cent of earners 7.2 per cent were women – an increase of 1.5 percentage points on 2005/06. However, nine Fire Rescue Services in England did not have any women and 27 did not have any minority ethnic staff in their top 5 per cent of earners.

## Top 5 per cent of earners

**Table 2.4: Gender and ethnicity of top 5% earners, 2005/06 and 2006/07**

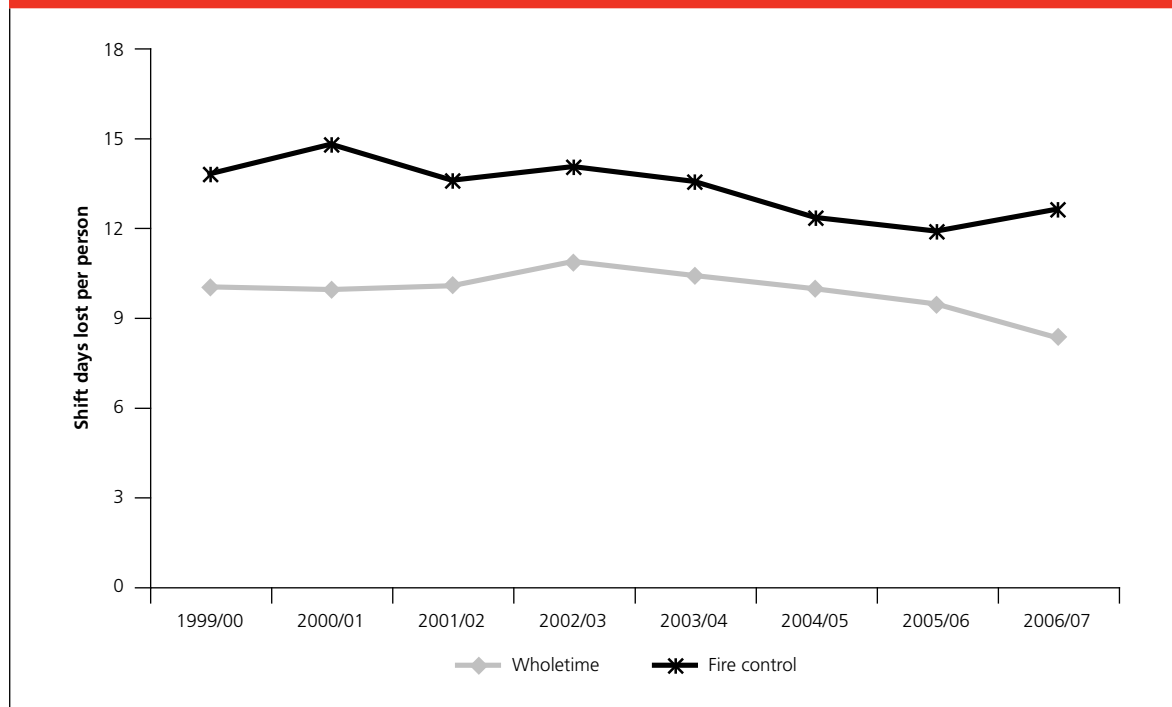
	2005/06	2006/07
Female	150	179
Minority ethnic	43	59
<b>Total top 5% earners</b>	<b>2,625</b>	<b>2,500</b>
		<i>Percentage</i>
Female	5.7	7.2
Minority ethnic	1.6	2.4

# Section 3

## Health and safety

### Sickness absence

Figure 3: Shift/days lost to sickness per person 1999/00 – 2006/07



- 3.1 During 2006/07 there were an average of 8.3 shifts/days lost per person by wholetime firefighters and 12.6 shifts/days lost per person by fire control staff.
- 3.2 The sickness level rates for fire control duty have increased by 12 per cent from the previous year, while those for wholetime personnel has decreased by nearly 12 per cent. In both cases, figures remain high, see figure 3.

## Retirements

- 3.3 Ill health retirement for the Fire and Rescue Service continued to decline. In 2006/07, the number of ill health retirements dropped from 394 in 2006/07 to 332 the lowest level since the peak in 2001/02.

**Table 3.1: Ill health retirements per 1,000 employees, England 2004/05 – 2006/07**

	2004/05			2005/06			2006/07		
	Retirements			Retirements			Retirements		
	Average strength <sup>1</sup>	Normal	Ill health	Average strength <sup>1</sup>	Normal	Ill health	Average strength <sup>1</sup>	Normal	Ill health
Wholetime	31,455	31.3	10.3	30,847	33.9	9.3	30,774	26.8	3.8
Retained duty system	13,298	10.5	1.8	11,188	10.5	1.3	14,070	3.4	1.1
Fire control	1,522	8.5	9.2	1,459	6.9	6.2	1,548	9.7	1.9
Non-uniformed	7,542	14.7	4.2	6,973	11.5	3.2	8,280	15.0	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,817</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>50,467</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>54,670</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>2.8</b>

1. Average strength figure taken over 2 years, at 31 March.

### Causes of ill health retirements

- 3.4 In 2006/07, musculo skeletal injury accounted for about 53 per cent of all ill health retirements for wholetime firefighters, of which 35 per cent were due to back injuries. Mental health illness accounted for 22 per cent of ill health retirements.

**Table 3.2: Ill health retirements by cause in 2005/06 – England**

<i>Injury type</i>	<i>Wholetime</i>			<i>Retained duty system</i>			<i>Fire control</i>			<i>Non-uniformed</i>		
	<i>Due to service</i>	<i>Not due to service</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Due to service</i>	<i>Not due to service</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Due to service</i>	<i>Not due to service</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Due to service</i>	<i>Not due to service</i>	<i>Total</i>
Musculo skeletal	28	35	63	11	2	13	0	1	1	1	6	7
Mental health	13	13	26	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1
Respiratory	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cardiovascular	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Senses	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gastro intestinal	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neurological	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cancer	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	3
Endocrine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dermatological	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Urological	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reproductive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	11	11	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	3
Cases undecided at end of year	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>

## Firefighters' injuries

- 3.5 Two firefighters were killed attending a fire in 2006/07, both (one retained officer and one retired officer) were from East Sussex. The number of injuries sustained by firefighters (during training, operational incidents and routine activities) in 2006/07 was 4,312 – a decrease of 6 per cent on the previous year. The number of RIDDOR major injuries also increased by 60 per cent in 2006/07, see Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: Total injuries sustained by wholetime and retained duty system firefighters during training, operational incidents and routine activities 2002/03 – 2005/06**

	<i>RIDDOR</i> <sup>1</sup>			<i>All personnel injured</i>
	<i>Over 3 day injuries</i>	<i>Major injuries</i>	<i>Fatal injuries</i>	
2002/03	1,307	91	3	6,299
2003/04	1,378	91	1	6,512
2004/05	1,208	92	4	5,554
2005/06	955	71	0	4,593
2006/07	939	113	1	4,312

In 2002/03 there was a period of industrial action which lasted for 15 days. The injury figures provided by fire and rescue authorities exclude incidents that occurred during this period

### Injuries during operational activities and training

- 3.6 In 2006/07, the total number of injuries sustained by firefighters during operational activities (attending fires and special service incidents) was 1,996 a decrease of 122 (6 per cent) on the previous year. In 2006/07, there were 9 per cent more injuries sustained during training compared with the previous year.

**Table 3.4a: Total injuries sustained by wholetime and retained duty system firefighters during operational incidents, 2002/03 – 2006/07**

	<i>RIDDOR</i>			<i>Total number of personnel injured</i>
	<i>Over 3 day injuries</i>	<i>Major injuries</i>	<i>Fatal injuries</i>	
2002/03	604	42	2	2,909
2003/04	742	45	0	3,420
2004/05	540	34	4	2,476
2005/06	423	38	0	2,122
2006/07	438	51	1	1,996

<sup>1</sup> Reportable major injuries are: fracture other than to fingers, thumbs or toes; amputation; dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine; loss of sight (temporary or permanent); chemical or hot metal burn to the eye or any penetrating injury to the eye; injury resulting from an electric shock or electrical burn leading to unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours; any other injury: leading to hypothermia, heat-induced illness or unconsciousness; or requiring resuscitation; or requiring admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours; unconsciousness caused by asphyxia or exposure to harmful substance or biological agent; acute illness requiring medical treatment, or loss of consciousness arising from absorption of any substance by inhalation, ingestion or through the skin; acute illness requiring medical treatment where there is reason to believe that this resulted from exposure to a biological agent or its toxins or infected material.

**Table 3.4b: Total injuries sustained by wholetime and retained duty system firefighters during training for operational incidents, 2002/03 – 2006/07**

	<i>RIDDOR</i>		<i>Fatal injuries</i>	<i>Total number of personnel injured</i>
	<i>Over 3 day injuries</i>	<i>Major injuries</i>		
2002/03	224	13	1	1,366
2003/04	231	24	1	1,318
2004/05	257	16	0	1,319
2005/06	200	14	0	1,027
2006/07	251	33	0	1,125

In 2002/03 there was a period of industrial action which lasted for 15 days. The injury figures provided by fire and rescue authorities exclude incidents that occurred during this period

# Section 4

## Operational activities

### Fires and non-fire incidents

4.1 Although fires and false alarms related to fires form the majority of incidents attended by the Fire and Rescue Services every year, some one in five incidents attended are not related to fire. Non-fire incidents cover a wide spectrum of activity and include:

- road traffic incidents
- chemical, biological and radioactive exposures and spills
- severe weather conditions such as flooding and high winds; collapsed buildings; and
- rescue of trapped people, including those stuck in lifts.

### Fires and fire false alarms

**Table 4.1: Total incidents to which fire and rescue services responded 2003/04 – 2006/07**

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
<b>Fires</b>				<i>Thousands</i>
Primary fires	172.4	147.2	137.5	131.1
Secondary fires	294.7	187.9	191.0	201.9
Chimney fires	6.5	6.3	7.0	6.8
<b>All fires</b>	473.6	341.4	335.4	339.8
<b>False Alarms</b>	384.1	360.1	350.0	291.4
<b>Non-fire incidents</b>				
Road traffic incidents	39.6	40.1	42.3	40.7
Non-road traffic incidents	118.8	118.3	114.7	125.3
<b>All</b>	158.4	158.4	157.0	166.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,016.0</b>	<b>859.9</b>	<b>842.4</b>	<b>797.2</b>

- 4.2 Provisionally, nearly 340 thousand fire related incidents were attended in 2006/07 in England, an increase of 1.3 per cent on the previous year. Primary fires fell by nearly 5 per cent in 2006/07; secondary fires increased by 5.7 per cent to 202,000 accounting for the majority of fires attended. Chimney fires decreased by nearly 3 per cent.
- 4.3 There were over 290,00 call outs for fire false alarms in 2006/07; a decrease of about 17 per cent on 2005/06.

## Non-fire incidents

**Table 4.2: Non-fire incidents in England, 2004/05 – 2006/07**

<i>Type of incident</i>	<i>2004/05</i>		<i>2005/06</i>		<i>2006/07</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Road traffic incidents	43,317	27	42,308	27	40,707	25
Non-road traffic incidents	118,308	73	114,713	73	125,295	75
Spills and leaks	9,488	6	9,188	6	8,863	5
Water – removal/provision	11,685	7	10,193	6	11,347	7
Effecting entry	12,617	8	13,494	9	13,971	8
Lift release	24,105	15	24,473	16	23,801	14
Other	60,413	37	57,365	37	67,313	41
<b>Total non-fire incidents</b>	<b>161,625</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>157,021</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>166,002</b>	<b>100</b>

- 4.4 Attendances at road traffic incidents were down slightly, by about 4 per cent on the previous year. Attendances at non-road traffic incidents increased – 9 per cent; they also accounted for the majority of the non-fire incidents attended by fire and rescue services (73%), see table 4.2.

# Glossary of terms

**Wholetime firefighter** A person employed full-time as a firefighter regardless of their rank.

**Retained duty system (RDS) firefighter** A person who contracts to be available for agreed periods of time for fire-fighting purposes, but who could have an alternative full-time employment.

**Fire control staff** Uniformed personnel who are employed to work in fire and rescue service control centres to answer emergency calls and deal with mobilising, communications, and related activities, regardless of rank.

**Non-uniformed staff** Generally support/administrative staff employed by a Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA).

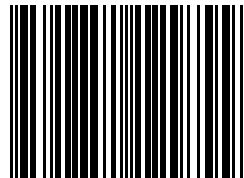
**Operational personnel** Staff who attend, or could be required to attend, incidents.

**24 hour units of cover** The number of staff required, under a particular duty system adopted to provide continuous cover over a 24-hour period.

**Attendance** Predetermined resources mobilised to an incident.

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