Strategic Workforce Plan 2024-2025

Introduction

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Strategic Workforce Plan flows directly from our Community Risk Management Plan and is linked to meeting the aims and objectives of our People Strategy.

The strategic workforce plan must be part of a holistic organisational development approach that encompasses People, Process, and Systems/Tools, ensuring that LFRS operates efficiently and effectively to meet the changing needs of the diverse communities it serves.

As we start to embed Fire Standards, there will be requirement to introduce various competency frameworks and codes of conduct for all our workforce, which may see changes to current ways of working as we align with the requirements to meet the desired outcomes.

Our strategic workforce plan helps us ensure the supply of a workforce with the skills and competence to meet our current and future resourcing requirements. The plan is delivered through a range of processes and tools which include effective leadership, talent and change management process and robust governance and risk management when exploring workforce planning opportunities and solutions.

The Strategic Workforce Plan is monitored and revised frequently (2-monthly) by Workforce Planning Group to ensure it correctly reflects our current and future requirements.

Our aspiration is to attract and maintain a competent and diverse workforce, which is representative of the community we serve, inspired to reach their potential, and engaged through clear leadership, flexible and equipped to respond to change with competence and confidence.

Approach to workforce planning at LFRS

1. The approach to Workforce Planning is set out within Service Policy and Procedure

2. The principles of the workforce planning process at LFRS are:

   o Our workforce plan supports our understanding of the need to link our strategic outcomes and the workforce required to deliver them.
   o We ensure that our workforce plan is sustainable and affordable.
   o We understand the synergy of People, Process, and Systems, with developing an efficient and effective workforce.
   o We understand where we can augment the effectiveness and efficiency of our workforce through the use of technology, and improved processes.
   o We focus on the skills and competencies needed to ensure we can deliver our strategic objectives.
   o Our plan is based on evidence and information which illustrates our current workforce and how it could look in the future through workforce diagnostics.

- o We are committed to developing our existing workforce and supporting internal career progression based on the clear understanding of our future workforce needs.
- o Our workforce planning will explore flexible and adaptable ways of delivering our services.

3. The overview of agreed workforce planning activities and actions at LFRS can be found in **appendix 1**. The recording/evidencing against each action is housed within the POD Plan 2024/27.

4. The agreed workforce recruitment plan can be found in **appendix 2.**

5. Workforce roles and responsibilities are set out in the Service Workforce Planning Procedure.

Risks and challenges

6. The risks identified here should be entered onto the Corporate Risk Register if they are to be considered as a Service priority.

7. There are a number of key themes emerging for the 2024-2025 workforce plan including:

Cultural/Leadership transformation

8. Following the initial introduction to the Core Code of Ethics, there is a need for embedding the principles across everything our workforce does in their day-to-day activities, supported by continued organisational development intervention.

9. The Service has committed to a move away from our current SHL competencies framework to the NFCC Leadership Framework. This will set the leadership behavioural expectations of staff at every level of the workforce, meeting the requirements of the Core Code of Ethics. This will be a significant piece of work, and aligning what we do with the requirements of Leading the Service Fire Standard.

EDI

10. The Service will currently be unable to meet its Public Sector Equality Duty requirements due to out-of-date equality monitoring data. There is a potential that this could negatively impact upon making informed decisions.

11. The timely completion of Equality Impact Assessments is required to ensure informed decisions are made, however, there are times when some business decisions are being made without an EIA, or the EIA is written post decision, which may mean that we are not showing due regard for our Public Sector Equality Duties.

Significant loss of operational experience and changes to crewing model
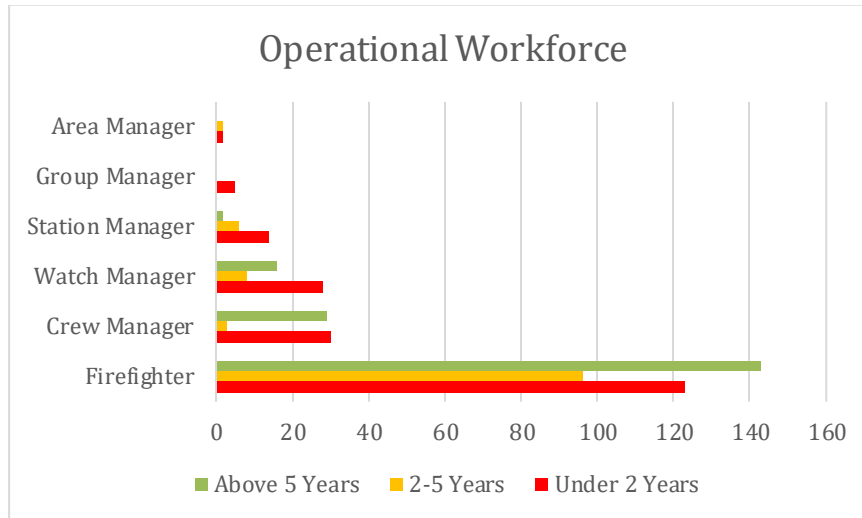
12. Over the last few years, the Service has seen a high rate of retirees and leavers from its operational workforce from Firefighter to Area Manager, which has created a significant loss of experience across the Service.

LFRS are currently in the process of removing Day Crewing Plus from its shift pattern, which has seen the need for the recruitment of additional firefighters to meet the crewing demands in the change of shift pattern, adding to the already above average numbers of operational staff working towards competence.

A change in On-Call contracted hours has led to a greater number of people required to meet the established number of hours required to ensure appliance availability, which in turn reduces the exposure to operational incidents across purely On-Call employees.

There remains a challenge in the number of firefighters across the Service with the level of qualification to ensure an effective response, namely Emergency Fire Appliance Driver, Level 1 Incident Command, and Breathing Apparatus Team Leaders (BA1).

Years in role as of February 2024.

Operational Workforce

(Bar chart showing years in role by rank, with three series: Above 5 Years, 2-5 Years, Under 2 Years)

Succession Planning

13. In order to identify and ensure we have the right people in the right roles at all times, local discussions should take place around an individuals' career aspirations as well as where they are in their career i.e. are there any intentions for promotion, cross functional movement, retirement etc. Currently these discussions do not take place, so we are unable to plan effectively.
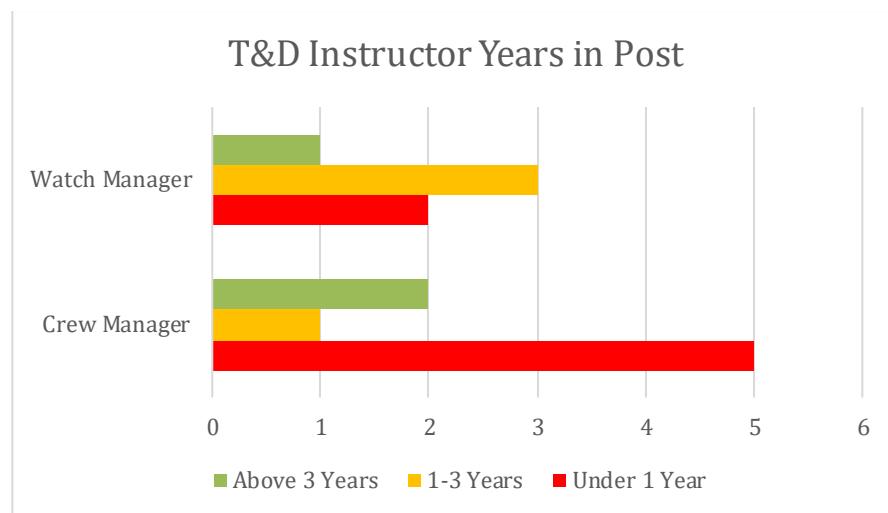
    The long term aim for succession planning is to harness an environment where we openly look at key roles within the Service and identify potential successors. This method is used currently for operational roles from Crew Manager to Group Manager and should also be used for Green Book staff where their role is seen to be a key role within the Service. True succession planning requires a high level of maturity within the organisation – it is not a democracy. We will continue to shape our approaches to succession and talent in a fair, transparent and planned way.

    There are multiple areas of success for progression with our non operational staff where we can demonstrate that there are potential career pathways – albeit not always as an upwards promotion but with opportunities for development and movement into other careers. We will continue to support this.

Training and Development resourcing

14. With the identified risk of loss of skills and experience within the operational workforce, combined with an uplift of specialist water and rope rescue stations, and a significant increase in the portfolio of required training/course provision, there is a higher demand upon Training and Development to deliver an increased programme with the same level of resource.

    There are challenges with recruitment and retention of instructors in Training and Development, which has led to challenges with experience of qualified full-time instructors.

T&D Instructor Years in Post

A horizontal bar chart showing years in post for T&D Instructors by rank. Legend: Above 3 Years (green), 1-3 Years (yellow), Under 1 Year (red). X-axis ranges from 0 to 6.

- Watch Manager: Above 3 Years = 1, 1-3 Years = 3, Under 1 Year = 2
- Crew Manager: Above 3 Years = 2, 1-3 Years = 1, Under 1 Year = 5

BA Workplace Trainers are not up to date, having not had any refresher training.

Fire Protection Resource

15. Unknown future of the funding received as part of the Premises Uplift Grant from 2025/26 onward, which currently funds 2 Fire Protection Inspecting Officer posts and 1 Fire Safety Auditor on fixed term contracts. If the Service is unable to pick up the costs post grant funding, this could impact upon the future number of fire safety audits undertaken.

16. The Premises Uplift Grant also funds a dedicated Corporate Communications Officer post on fixed term contract.

17. Funding from the New Burden Grant funds 1.5 Building Safety Regulator posts. The future of this funding is unknown.

Leadership development

18. In mid to late 2023, we started to invest in leadership development, providing new knowledge, skills and behaviours, linked to the gaps identified in the Core Code of Ethics Report. This is a key area of development for the organisation, and every effort should be made to provide opportunity for all managers to embed the new learning.

19. Whilst the initial take up has been encouraging, there is a need to build upon and embed development pathways for our leaders. The current trial of both Supervisory and Middle Manager development pathways will need to be thoroughly evaluated and where required further developed, ready to be rolled out in support of a talent management programme. Evaluation of the programme provides strong evidence and support for our S&MLP's

Professional development opportunities.

20. With limited development opportunity for Green Book staff identified nationally, it is important that we recognise the challenges this brings to the Service in being able to attract and maintain a diverse and talented workforce.

21. Educating line managers on the importance or identifying development opportunities for the members of their team(s) is essential. As is encouraging those team members to actively look for development opportunities.

22. The use of apprenticeships is currently underutilised and is a valuable source of development opportunities for existing employees; however, the Service must be prepared for the 20% off the job training hours that come with all apprenticeships.

Efficiency savings

23. We need to develop more effective and efficient ways of working, leading to cost reduction as part of our culture, focusing on creativity and innovation to work smarter for example by automating processes, digitalisation of paper based forms, reducing administration, and removing repetitive tasks. Where possible we will invest in developing the thinking and skills of our managers to consider process efficiencies using a produce once use often approach.

Purpose of the Workforce Plan

24. The aims of this plan are to address the key problems and opportunities we are facing, which include the following needs:

   o To become more proactive in collating and using information, to predict our immediate and future resourcing needs and solutions.
   o To create and embed a structured succession planning process.
   o To create and embed a structured talent management process.
   o To implement a robust workforce planning process, amalgamating the existing elements.
   o To become more responsive to the external factors impacting on our workforce.

This will be achieved through the realisation of the following objectives:

   o Integrating our strategic objectives with our resourcing and financial plans.
   o Dynamically and proactively use information and data to identify our future workforce requirements in terms of capability, size, shape, location and cost.
   o Creating a coherent process for succession planning.
   o Creating a coherent process for talent management.
   o Meeting our resourcing needs through agile deployment of our workforce.

Scope of the plan

25. The strategic direction for the Workforce Planning Group is to align the workforce to achieve the key priorities set out in the LFRS strategies. Key outcomes we want to deliver in each strategy are attached as **Appendix 3.**

   o Safer Communities
   o Response
   o Finance and Resources
   o People
   o Governance

26. It is recognised that our workforce is key to the efficient and effective delivery of our strategic objectives, therefore the appropriate workforce planning and People Strategy are critical to the development and support of professional, skilled, engaged, agile, and healthy workforce.

Our workforce – key information

Appendix 4 provides a summary of key workforce information for 2024, further workforce data can be accessed via the Workforce Planning Data Dashboard.

The future workforce – workforce projections 2024/2025

27. Our ambition is to create an approach to staffing that enables the Service to supply, provide, support, and develop the workforce.

    As outlined above, there are significant risks and challenges ahead that require a range of solutions. The challenges, risks, and solutions throughout this plan, are owned by everyone with the vision to provide a better aligned, supported and sustainable workforce for the future, able to deliver our strategic commitments.

    The commitments outlined throughout this plan support the changes required, to develop the workforce and mitigate the risks and challenges faced in 2024/2025 and beyond.

In this section we describe the changes we anticipate to the principal employee groups and the reasons for these changes.

Community Risk

28. Currently all Watch Managers are undertaking Fire Protection courses, however, is there a need for adding to the number of people doing FP courses? (e.g. WM's on stations). We will need to consider the additional training costs for the additional 9 Watch Managers to be trained in Fire Protection, post move from DCP.

29. Recruiting to the Hydrant Maintenance technician role and the lack of extant staff

30. Managing Fixed-Term Contracts within the current Premises uplift Grant money and the insecurity of those monies from 25/26 period.

Operational Response

31. Recruitment to fill 50 operational roles to meet the establishment changes between April 2024 and March 2025, as we move away from DCP. (38 Firefighter, 8 Crew Manager, 4 Watch Manager).

32. Recruitment and promotion processes to meet the demand of operational retirement profile.

    On-going recruitment of On-Call firefighters to meet Service needs.

    Upskilling of Operational workforce to meet the demand of skills shortage.

    Updating knowledge of BA Workplace Trainers.

People and Organisational Development

33. Creation of Workforce Planning dashboard to house data that supports effective Workforce Planning activities. This is built on the 7 Rights model, (Capability, Size, Shape, Location, Time, Risk, and Cost).

34. Review and development of the people processes to ensure they are simple, effective and customer focussed. This will be aligned with the NFCC Maturity Model and reviewed on a frequent basis.

35. Introduction and embedding of the NFCC Leadership Framework (replacing the current SHL framework), to support the Core Code of Ethics and underpin the two Leadership related Fire Standards.

36. Rewrite of the EDI scheme 2022 to 2027 is being undertaken, which will lead to a more targeted approach to meeting the EDI challenge.

37. Delivery of EIA Strategic and Practitioner Training.

38. Continue to offer apprenticeships as development opportunities.

Business Support

39. With a Service wide digital transformation initiative, Business Support are currently working on a 3-year resource plan to meet the potential peaks and troughs, as well as introducing generic roles to try and reduce the number of single points of competence, providing a more agile solution to their workforce need.

Supplying the required workforce

40. This section informs on how we intend to meet the ongoing demand, overcome the challenges, and reduce the risks identified in the above sections.

41. The NFCC Maturity Model framework will be used to self-assess our current practice. The insights gained from self-assessment are used to identify our current maturity level and support our development towards a best practice approach towards meeting the identified workforce needs of the Service.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

42. The rewrite of the EDI scheme 2024 to 2027 sets out how we aim to meet the challenges highlighted.

43. An up-to-date EDI data set will be created and added to the Workforce Planning dashboard. This will allow the Service to report against its Public Sector Equality Duties and inform how we address building on our diverse workforce needs through targeted recruitment intervention.

44. Our detailed EDI plan can be viewed by following the link xxxx

Candidate attraction

44. Our goal is to attract a diverse pool of candidates while optimising cost-effectiveness through thorough analysis of data, financial considerations, adherence to best practices, and legal requirements. To achieve this objective, our Diversity Community Engagement Officer collaborates with both operational and non-operational teams, actively participating in numerous recruitment and community events across LLR. They interact with various stakeholders including educational institutions, job centres and organisations dedicated to supporting underrepresented groups, ensuring comprehensive engagement and representation.

45. Our Diversity Community Engagement Officer uses their external network of community stakeholders to frequently distribute information regarding new vacancies, volunteering opportunities, and Fire Service recruitment events (i.e. Have a Go Days, online workshops).

46. Recruitment materials are continuously reviewed to incorporate up-to date information regarding all career opportunities at LFRS.

47. Our workforce strategy prioritises fostering an inclusive and engaging candidate experience throughout the recruitment process, ensuring each applicant feels valued and supported.

48. We are dedicated to enhancing the experience for candidates, administrative personnel, and hiring managers alike. In order to achieve this goal, we have procured a new applicant tracking system that will introduce positive and advantageous improvements to our recruitment process.

49. As part of our ongoing workforce planning strategy, we are developing a comprehensive positive action evaluation plan aimed at systematically assessing the effectiveness of our initiatives. This plan will include regular reviews to evaluate the impact of the efforts led by our community engagement officer and their contributions towards our organisational goals.

Recruitment

50. At Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, we recognise that our greatest asset is our people. Our success is built on the talent, dedication, and diversity of our workforce. Therefore, we are committed to attracting, selecting, and retaining the best candidates who represent our values and contribute to our collective success. Our Recruitment Policy outlines our principles in ensuring fair and transparent recruitment practices. By adhering to this policy, we aim to foster a culture that embodies our core values of professionalism, positivity and honesty, while upholding legal and ethical standards in all our recruitment efforts.

Retention

51. Our intent is to prioritise the retention of our organisation's valuable talent through a strategic workforce planning approach. By assessing current needs, forecasting future requirements, and implementing tailored initiatives from our workforce planning strategy, we aim to cultivate an environment where employees feel valued, supported, and empowered, fostering long-term commitment.

Talent development

Leadership development

52. Our leadership development provision covers 3 specific areas, Command, Leadership, and Management, developing rounded knowledge, skills, and behaviours.

    Operational managers are put through the relevant level of incident command training.

    We offer three Leadership Development programmes (Supervisory Leaders, Middle Leadership, and Executive Leadership Programme), dependant on the development needs and aspirations of our leaders.

    Management modules are based on the core requirements of people, process and systems, required for supervisory roles, and whereas middle manager modules cover elements such as budgets, report writing, project management, resource forecasting and planning.

53. We are developing dedicated leadership toolkits for our Supervisory and Middle Manager cohorts, where they can access course dates, learning material and self-development resources. Our programme is open to operational and non-operational staff.

54. We have introduced the NFCC Supervisory Leadership Development Programme, and Middle Leader Programme to our portfolio. These are self-study programmes, which are linked to the NFCC Leadership Framework and are CMI certified.

55. Review the provision of Level 3 Team Leader/Supervisor and Level 5 Department/Operations Manager apprenticeships as an alternative, making better use of available funding and resource.

Professional development

The Service supports and encourages professional development

Career paths

56. We plan to develop career pathways outlining development opportunities for our workforce.

    Career paths will suggest ways in which colleagues could develop their careers. Focus will be upon individual ownership and self-directed development with the differentiation between transferable skills and specialist elements to support flexibility within our workforce and aid movement to different roles. Career will focus upon continued development; this could include but is not exclusive to promotion.

Apprenticeships

57. Provide greater information and support for managers to understand the availability of apprenticeships, which can be discussed with their teams as part of the PDD process.

58. L&OD Advisor will continue to highlight Apprenticeships as a viable option as part of their on-going planning meetings with Department Managers.

59. See para 43, Leadership and Management Apprenticeships.

Coaching and mentoring

60. Implement and embed the use of the NFCC Coaching and Mentoring Portal.

61. Provide support and guidance to managers on how to guide members of their team to access coaching and/or mentoring via the NFCC Portal, as part of the PDD process.

62. Identify internal coaches and mentors and sign them up to NFCC Portal as internal providers only.

On the job training

63. Where possible, development activities draw on the knowledge and skills of existing LFRS colleagues. This has the advantage of allowing advice, guidance, and on-the-job training to be given in a way that is directly applicable to the work context, and highly relevant to the individual. Development by these means may take many forms, including, for example, one-to-one discussions, secondments, hands-on demonstrations, team meetings, mentoring and coaching.

64. Action Learning will be utilised as a model to develop and embed the new knowledge, skills and behaviours of leaders, whilst addressing organisational challenges and problems.

Succession planning

65. Effective local workforce planning is essential to succession planning, to achieve this we will work with line managers to coach them on having effective conversations and also communicate more widely why succession planning is important for future proofing the Service.

Flexible Duty System officers' development rota

66. We implement a succession management approach to the Officer rota and specialisms, through a development rota.

Appendix 1

Strategic Workforce Plan Objectives

Area	Objective	Actions	Timeframe	Comments
Cultural Transformation	Implementation and embedding of NFCC Leadership Framework	Utilise Action Learning Model to grow Develop our approaches to employee engagement	April 24	Direct links to CCE and Leading the Service Fire Standards.
Workforce Planning Data	Create a Power Bi dashboard to host the relevant strategic WFP data.	Identify data sets that inform on shape, size, capability, skills, location, cost, and risk. Establish how to extract the data from current location. Build dashboard to house the data.	Stage 1 March 24 Stage 2 May 24 Stage 3 June 24	Staged approach. 1. Shape, size, location, skill. 2. Cost. 3. Capability Risk will be identified at each stage.
Implement and embed NFCC Coaching and Mentoring	Provide coaching and mentoring opportunities as part of on-going workforce development.	Identify the process for requesting and provision of coaching and mentoring, linked to the NFCC Coaching Portal. Provide guidance to support access to coaching and mentoring. Communicate the provision via The Portal, and add to	Aug 24	See Transformational Leadership timeline

		Service Procedure. Identify internal mentors/coaches and sign them up to the portal.		

37

Appendix 2

Strategic workforce recruitment plan – February 2024 – March 2025

Key:

| Complete |
| High Priority |
| Medium Priority |
| Low Priority |
| Not yet scoped/started |

Identified needs and priorities	Which of the corporate strategies does this address?	What specific actions are needed to deliver the priority?	Risks/issues	Costs and On Costs	What are the timeframes for delivery?	When was this priority approved by the WFP Group?	Current status for monitoring
To meet the aims of abc.	Finance and Resource	Recruitment of xyz	The impact of not recruiting to this role will be …	Recruitment costs Salary On-costs	In role by xxxx		Recruitment pack being created

38

V1.0 March 2024

Appendix 3 Key strategic outcomes 2024 – 2028

Safer Communities

Fewer incidents with reduced consequences

- Targeted prevention, protection, and resilience activities.
- Manage business and community risk effectively.
- Effective partnership working

Response

Respond effectively to incidents

- Manage calls to fires and other emergency incidents.
- Provide 24/7 response to local, regional and international incidents.
- Supply the appropriate resources and attend incidents to meet the needs of our communities.
- Meet our communities' expectations in resolving emergencies.

Finance and Resource

Deliver value for money quality services

- A well-managed and transparent budget.
- Robust and effective procurement activities.
- Reliable, secure, and effective ICT systems.
- Fit for purpose estate, vehicles, and operational equipment People

People

An engaged and productive workforce

- Striving to improve the service we deliver.
- Listening and engaging with our employees and our communities.
- Ensuring our people. Know that their health and well-being is important to us.
- Being uncompromising in our commitment to diversity and an inclusive. Cohesive workforce.

Governance

Provide Assurance

- Well-informed communities.
- Well-informed staff.
- We'll know what our communities think.
- We'll know what our staff think.

V1.0 March 2024

Appendix 4

Workforce profile in March 2024

Number of employees – 663

Permanent posts – 658
Agency contract - 5

Gender

Male – 501 (75.6%)
Female – 157 (23.7%)
Not Known – 5 (0.7%)

Male	Number of people	% of workforce
Support	56	34.8
Fire Control	9	32.2
On-Call	197	93.2
Whole-time	355	90.8

Female	Number of people	% of workforce
Support	95	65.2
Fire Control	19	67.8
On-Call	14	6.8
Whole-time	36	9.2

Registered Disabled – 33 (5%)

Ethnic Origin

Ethnic origin	Number of people	% of workforce
White/White British	556	83.8
Black/Black British	5	0.7
Asian/Asian British	18	2.7
Mixed/Multi Ethnic	23	3.5
Not Stated	61	6.2

Age Profile

Operational Workforce

V1.0 March 2024

Age Band	Number of people	% of workforce
17 - 24	30	4.5
25 - 35	128	19.3
36 - 45	179	27
46 - 55	132	19.9
56 - 65	25	3.8
66 and over	0	0

Non-Operational Workforce (Including Fire Control)

Age Band	Number of people	% of workforce
17 - 24	7	1
25 - 35	30	4.5
36 - 45	46	6.9
46 - 55	50	7.5
56 - 65	42	6.3
66 and over	8	1.2

Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Number of people	% of workforce
Straight or Heterosexual	534	80.6
Bisexual	15	2.3
Gay/Lesbian	12	1.8
Not Answered	102	15.4

This page is intentionally left blank