



Anglia Ruskin University  
Division of Public Services  
BA (HONOURS) Public Services

**Modernisation and identity/masculinity in the UK Fire and Rescue  
Service**

An investigation into the modernisation and look into identity/masculinity in the  
UK's Fire and Rescue Service



Matthew Craig Catchpole

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation will be investigating the question: Modernisation and identity/masculinity in the UK Fire and Rescue Service! It will be looking into certain elements of modernisation in the UK Fire and Rescue service and using work and sources by theorists and government papers to investigate modernisation.

Identity/masculinity will also be investigated in this dissertation in the third chapter, this dissertation will also be looking into how identity/masculinity affects the UK Fire Rescue Service. Theorist's work on the subject of identity and masculinity will be used to investigate further into these two elements of a UK Fire Fighter.

Statistics are going to be used in the fourth chapter, looking into the numbers of women and ethnic minorities that are involved with the F&RS compared with the amount of white males. This chapter is to support chapter two and three looking at what modernisation has done to the numbers of representatives in the F&RS and how these numbers may pose a change to the identity/masculinity of the service.

This dissertation will be using these areas stated above in the conclusion, closing the investigation, discussing how modernisation links into identity/masculinity in the UK Fire and Rescue Service.

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## **Contents**

Formal Front Cover	1
Informal Front Cover	2
Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	4
Chapter 1: Introduction	7
Aims and Objectives	8
Structure of the Study	9
Chapter 2: Modernisation	12
Introduction	13
What is modernisation?	13
The need for modernisation: advantages and disadvantages	17
Conclusion	20
Chapter 3: Identity/masculinity	22
Introduction	23
Identity and masculinity in the fire service	23
Friction/trouble in the service with Identity/masculinity	29
Conclusion	32

Chapter 4: Statistics	33
Numbers of representatives	34
Pose a change	35
Chapter 5: Conclusion	37
Conclude, Modernisation and identity/masculinity in the UK Fire and Rescue Service.	38
PDP	41
Methodology	45
Appendices:	48
Appendix A: Fire and rescue service, operational statistics bulletin for England 2007/08 - Section one	49
Appendix B: Equality and Diversity Report 2009 - Fire and rescue service 2009 National Action Plan	55
References	56

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# Chapter 1

Introduction:

Aims and Objectives

Structure of the Study

## **Introduction**

Welcome to the first chapter of this dissertation the introduction, this chapter will be including aims and objectives and the structure of the study. Aims and objectives will outline what the dissertation is about and what is to come out of the dissertation. Structure of study outlines the way in which the dissertation will be set out and how.

### Aims and Objectives

Modernisation has become a very apparent part of life for all public services, especially the UK Fire and Rescue Service (F&RS) in the present climate 'powers that be' see the need for modernisation in the public services of the UK. With a look into the F&RS there are two main elements that are at the top of much discussion in the service. It is know that identity and masculinity plays a big part in the role/life of a fire fighter!

The plan of this dissertation is to look into as much resources and work specified on modernisation and identity and masculinity in the fire service, to be used in discussion and debate to answer the dissertation question. The end of the study will draw upon the conclusion on modernisation and identity and masculinity, showing its findings from the resources used in chapter five the conclusion!

The aim of this dissertation is to answer the question: Modernisation and identity/masculinity in the UK F&RS through secondary data, debating and discussion. The studies objective is to answer the question by the use of university work, academic books, government reports and other resources to come to the conclusion of the dissertation and author's answer. This dissertation will be using knowledge and resources gained by the author during their time on the Anglia Ruskin University Courses: Public Service Foundation Degree and BA (HONs) Public Service Degree.

To answer the question the study will be using well-resourced references from the public service degree, in particular from one of the lecturers at Anglia Ruskin University. He has a number of pieces of work, a book and a thesis looking into the UK F&RS looking into the subjects of modernisation, identity and masculinity. His main theory on fitting-in will be one of the main sources of research for the use of the dissertations investigation and discussion.

Supporting this work the study will be using government reports and books by other theorists on the subject of the question. The main book source for the dissertation will be 'United They Stood' a book by Seifert and Sibley (2005) on the 2002-2004 UK fire fighters dispute covering the issues brought up in the dissertation question.

### Structure of the Study

Chapters two (Modernisation) and three (Identity/masculinity) will both start with their own personal introduction, introducing and outlining what is to be

included in the chapter. These two chapters will also both end with their own personal conclusion finalising each section, so to give the chapter a starting point and end. Chapter four is a section on statistics used to back up the findings of chapters two and three. Chapter five is the dissertations conclusion, it will wrap up the findings in chapters two and three and will have the final thoughts and the dissertations answer.

In the second chapter of the dissertation it will be looking into modernisation and how it affects the UK F&RS. This chapter will be split into three sections, the first looking at what is modernisation? This section will show what modernisation is and what it means for the UK F&RS from the past few years to the present. The second section will be looking at, why the need for modernisation and a look into the advantages and disadvantages of modernisation if there are any? The third section will be focusing on the troubles seen and experienced with the introduction of modernisation in the UK F&RS and what has happened in the service since its arrival.

The third chapter will be looking into identity and masculinity in the UK fire and rescue service. This chapter will be split into two sections the first looking into identity and masculinity in the fire service, covering a more detailed look into a fire fighters view of themselves. The perception they have and how the public see them and how the factors of identity and masculinity in the fire service affect them.

The second section of this chapter will be looking into why these two factors (identity and masculinity) cause so much friction and trouble in the UK F&RS

service. The chapter will be especially looking into the stereotypes that have come to be associated with the fire service on a fire fighters identity and masculinity. The section will look at the problems identity and masculinity cause in the service its self between the fire fighters and the fire officers.

Chapter four will be a chapter on statistics looking into the numbers of women and ethnic minorities that are involved with the F&RS compared with the amount of white males. This chapter is in support of chapters two and three. The chapter will be split into two sections, the first looking at what modernisation has done to the numbers of representatives in the F&RS. The second section will be looking at how these numbers may pose a change to the identity/masculinity of the service.

The fifth chapter of this dissertation will be the conclusion, investigating, debating and disusing how modernisation links into identity and masculinity in the UK F&RS. The conclusion will be looking into the chapters before it finalises the findings from their research to answer the dissertation question.

The authors introduction, has show what is to be expected from this dissertation and why this choice of question in the first place. The aims and objectives section of the introduction has outlined the dissertations purpose. The structure of study section of the introduction has outlined the way in which the author will set out there dissertation and how they want it to look and say!

# Chapter 2

Modernisation:

What is modernisation?

The need for modernisation: advantages and disadvantages

Problems modernising.

## **Modernisation**

This chapter will be looking into what modernisation is in the first section, the second part of the chapter will be discussing why the need for modernisation and the advantages and disadvantages of modernisation in the F&RS. The third part of the chapter will be looking at the problems faced with modernising. Sources from the book 'United They Stood' by Seifert and Sibley (2005) will be the main source for work on modernisation. The chapter will also be using work from Baigent (2007) on modernisation to answer the question!

What is modernisation?

In March 1999 the Government published a paper to set out their key policies and principles reinforcing their long-term programme of reform to modernise the public services. This paper used sources from the Comprehensive Spending Review and the introduction of Public Service Agreements. The paper ensured that its agenda involved everyone working in public services and the general public who make use of these services.

The paper included the Government's commitments that they put together for the framework for the papers plan:

The first commitment that the Government wanted to achieve was that they would be looking ahead to the development of new policies for the public

services, to ensure progress in the long-term and not just for the short-term pressures.

The second commitment that they wanted to bring to the public services was that they needed to provide for the general public and not just for the ease of the public services.

The Government's third commitment was that they wanted to bring to public services an efficient and high quality service and not just be happy with an average service.

The fourth commitment was a promise to bring in new technology to meet the needs of the general public and to cater for business needs.

The Government's fifth commitment was that they would value the public services and not to put them down.

They stated that there were a number of key points which were going to be essential to the success of the plan and which were priorities to be at the core, they include Policy making, which is the development of a framework for excellence in policy making, including guidelines on best practice, new databases to support evidence-based policy making and appropriate training and development Cabinet Office (2000). This was also to include a complete review of Departments' policy making by the peers. The Government also wanted the public services to be available all day every day. They also promised routine checks of customers' opinions of the public services, with methods to improve the service where needed. They wanted to include Public Service Agreements from each individual service, setting out targets for modernisation and change, also a re-evaluation of all central and local

government services. The Government also wanted to develop a programme to modernise the civil service for the future, this programme would look into changes to recruitment/development policies.

A project board whose members would be from various backgrounds would oversee this modernising Government programme Cabinet Office (2000).

After the completion of this paper the Government thought it would be a good idea to invite comments/suggestions and set up an email address for responses.

Comments/suggestions made were: 'involving members of the public to a greater extent when developing policies and services; increasing mobility across the public sector as a way of bridging cultural divides; prioritising the tasks in the White Paper to ensure that we succeed in our objectives' Cabinet Office (2000).

One comment/suggestion that was made and would be relevant to the F&RS was: 'the importance of stronger co-ordination from the centre on key corporate issues such as the development of key electronic service delivery; and taking forward the Information Age vision without excluding any groups in society, for example people with disabilities' Cabinet Office (2000).

The modernisation agenda is the development of a public service, put forward by the government and would lead to changes in the service. At the moment and during the past years the F&RS are going through a big push in modernisation, renewing their policies and bringing the service up to date.

'Modernisation' is not a neutral step forward but a highly coloured version of progress rooted in market-style efficiency' Seifert & Sibley (2005).

Seifert and Sibley (2005) also go on to say that modernisation (government defined) had swept through the British state by the year 2002, at that the fire service had no where to hide from if happening to them.

The Fire Brigade Union (FBU) was made aware of modernisation coming into effect as early as the year 1999. When discussions came to light on a new white paper on the future of the service. 'Issues for the FBU would be how to respond to modernisation rather than how to bury their collective head in the sand' Seifert & Sibley (2005). As seen here there are already issues with the FBU and modernisation with the resistance to change! Section two of this chapter will be looking further into these issues surrounding modernisation.

Seifert and Sibley (2005) also go on to say that the modernisation of the fire service is best appreciated within a broader and deeper context of changes in British society and politics. Looking at the extreme results of modernisation as a market style reform means that it will bring in different forms of privatisation, may be leading to the selling off and leasing out, of parts of the work fire fighters do at the moment in there job role. This could lead the fire service along the same path, similar to what happened to British Rail, being sold off, privatised and turned into such companies as Network Rail and ONE. Modernisation also looks into marketisation and the distribution of power being given to the managers in a tight central controlled corset run by performance and financial targets.

Modernisation is seen as a code for a reform package, based on a mix of privatisation and private sector management inside a framework of

government audit, performance targets and a central control over local delivery of services Ironside and Seifert (2003).

The need for modernisation: advantages and disadvantages.

Modernisation has brought in to public services an introduction to market forces. Modernisation means for the fire services that it will take on a combination of more authority to make decisions at a central government level. This would see more local elected councillors being by-passed and the power would be given to the senior management in the stations. This would then help the service by bypassing the concerns of both the workforce and local community. Modernisation in its full effect would empower the central government and the senior managers in the fire service! Seifert & Sibley (2005).

From a fire fighters point of view and for some one who has been associated with the service for a length of time it may be hard for them to see any advantages to modernisation. As the modernisation of all public services has had a big impact, it may be true to say that the F&RS has had the biggest hit. Modernisation has really modified the role of a fire fighter and the service and is looking at making the F&RS more community focused. The advantages of modernisation means that the F&RS are now more focused on fire prevention and the priority of saving lives and injuries, rather than protecting buildings and property Seifert & Sibley (2005). The modernisation of the F&RS also saw the rank structure change from a rank based service to a service based

on roles. Three of the big advantages of the modernisation of the service were the look into new ways of providing fire safety legislation, the birth of community fire safety (bringing in the community and getting them more involved in fire safety) and equal opportunities within the service Seifert & Sibley (2005).

Modernisation disadvantages hit right to the heart of the fire service with their cultures, formal and informal. Modernisation favours the formal culture and this is where you start to see the problems:

Leadership has a huge impact on the everyday running of a fire station, elements like the struggle against the past hierarchal leadership (the ways things are done round here), look into the informal and formal cultures that are in the public services. The past hierarchal leadership act on people developing as we tell them, 'Mite is right' and it was seen as an exclusive organisation. Fire chiefs would see difference as a threat and would carrying on with the old ways of doing thing "we know how things should be done round here" Baigent (2007).

This view was part of the informal culture that puts up resistance against the formal culture. The formal culture is the present leadership, which wants to change methods and bring the service into the future. The informal culture is the past leadership, which wants things to stay as they are and believe the methods they are using now are working and there is no need for change or modernisation, which equals efficiency Baigent (2007).

This struggle between the two cultures is affecting the service delivery of many public services. This then has a knock on effect on fitting in Baigent

(2007), core values, the formal hierarchy and norms, rules and values Maslow (1987). All these things then build up to form resistance!

For new recruits in public services, fitting in Baigent (2007) is hard anyway, being new and fresh and an outsider of a team that may have been together for years is going to be hard. This is where the problems begin, if we have a new recruit who has been trained in the new methods brought forward by the modernisation of the service they are going to stand out even more. For them to fit in Baigent (2007) they are taken under the wing of one of the already existing team members. This is where the informal group influences the formal group and modernisation. The new recruit is then taught in the old ways of doing things and for them to fit in Baigent (2007) they follow suit. This process then changes the new recruits core values and they then fall into the informal cultures norms, rules and values Maslow (1987). This resistance of the informal culture taking away the new recruits methods and teaching them the 'old ways' is one of the main disadvantages modernisation suffers in the form of resistance!

Problems modernising.

In order for modernisation to happen in the fire service it needs to break through the labour intensive system, that a every day fire station has been living by for many years. The F&RS has a strong traditional reputation of collective bargaining. The F&RS has found that modernisation has found the necessary skills to undermine national conditions of service, to reduce the

input of the unions (FBU). Modernisation is breaking up the strong work groups the F&RS have had years building up.

'This has to be done covertly in the name of greater efficiency and greater local flexibility, as well in the name of the customer. What remains a puzzle to many is the 'why' of it all.' Seifert & Sibley (2005)

What the F&RS can't understand with modernisation is why they have changed things, what is wrong with dedicated staff working in efficient sectors on behalf of an accountable employer. The F&RS don't see why the need for the change of direction!

Seifert and Sibley's (2005) answer to why the need for modernisation and a change in direction looks at three elements. Modernisation would give you a tighter control on cost and performance for central government. The state would also take greater power to enforce a greater inequality; so to make an easier route for privatisation. They would be able to do this by weakening the opposition from the unions (FBU) and electing local councillors and professional experts (specialists, Belbin 1981).

Seifert and Sibley's (2005) also believe that modernisation would have to seize the ideological high ground associated with the delivery of efficient services and thereby undermine residual in welfarism and socialism. To weaken the unions and opposition making sure they have no say or standing in F&RS ideology.

The Chapter has looked at modernisation and what it is, discussing its involvement with the F&RS as a plan to help and improve the service by making it more into a marketisation service and delegating the power between

managers. The first section has also looked at the extreme cases of modernisation and how it could see the privatisation of the F&RS.

The second part of the chapter discussed the advantages and disadvantages of modernisation in the F&RS and looked at fire prevention and the priority of saving lives and injuries and the advantage of being a more community focused service. The third part of the chapter looked at the problems faced with modernising looking at the issues with the FBU and the union's troubles with the new F&RS due to modernisation.

# Chapter 3

Identity/masculinity:

Identity and masculinity in the fire service

Friction/trouble in the service with Identity/masculinity

## **Identity/Masculinity**

This chapter will be looking into identity and masculinity in the fire service. The second part of the chapter will be discussing Friction/trouble in the service with Identity/masculinity. Sources from Baigent (2007) will be the main academic work used for this section. This chapter will also be using work and sources from the book 'United They Stood' by Seifert and Sibley (2005).

### Identity and masculinity in the fire service

The word "Masculinity" is often used to describe men's behaviour. The dictionary describes masculinity as 'behaviour appropriate to a male' Baigent (2007).

So why would a fire fighter see them self as masculine or the public perceive fire fighters to be masculine and male. One look into the role of a fire fighter and the things they have to do within their everyday life as a fire fighter, may explain why they see themselves as masculine and why there is a stereotype that all fire fighters are male!

A fire fighter has a very demanding job and there is a dominant physical side to the work involved. Fire fighters back up their evidence to be masculine by the nature of their work. The extreme physical skills, determination and strong sense of public service Baigent (2007) in their line of work are the core reasons for owning the title of being 'masculine'. Stereotypically fire fighters

are seen to be white males also feeding to the stereotype that you have to be male to be masculine and in a full physical job.

From a fire fighters point of view they see their identity in their work or their behaviour as 'masculine' in the F&RS. The same might be said whenever 'boys' get together; their behaviour could be judged as masculine or a form of masculinity. In effect, anything that men do they may describe as 'masculine' Baigent (2007). In the next section of this chapter it will continue further with the look into stereotypes with identity/masculinity in the F&RS.

Baigent (2008) paper *Heroes and Masculinity* work in progress, looks at the phenomenon of masculinity not only as a discourse practised to exclude women from a source of power in society. Could this then see male fire fighters using this practise on women fire fighter in the service to exclude them, or can this be a look into what male fighters use against all women. Baigent (2008) looks at this phenomenon of masculinity discourse practice as being part of the hierarchy amongst men, which can be linked to the informal hierarchy in the F&RS. 'Some masculinities are more important than others. For the people who look up at heroes, masculinity in a heroic sense as portrayed by people in uniform is elevated and sought after' Baigent (2008).

Baigent (2008) then goes on to ask the question; perhaps it is possible to identify masculinity at work in the emergency services. However, how does this differ from the military? He believes that it is; possible to suggest that when people in the emergency services argue that their work is masculine because it is life threatening (Paoline 2003), unlike the military at war where

the work is clearly dangerous, they may have to encourage the belief that their work is dangerous and therefore masculine Baigent (2008).

Baigents (2008) paper *Heroes and Masculinity* work in progress provides some sense that masculinity can provide for the fire fighters there needs (Maslow 1987) by linking social behaviour, image management, testing and fitting-in with a Foucauldian Gaze.

Sources used and looked into by Baigent (2008) show arguments that suggested 'people must prove they can fit with the informal professional understandings of teams at work – particularly when these reduce the danger at work. However, it may a bit late to test someone, if the first time this happens is in a potentially dangerous situation'. Baigent (2008) goes on to say that; if people do not follow the rules they might make a situation that is contrived to look dangerous into a reality if they do not follow the rules. Therefore, teams often test their members using humour.

Fire fighters are not the only ones who test themselves and their colleagues. This testing process can also show elements of the masculinity and also identity within the service. The tests can be seen as going on between the young or new recruits and the older more experienced (informal culture) fire fighters this show a very similar pattern as in the military.

'Fire fighter's keenness to enter buildings that are alight and have the potential to kill them, and how this keenness continues throughout their 30 year's of service does not balance with the outcome for those in the military, who quickly loose the ambition to be brave when actually provided with the

opportunity' Baigent (2008). This does not work with the resistance to attempts to make the fire fighters job safer by enhancing more of a collected commitment to the community, for example looking into fire prevention that in turn would reduce fires and danger Baigent (2008).

Baigent (2007) argues that to provide some early warning of what male dividends might be, it is important to note that an argument will develop that will suggest the way fire fighters go about their work could be seen as a test to their identity/masculinity. This allows the fire fighter to assemble, reproduce and control their masculinity in the terms of their own self-esteem; their status in their peer group; their status with the public. This point also looks into a fire fighter's identity, they get their identity from their self-esteem, peer group and the public they serve. Baigent (2007) also goes on to say that however, a fire fighters status and their masculinity evolves from the particular way that fire fighters arrange how their work will be done (which might be seen as the skills of being a fire fighter), fire fighters increasingly have to resist senior staff who attempt to take away the means through which fire fighters prove themselves by deskilling and cutting down the roles of the F&RS. This is where modernisation tackles the fire fighter's identity/masculinity and comes in to play by, in theory feminising their job/role. Increasing jobs like fire prevention duties focusing less on their duties to protect buildings and property which where seen to be the really masculine traits of the job.

Fire fighters may see and believe that their masculinity is pre-given! Examples of this may be when fire fighters are out on a call and set out to 'prove' their

'calling' Baigent (2007) fire fighters test themselves to prove they can live up to the pre-given masculinity! The fire fighters also see themselves as having to prove to their fellow colleagues in the watch and to the public that they belong and have the 'required skills' for the job (identity/masculinity).

The tests that the fire fighters personally put themselves under to prove their masculinity can be subject to the influence from the Foucauldian gaze (Foucault 1977; Rabinow 1986). The 'gaze' is constantly observing the watch in their operational duties. Baigent (2008) suggests that an efficient watch will develop trust amongst themselves by establishing protocols for firefighting, then submitting to their own gaze and that of the watch, to 'prove' they can be trusted not to let themselves and the watch down. Baigent (2008) believes that when there is a; newcomer to the watch this might disrupt these protocols and endanger the team.

A place where the fire fighters can avoid the 'gaze' and where it has a weaker presence is surprisingly the station, with the station being more of a homely presence with its more relaxed, stress free environment. Though in the fire station the fire fighters are still putting their masculinity to the test in the two cultures of the informal and formal hierarchy. They also test their masculinity in simple ways during the time they have in which to relax, through such manners like playing and competing in games, which are more related to pub culture. Games like snooker, pool and darts, which are stereotypically seen as male sports and show and feed masculine traits.

Female fire fighters are also now actively defending their rights to be fire fighters through their networks. Female fire fighters are as active as their male counterparts in constructing and testing themselves Baigent (2007).

Hearn (1994, 1996) and Connell (1995:67, 2000) see the fire fighter as a view of a celebration to manual labour and being an important part of proletarian masculinity and see there is no objective consistency to masculinity (Baigent 2007). Men are always going to construct an individual masculinity according to their cultural understanding, this understanding then gives the men a false view of the standard of what a man is supposed to be Baigent (2007).

Masculinity is seen as a social application that has many forms and for each of these you can expect to find a social reason for their existence and not a biological one (Rabinow 1986: 4 and Baigent 2007).

Baigent (2007) defines a Fire fighters' masculinity as a social construction with a central feature that fire fighters achieve by passing the test of being seen as a good fire fighter. He goes on to say what the standards are for the fire fighters: the tests are set by the watch in the form of 'universal' protocols for fire fighting and individually each fire fighter has their own subjective interpretation of what these standards are. When a fire fighter first gets to the fire they set out to achieve their own standards, their watch's standards and the public's perception of a fire fighters standards Baigent (2007). Baigent (2007) believes that other elements like the local community can have an influence into a fire fighters masculinity. He talks about how, throughout the country each watch will have its own 'agreed' way of fitting-in with these elements of identity/masculinity and how those who fire fighters see as unable to achieve these standards then become an 'other', An other is a person who

is someone the fire fighters marginalise and judge themselves against. This combination is what fire fighters call their masculinity Baigent (2007).

#### Friction/trouble in the service with Identity/masculinity

The problems that surround the fire and rescue service on identity/masculinity are ones that are a hindrance to modernisation. The Stereotypical view that all fire fighters are white and male are one reason why modernisation of the F&RS is struggling to represent the communities they serve. The power struggle between the informal and formal cultures is also a very tender subject when you come to look at why the F&RS is finding so much trouble with identity in particular.

This also explains the difficulties between fire fighters and their officers this is made especially worse when fire fighters resistance gets more heated, as for an example the method of striking. Baigent (2007) and Giddens (1982) see fire fighters resistance as a classic case of radical awareness to fight against the common enemy of the economic drawbacks that the formal culture (modernisation) has brought to the watch! These two theorists also believe that the fire fighters resistance could be more to do with the action of the watch acting conservatively to protect their way of proving their masculinity against the formal culture and its senior staff who want to stop this action.

Fire fighters now see senior management as the face of modernisation because they have to enforce the new roles and changes. What some fire fighters don't realise is that the senior management once used to be fire

fighters and for them to be promoted they had to give up their fire fighter identity. This means they had to give up their physical skills, hands on working, raw fire fighter 'masculinity' and the shared understanding that they had whilst they were fire fighters. This is where the informal group does not associate themselves with the formal group the fire fighters feel that the senior management have lost their status as fire fighters and also their membership to the informal group. Officers do dispute these facts and believe that they are still fire fighters but the fact of the matter is they have lost their identity as a fire fighter. Due to this officers are now embracing their new informal culture and identity as 'the boss' establishing their status by managing and leading the fire fighters due to modernisation.

One way officers may justify this is to now interpret efficiency in economic rather than in-service terms. Officers can then 'prove' their authority by attempting to deskill and cut the fire service to improve its 'economic' efficiency Baigent (2007). This quote also supports the theory from Seifert and Sibley (2005) that modernisation 'has to be done covertly in the name of greater efficiency'.

Friction/trouble in the service with Identity and masculinity looks at the stereotype of the white male fire fighters Identity and masculinity under threat from modernisation and the informal group pushing through equal opportunities and equality. This situation has been the 'thorn in the side' of the modernised F&RS because of the stereotype that 'firemen' are all white males and a fire fighters masculinity can only be achieved through these two factors. This could be seen to be why fire fighters see women and ethnic minorities as a threat to their identity and masculinity.

Fire fighters have developed their skills, qualities and attributes in common with each other, associated by the fire fighters job and the image of a hero. With fire fighters being predominantly men, they form their informal hierarchy (which the senior staff members see themselves as outsiders to). This point on hierarchy shows how it goes back to a past mention made in the investigation, that modernisation does not break through at the 'ground floor level' (fire fighters). The older fire fighters pass down to the younger fire fighters (who are fresh from training and have been taught the new ways due to modernisation) their knowledge about the skills, qualities and attributes necessary for fire fighting 'the good old way'. The younger fire fighters will now learn from their peers and the watch in the way in which the informal hierarchy wants them to. This can also lead to other forms of behaviour. These behaviours in the watch, described as references to behaviour of boys or youths, which has now, again become acceptable for the fire fighters. Baigents (2007) report on fire fighters masculinity looks at the 'false monolith' of a fire fighters masculinity being developed by themselves in their environment and the informal hierarchy, Baigent (2007) refers to this behaviour/identity as 'firefighters' masculinity'.

The view of the fire fighter is that they see identity/masculinity to be in a generic sense as if all men had it, they would, when pushed, identify 'firefighters' masculinity as characterising something different, even something special that 'other' men do not have or achieve Baigent (2007).

The Chapter has looked at Identity and masculinity in the F&RS discussing why fire fighters see themselves as masculine and how they portray their masculinity in the watch and to the public. The chapter has also looked into definitions of masculinity and Biagent's (2007) views of a fire fighters identity and masculinity. The second part of the chapter looked into the friction and troubles that the F&RS have with identity and masculinity with fire fighters. This section has looked at the stereotypes that the F&RS have and the realistic facts of these stereotypes. This section also went into more detail in looking at the trouble with the informal culture and its influence in bringing friction to the F&RS.

# Chapter 4

Statistics:

Numbers of representatives

Pose a change

## Statistics

### Numbers of representatives

<b>Table 1.3: Firefighters – Gender &amp; Ethnicity as at 31 March 2004–2005 (per cent)</b>					
	<i>Gender</i>		<i>Ethnicity</i>		
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Ethnic minority</i>	<i>Not stated</i>
2004	97.6	2.4	94.7	2.1	3.2
2005	97.5	2.5	94.3	2.2	3.4
2006	97.2	2.8	92.7	2.5	4.8
2007	96.9	3.1	90.7	2.6	6.7
2008	96.7	3.3	90.5	2.8	6.7

2008's Statistics above show that fire fighters in England are mostly male and white – 3.3 per cent of fire fighters are women and 2.8 per cent of firefighters are from ethnic minority backgrounds Fire Statistics (2008).

These statistics look into the F&RS from the years 2004 to 2008 from the Fire and rescue service, operational statistics bulletin for England 2007/08. Table 1.3 shows in per cent the numbers of representatives for the genders and ethnicity. As seen from the table you can see that the majority of fire fighters from the years 2004 to 2008 are white males. These statistics back up the facts of the stereotypes linked with the F&RS that fire fighters are white males! Past statistics of the F&RS look no better than these findings, these past years statistics still show that the majority of fire fighters represented are

predominately white males with women accounting for a much smaller number and the ethnic minority nearly non-existent.

Pose a change

Over the last five years, the proportion of women firefighters has increased from 2.4 per cent in 2004 to 3.3 per cent in 2008 Fire Statistics (2008). See *appendix A, figure 1*

The above point shows that modernisation in the F&RS has been making a change and the F&RS is now slowly delivering an equal service. Diversity and equal opportunities in the F&RS came from the modernising of the service and is showing the increase of women in the F&RS, down to the success of the modernisation of the service. Though numbers are on the up and there are increasing numbers of women joining the service every year this is still a very low percentage. The F&RS is still not achieving there diversity and equal opportunities percentages for women representatives in the service they need these numbers to improve so they can go on to fulfil the representation of the communities of the UK.

Over the same period the number of firefighters from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased from 2.1 per cent to 2.7 per cent Fire Statistics (2008). See *appendix A, figure 2*

This point shows that now that modernisation is in full effect for the F&RS that there has been change and the F&RS is pushing to deliver equality to the service. The increase of ethnic minorities in the F&RS has been the success

of the modernising of the service bringing in diversity and equal opportunities. Though the numbers have been increasing every year this is still a very low percentage for the representative number of ethnic minorities in the service and for the diversity and equal opportunities that each watch have to represent their community.

However the number of firefighters for whom no ethnicity is recorded has risen from 3.2 per cent to 6.7 per cent Fire Statistics (2008). See *appendix A, table 1.3*

These statistics show increases of the women and ethnic minorities in the F&RS though these numbers are not enough. Even with the help from the F&RS – 2009 National Action Plan from the Equality and Diversity Report 2009 (Fire and Rescue Service 2009) See *appendix B*. This report shows the leadership and promoting inclusion that the service is using, though this is not enough to attract women and ethnic minorities.

These statistics show that white males are still predominantly representing the F&RS. With the service functioning with these per cents the white male 'fireman' still doesn't have a threat to there masculinity and there identity! The stereotype of the fire fighter is still to this day seen and you can see why!

# Chapter 5

Conclusion:

Conclude, Modernisation and identity/masculinity in the UK Fire and Rescue  
Service.

## **Conclusion**

Now this dissertation has gone through all four of the chapters, this section the conclusion will be going on to look in to there findings. The conclusion will be coming up with the dissertations answer for this research linking modernisation into identity and masculinity in the UK F&RS. The conclusion will be looking through all the investigating, debating and discussing on modernisation and identity and masculinity in the UK F&RS from the research, looking into the chapters and finalising there findings.

Chapter two has looked at modernisation investigating the consequences that it has on the F&RS. The chapter illustrates how modernisation has turned the service into a marketisation service and delegating power of leadership and responsibilities between managers. The chapter also looked at the extreme motions of modernisation and how it could lead to the privatisation of the F&RS. Fire prevention has been introduced as a new role within the F&RS, looking at the priority of saving lives and injuries through prevention and for the F&RS to be a community focused service. The research also went over the trouble faced with the FBU and union's issues with the F&RS modernising.

Chapter three Identity/masculinity in the F&RS looked at the fire fighters portrayal of masculinity in the watch and to the public. The chapter looked at the frictions and troubles that the F&RS have with identity and masculinity with fire fighters and the public's perception. Investigating the stereotypes that the F&RS have and chapter four looked at the facts of these stereotypes

through statistics. This section also went on to talk about the trouble with the informal culture and its influence in bringing friction to the F&RS and resisting the formal culture.

The answer from this dissertation on the linking modernisation into identity and masculinity in the UK F&RS suggests that modernisation has had a positive impact on the F&RS and the fire fighters masculinity and identity!

Since modernisation has come in to play, the F&RS has seen the service change there rank based structure to a structure based on roles. Modernisation has and is turning the F&RS into more of a pro-active service with the introduction of new roles such as Fire Prevention. With modernisation taking away more of the masculine traits of the job and putting the priory on these new roles, this may be seen that modernisation is feminising the role of a fire fighters job. This feminising of the role of a fire fighter is having a positive knock on affect with a fire fighters identity and masculinity. Fire prevention means that the fire fighter will be spending more time educating and doing more work to set up and enforce prevention that the masculine traits of the job like fighting fire will become less of an importance to the role of a fire fighter. The 'fireman' identity will then in turn suffer to the hand of modernisation as the new roles become more common practise for the fire fighters to do, the public and all so the fire fighter themselves (the watch) will see there masculine identity being feminised. This will in turn have a positive affect on the stereotype of the fire fighter with modernisation affecting the representation of the F&RS. With more and more women and ethnic

minorities becoming fire fighters this would see the identity of a fire fighter change and break the stereotype that all fire fighter are white males.

Modernisation would also show in future years more positive statistics showing the white male representation of the F&RS going down in numbers through the years and the numbers for women and ethnic minorities going up. With the service functioning with these per cents the white male 'fireman' would see a threat to there masculinity and identity! These future statistics would challenge the stereotype of a fire fighter.

This dissertation research has finally come up with the answer that the link between modernisation and identity/masculinity in the UK F&RS is to be a positive step forward for the future of the UK F&RS. The positive link from modernisation to identity/masculinity is that modernisation will in the long term change the service for the good, bringing it up to date with the current time and climate. Which is a must needed change so that the service can provide and cater for the UK needs in the present and for see able future. This change will be to the benefit of fire stations around the UK in the future showing a better representation of their communities. With all the watch's in the F&RS at each station representing the community they serve, it in turn will portray a more positive identity for the UK F&RS. This in turn will help fight or see the end of the problems that were found in the service because of and due to the issues surrounding masculinity!

## Professional Development Plan

### (PDP)

Since my time at Anglia Ruskin I have come to learn many new ways of research and producing work in relation to my academic career. I have seen myself really improve from my time in college to now in my final year of university. I have now got a clear and improved view of the workings of a library and how I can make it work to my advantage, therefore benefiting myself by making full use of all that it offers. I can now structure and write an essay in the academic way the university expects and feel confident in using other resources for the use of references and to help me with my own work.

When I joined the course my career aspects had been the same plan for a few years, I wanted to get my degree then join the police force in the local area where I live. Since my time on the course I have been ever more drawn to the fire and rescue service and my plans of being a police officer are now no longer my main priority.

The aspects of the degree that have interested me the most have to be the work experience modules, these are the main reason for why I now want to join the fire and rescue service. My time at Park Side fire station in Cambridge really opened up my eyes to the role/life of a fire officer and how it fitted all the aspects of a job I want to see myself in!

My time on the course has seen my friendship with my other classmates build in to a strong and secure team environment. I had already seen myself as a person who could work in a team but I now can see that the way in which to get the best out of myself and to work to my full potential is by being in a

group situation. The course has given me a strong sense of teamwork and why it is important to have this in a public service! The course has helped me to develop more confidence in public speaking through the many presentations we did over the years.

My dissertation topic relates to my career aspirations as modernisation is playing a massive part especially at the moment for the fire and rescue service. As I want to join the fire and rescue service having the knowledge on modernisation and knowing why it is happening and the need for it would give me an understanding and advantage in the job.

I have found the process of writing my dissertation the hardest piece of work I have had to do in my academic life, just the sheer size of the dissertation gave me problems. I found the word count scale of a maximum of ten thousand words very challenging and testing personally for me to complete. The writing of so many words and the use of so many different resources really did test me and stretch my skills. The amount of resources I used and combined with putting them all together, so that they worked to answer my question did cause me problems and making sure that I used them to get the full capacity out of my work was very difficult for me.

On the completion of my dissertation it has helped me to achieve some of the outcomes of the Public Service BA (Hons) pathway skills. While writing up my dissertation I have had to be independent and use my managing skills to evaluate a range of learning resources/information resources for my research.

With my question being on modernisation in the fire and rescue service I have had the chance to use and reflect on my work experience at Park Side fire station and use it in my dissertation.

My dissertation has helped me to improve my written communication, though as it is an assignment I have not had the chance to improve my oral communication. The dissertation has also helped me to improve myself by working independently as it wasn't group based.

My dissertation involved a lot of research and use of other works on the subject of my question, so my dissertation helped me to manage and evaluate a range of resources. I also had to apply ethical understanding to specific public service contexts through my dissertation because of my question content.

The skill of communication, learnt by taking part in the presentations, would benefit me in my career, as in a public service environment communication is key, you need it in all elements of your job with the public and with the communication within the service. From a personal point of view these skills have also been reflected in my day-to-day living and I now find that I can hold and make an improved conversation. Professionally these skills will help me hugely in the role of a fire officer and will give me an advantage in applying to get a job in the fire and rescue service.

The course is very work related/specific and really has given me a good look into all the elements of a public service. The research for my dissertation has also opened my eyes to what goes on behind the scenes in the fire and rescue service, so that I know what I am really looking at as a career.

I have enjoyed my time on the course and my only criticism would be that I believe the degree could do with more practical learning and hands on experience (work experience).

To conclude, my experience in doing my degree and with the writing of my dissertation, in this my final year at university, I have seen myself really improve. I believe that I have developed much stronger skills in both communication and working in a team.

## Methodology

For my dissertation I focused on a certain topic because during my time doing the degree I have grown more and more interested in the F&RS. My topic on modernisation and identity/masculinity is a very sensitive subject with the F&RS especially at this moment in time. As I want to look into a career in the F&RS my dissertation has helped me to understand the behind the scenes scenarios which go on in the F&RS. I choose my topic so that it would help me to understand the political/ethical involvements in the F&RS.

The literature research I did has mostly been taken from my time at the university and on the public service course. The sources of the research were mainly a book on the fire service and Government papers, by the Home Office. Research carried out by Baignet, was also a main source for my dissertation as I had worked with him through my three years of being on the course. These sources I found like second nature to use as I had been using them through my time on the course and knew that they were reliable and easily accessible.

Throughout the progress of the dissertation I did not manage to find much information on modernisation from the sources I used. The main work I have used for modernisation was research from Baignet (2007) and the book United They Stood by Seifert and Sibley (2005). Other than the problems around obtaining literature on the modernisation of the fire service I found no gaps in the literature needed for my dissertation.

Statistics that I used in the dissertation were from reliable government sources/web sites. The statistics I used I made sure that they are easily assessable and are also used in the national statistics. Some statistics have been absent from what was shown in the dissertation (only because it was not relevant) but accompany the statistics shown in my appendices.

My dissertation does not use primary data, this is because the data needed for this dissertation was mainly statistics that were easily assessable from the necessary websites. I also had limited knowledge on gathering and displaying statistics, and so reliable sources were used as I understood and found them better to work with within my dissertation.

Secondary research material has been triangulated to incorporate a variety of sources and methods Fielding (1986). Meaning that secondary data gave me a much more detail aspect for the work/research needed for the dissertation. The secondary data was used through out the dissertation and made the debate of the dissertation question more supported.

The sources I used for this dissertation came from academic books and official Government papers. Secondary research proves to be good useful information that is reliable and have some strength behind it, you must be careful and look closely into it. When looking in to my secondary information for my dissertation I made sure I used sources from or those that had been advised when doing my public service course. Making sure I know where the

research came from so I recognize that it is relevant and that I was on the right path.

Strengths and weaknesses of the research came in the form of bias, it was evident that in some of the works that they took a particular stance on what they were debating. The book by Seifert and Sibley (2005) stood out as one of the most biased pieces of work as it came from the firefighters' view and beliefs. The book also strongly supported the fire brigades union and their take on modernization.

The methods used by the original authors of the research used both primary and secondary data. The strengths to Baigents (2007) work was that he researched deeply into topics on masculinity, sexism, racism and homophobia, he also worked on and had people work with him on pieces of research so that he could widen his knowledge and sources. Other strengths in Baigents (2007) work can be seen in his primary data, such as the data produced from his three focus groups in the different stations, where he observed firefighters in their own environment.

Weaknesses that were found in Baigents (2007) and Seifert and Sibley (2005) work was their use of the secondary data.

Baigent (2007) used 30 years of his own personal experience in the fire service to produce his ideas, theories and work. He recognized that his own time in the service did not justify as a good enough source for secondary data. The same can be said for Seifert and Sibley (2005) they took the stance of the fire officer and FBU giving their work a biased view!

# Appendices

## Section 1 - Fire and rescue service personnel

### Number of staff in post on 31 March 2008

<b>Table 1.1: Number of staff in post on 31 March 2004-2008</b>					
<i>Number of staff in post (FTE)<sup>1</sup></i>					
	<i>Whole time</i>	<i>Retained duty system<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Fire control</i>	<i>Non-uniformed</i>	<b>Total</b>
2004	31,826	10,853	1,435	6,220	<b>50,334</b>
2005	31,097	11,037	1,448	6,762	<b>50,344</b>
2006	30,596	11,321	1,470	7,231	<b>50,618</b>
2007	30,558	11,860	1,491	7,390	<b>51,300</b>
2008	30,580	11,744	1,522	7,800	<b>51,646</b>

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

2. In 24-hour units of cover.

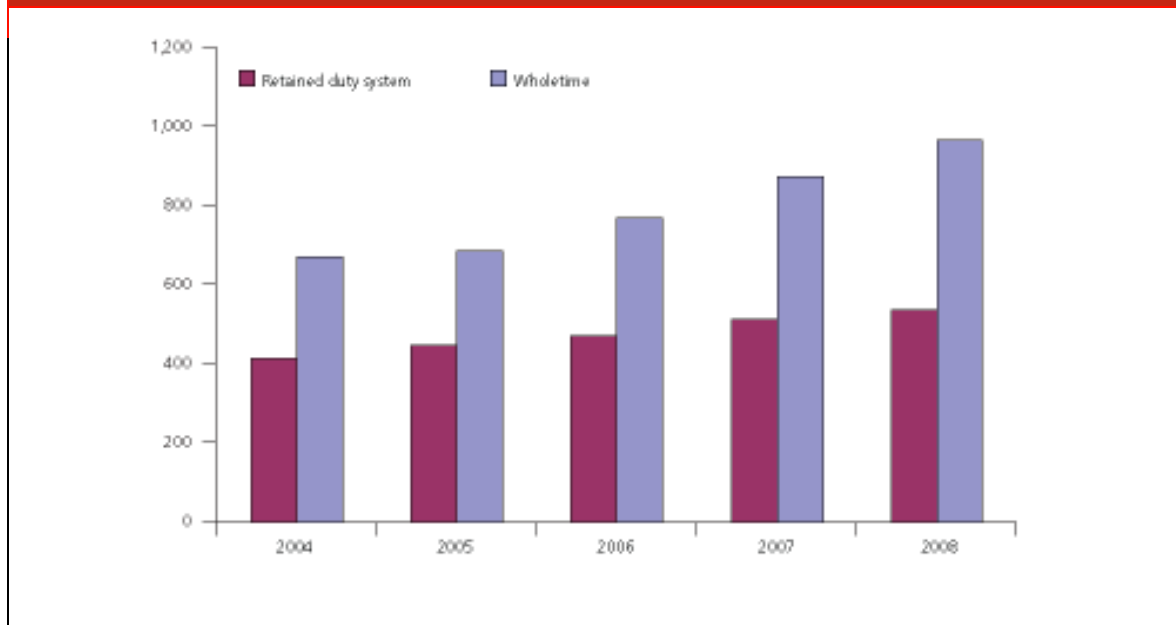
1.1 There was 51,646 full-time equivalents fire and rescue service staff in England as at 31 March 2008, representing an increase of 3 per cent over the last five years.

### Firefighter strength

<b>Table 1.2: Firefighter strength (FTE) by Role – 2008</b>			
<i>Role</i>	<i>Whole time</i>	<i>Retained duty System</i>	<b>Total</b>
Brigade Manager	168		<b>168</b>
Area Manager	221		<b>221</b>
Group Manager	706	3	<b>709</b>
Station Manager	1,608	78	<b>1,686</b>
Watch Manager	4,606	1,011	<b>5,617</b>
Crew Manager	4,104	2,025	<b>6,129</b>
Firefighter	19,168	8,626	<b>27,794</b>
<b>All Firefighters</b>	<b>30,580</b>	<b>11,744</b>	<b>42,324</b>

- 1.2 As at 31 March 2008, there was 42,324 full-time equivalents operational staff (whole time and retained duty system firefighters) in England. This includes all roles of firefighters including senior managers.
- 1.3 Firefighters in England are mostly male and white – 3.3 per cent of firefighters are women and 2.8 per cent of firefighters are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

**Figure 1: Women firefighters in England 2004–2008**



- 1.4 Over the last five years, the proportion of women firefighters has increased from 2.4 per cent in 2004 to 3.3 per cent in 2008. Over the same period the number of firefighters from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased from 2.1 per cent to 2.8 per cent. However the number of firefighters for whom no ethnicity is recorded has risen from 3.2 per cent to 6.7 per cent.

**Table 1.3: Firefighters – Gender & Ethnicity as at 31 March 2004–2005**

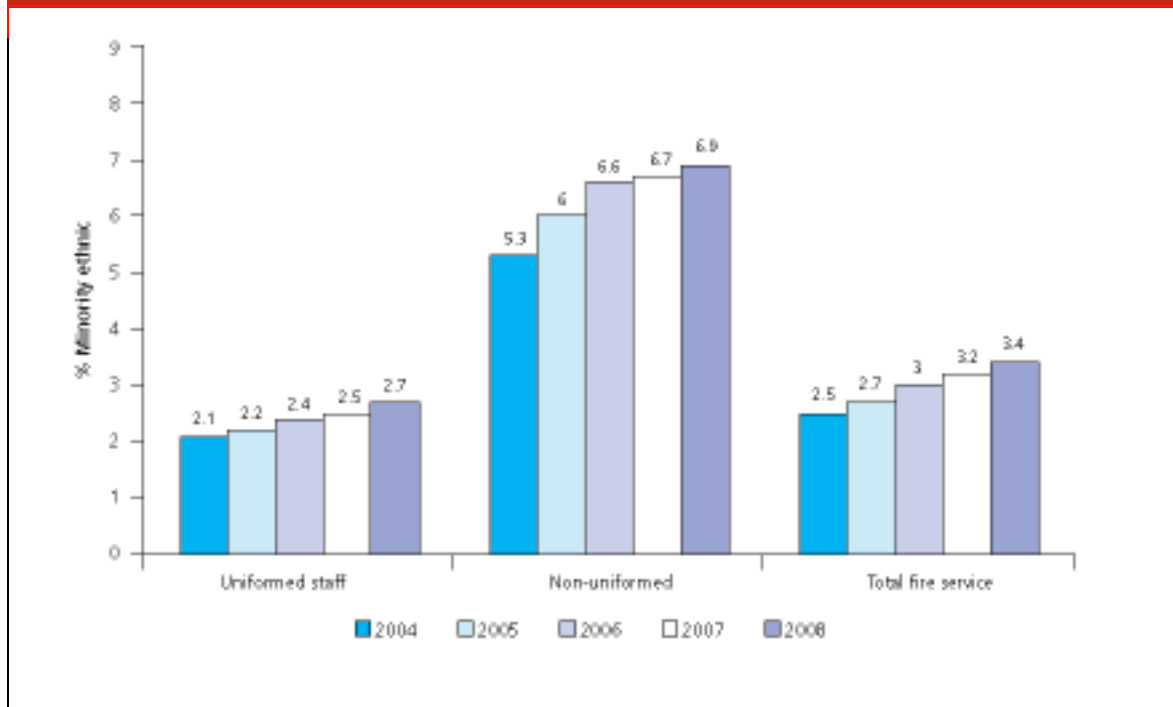
	<i>Gender</i>		<i>Ethnicity</i>		
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Ethnic minority</i>	<i>Not stated</i>
					<i>per cent</i>
2004	97.6	2.4	94.7	2.1	3.2
2005	97.5	2.5	94.3	2.2	3.4
2006	97.2	2.8	92.7	2.5	4.8
2007	96.9	3.1	90.7	2.6	6.7
2008	96.7	3.3	90.5	2.8	6.7

## Control and Support staff

- 1.5 As at 31 March 2008 there was 1,522 fire control staff (FTE), 2 per cent higher than in 2007.
- 1.6 The total number of non-uniformed support staff (FTE) continued to increase. At 31 March 2008, there was 7,800 non-uniformed support staff, 6 per cent higher than the previous year.

## Ethnicity

Figure 2: Proportion of minority ethnic staff in England FRS 2004–2008



- 1.7 Over the past five years ethnic minority staff in the fire service has increased from 2.5 per cent in 2004 to 3.4 per cent at 31 March 2008. See figure 2.

## Joiners and Leavers

- 1.8 Over the year 2007/08 there were 45,378 applications to join the Fire Service, with an estimated 7 per cent of these successful. In 2007/08, 19 F&RS did not recruit whole time duty system firefighters, eleven did not recruit retained duty system staff, 12 did not recruit fire control staff and 6 did not recruit non-uniformed staff for the year.

**Table 1.4: Applications and Joiners, 2007/08**

	<i>Applicants</i>		<i>Joiners</i>
	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of applicants successful</i>	
Whole time	20,078	4	1,014
Retained duty system	2,978	25	752
Fire control	2,257	8	122
Non-uniformed	18,323	6	1,156
Other Recruitment	1,742	12	179
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,378</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3,223</b>

1.9 During 2007/08, 1,766 operational staff joined the Fire and Rescue Service – 1,014 whole time duty system and 752 retained duty system firefighters. 9.6 per cent of these joiners were women. See *table 1.4a*.

**Table 1.4a Joiners by gender and ethnicity, 2007/08**

	<i>Operational staff<sup>1</sup></i>			<i>Other recruitment</i>			<i>Total All staff</i>
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	
White	152	1,311	1,463	704	582	1,286	<b>2,749</b>
Ethnic minority	4	87	91	45	46	91	<b>182</b>
Not stated	13	199	212	42	38	80	<b>292</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>1,597</b>	<b>1,766</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>3,223</b>

1. Whole time and Retained Duty system staff

1.10 During 2007/08, 3,685 staff left the fire and rescue service – 6.6 per cent of all staff (including those who leave and join another service), while a total of 3,223 staff joined the Fire Service. 5.6 per cent of these new entrants were from ethnic minority backgrounds.

1.11 Whole time duty system firefighters who left the service in 2007/08 reached 1,467 (equivalent to 5 per cent of staff). This is 6 per cent higher than in 2006/07, mainly due to an increase in compulsory/voluntary age retirements – 62 per cent of whole time duty system firefighters who leave are compulsory/voluntary age retirements. See *table 1.5*.

**Table 1.5: Leavers 2007/08**

<i>Reasons for leaving the fire service</i>	<i>Number of staff leaving</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<i>Whole time</i>	<i>Retained duty system</i>	<i>Fire control</i>	<i>Non-uniformed</i>	
Dismissal on disciplinary grounds/poor performance	49	46	1	28	<b>124</b>
Medical discharge	54	12	3	8	<b>77</b>
Resignation to take other employment	210	291	46	440	<b>987</b>
Personal/work commitments*		303			<b>303</b>
Moving away from catchment area*		77			<b>77</b>
Compulsory/voluntary age retirement	909	45	8	130	<b>1,092</b>
Other reasons	245	356	50	374	<b>1,025</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,467</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>3,685</b>
					<i>per cent</i>
Dismissal on disciplinary grounds/poor performance	3	4	1	3	3
Medical discharge	4	1	3	1	2
Resignation to take other employment	14	26	43	45	27
Personal/work commitments*	0	27	0	0	8
Moving away from catchment area*	0	7	0	0	2
Compulsory/voluntary age retirement	62	4	7	13	30
Other reasons	17	32	46	38	28
<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.

1.12 Retained duty system firefighters who left the service in 2007/08 numbered 1,130 (about 8 per cent of staff), and 11 per cent higher than in 2006/07.

Appendix B:

<https://owa.anglia.ac.uk/exchange/matt.catchpole@student.anglia.ac.uk/Inbox/Dave/dissertations%20on%20fire%20or%20equality.EML/equalitydiversity2009.pdf/C58EA28C-18C0-4a97-9AF2-036E93DDAFB3/equalitydiversity2009.pdf?attach=1>

Page 39

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