



# “Join Us” GMFRS Attraction Strategy 2019 – 2022

Talent & Resourcing Team (HR/OD)

# Foreword: Dawn Docx (Chair of ED&I Strategy Group)

The GMFRS Attraction Strategy sets out our ambition; **to attract and retain a talented and diverse front line firefighter workforce, one that represents the Greater Manchester communities that we serve through Positive Action.**

This Strategy builds on the progress that we have made since 2016. We have already come a long way over the past 15 years in attracting and recruiting a more diverse workforce into our frontline roles, but we recognise that there is still some way to go before we can truly state that our workforce reflects the diversity and richness of our communities. A reflection which is paramount to the future success and strength of any modern Fire and Rescue Service.

To move us closer to achieving our ambition our approach is clear; to learn from and build on our successes, to link to national and local agendas and to create a more sustainable model to move us forward. Our approach complements our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.

This document sets out how we aim to achieve our ambition to 2022, and sets out the following three sections which tell our story; “Past Successes”, “Current Picture” and “Moving us Forward”. We want to achieve this ambition using enhanced recruitment and selection tools, a sustainable and cost-effective model and by focussing on social value.

Our Strategy has been designed with all our stakeholders in mind, our employees, partners, candidates, communities, and colleagues as they all play a vital part in making our strategy successful.

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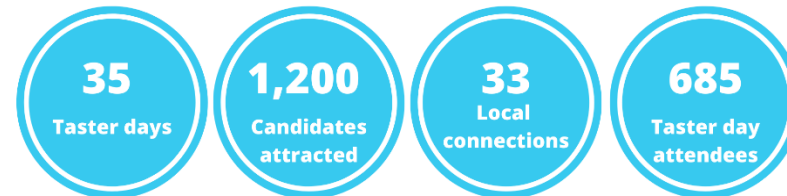
# Our Successes

Since the GMFRS Attraction Strategy launched in 2016, the service has seen great achievements in attracting, appointing, and retaining a more diverse workforce that reflects the Greater Manchester Communities that our organisation serves. There are several successes that we want to build on;

## Successes: Positive Attraction Team;

In 2017 we brought together a “Positive Attraction Team”, a diverse mix of uniformed and non-uniformed colleagues who were passionate about driving change and bringing the Attraction Strategy to life. This team worked tirelessly for twelve months to promote opportunities to members of the public that may not have considered careers with the Fire Service before. The achievements of this team included:

- 35 taster days over two years
- More than 1,200 candidates attracted to our ‘join us’ database via targeted attraction campaigns
- Over 33 local connections made with businesses, sports clubs and community groups
- Creation of branded attraction materials, images (as seen on the left) and a [recruitment information video](#) to support the campaign



## Successes: Taster Days;

Taster days have been a great success of our recent strategy. Allowing prospective candidates to meet our crews, understand more about the opportunities available and test their fitness and English & Math functional skills levels against our minimum standards.

Taster days have also enabled our front line workforce to be involved and engaged in the early stages of our recruitment process. Which has helped us to foster good relationships between our candidates and the workforce early from their first interactions with us.

Over **685** candidates from our local and wider communities attended taster days during 2017 to 2018.

*Our current Taster day format includes:*



## Successes: Apprenticeship Employer-Provider;

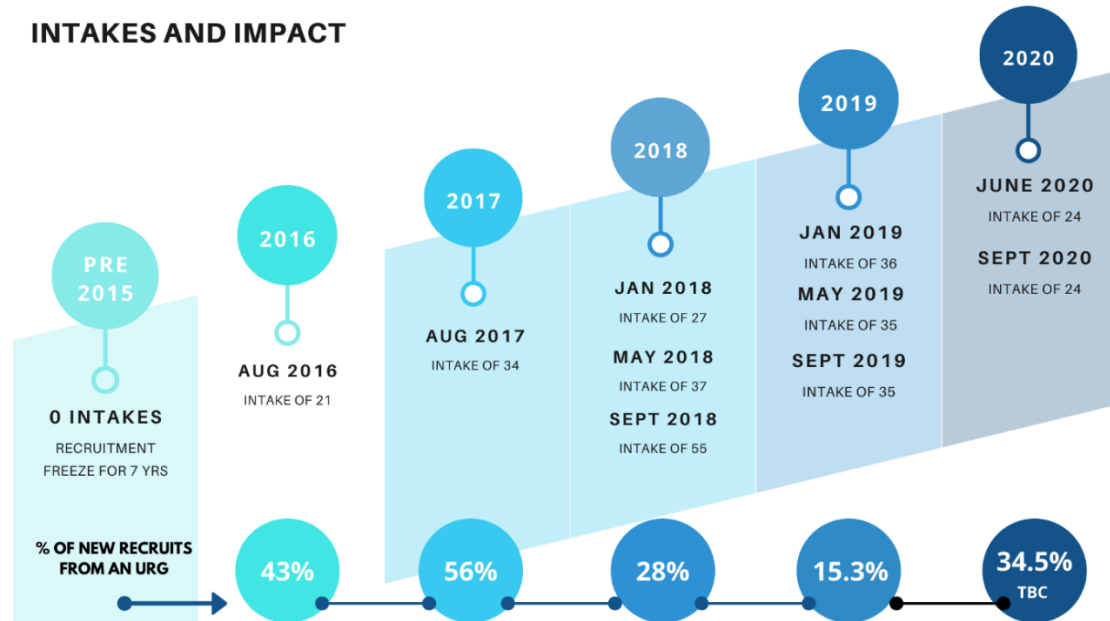
In 2017 we also became an apprenticeship employer-provider and delivered the "Level 3 Operational Firefighter" Apprenticeship Standard. Which has meant that significant time and resource has been invested in ensuring that our new recruits are trained and supported to the highest standard.

As part of our apprenticeship provision, we have put measures in place to support individuals for the duration of their apprenticeship. Including Functional Skills support from the point of attraction / community engagement.

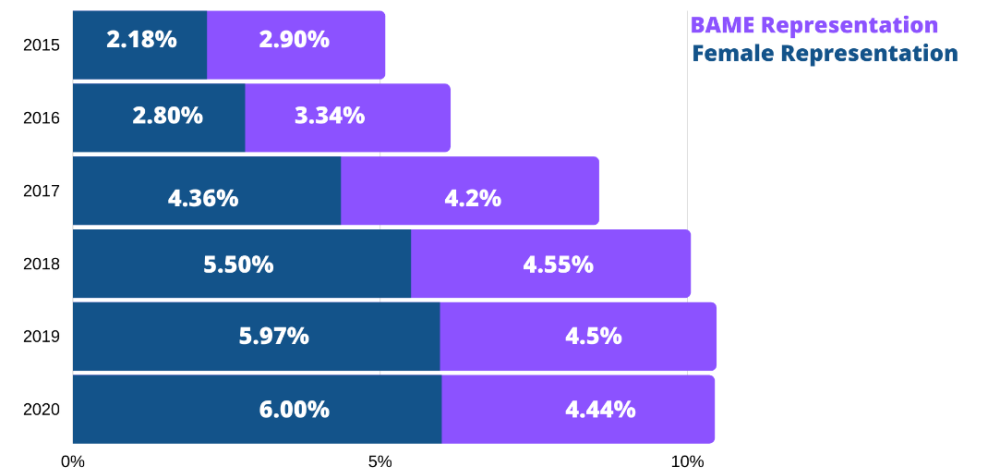
# Successes: The Statistics;

The outcomes in numbers of the past Attraction Strategy are as follows;

## INTAKES AND IMPACT



## GMFRS Front Line Workforce Demographics 2015 - 2020





## Successes; 2019 Campaign

The September 2019 campaign was our largest open application recruitment drive in over 10 years. This was an accelerated campaign, leaving a very small window for the team to deliver targeted positive attraction activity. However, a range of activities were undertaken with a view to promoting GMFRS careers to underrepresented groups. Our approach included:

- An open expression of interest form, available on our Applicant Tracking System
- More information available on our websites, including downloadable packs
- Local and regional news and media push, including a press release
- Mini taster days allowing for high volumes of attendees
- Targeted attraction to local communities, promoting the EOI link – virtually and face to face
- Modified Duty colleagues supporting our attraction work
- Attendance at jobs fairs, including the Thomas Cook event in October 2019
- Social media plan via the corporate communications team
- Utilising our Greater Manchester Partners to promote opportunities, including a Greater.Jobs digital campaign and promotion through our staff networks

The campaign was successful, bringing in just under 5,000 expressions of interest, 1,211 taster day attendees (approx. 24% of expressions of interest) converting to 802 applications (525 of which were shortlisted). This included a consistent number of applicants from Under Represented Groups throughout the process, resulting in **34.5% of successful candidates** offered positions coming from an Under Represented Group (Female, BAME, LGBT+ and those with disabilities).



### Greater Manchester is recruiting firefighters - here's how you can apply

Despite recent cuts to its fleet GMFRS has announced they are recruiting firefighters

2579 SHARES

Enter your postcode for local news and info

Enter your postcode

Go

In Your Area

GMFRS is looking for firefighters (page Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service)

GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

**FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT**

Submit your expression of interest NOW!

#greateryou

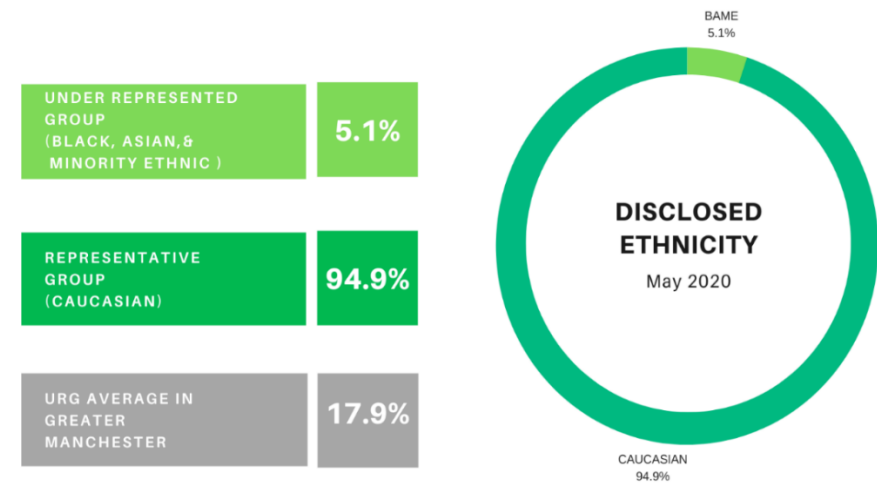
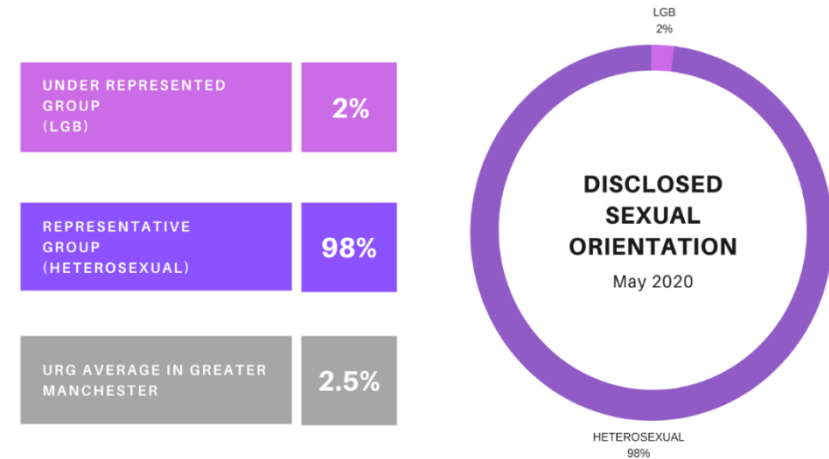
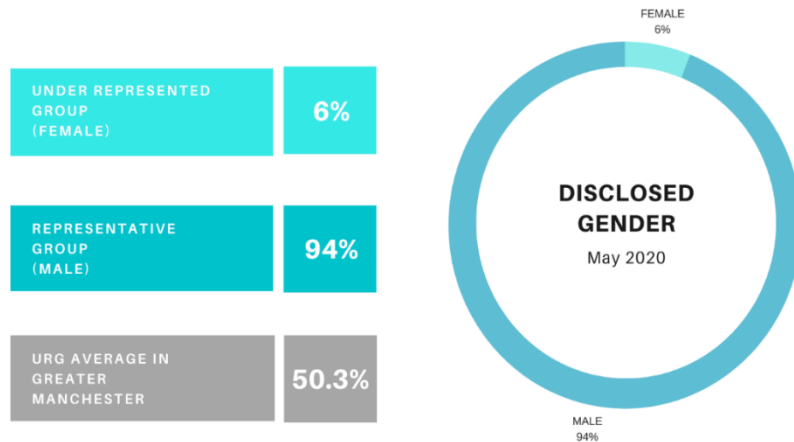
Our plan to take us to 2022, will build on these successes and support us in meeting our ambition of being a fully inclusive workforce that is representative of the communities that we serve.

# Current Picture; Where Are We Now?

## CURRENT GMFRS FIREFIGHTER DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN (MAY 2020)

Data from O.N.S.: Midyear estimates 2019 (Gender), Sexual Identity Subnational 2013-15 (Sexual orientation), Population denominators by broad ethnic group 2011 – 17 (Ethnicity)

In the current economic climate, as an organisation, it is key that we recruit and develop people with the relevant skills, behaviours and aligned values to take us forward, whilst ensuring that we represent the diverse range of communities that we serve. In order to do so, we must be considered as an employer of choice to attract and engage with an equally diverse future talent pool.



## Current Picture: Alignment To Other Priorities;

GMFRS has seen an unprecedented amount of change during 2018 – 2020, which is also shaping the direction of our future Attraction Strategy, along with the key strategic priorities for the broader GMCA organisation. The most significant changes being;

## Programme for Change. Leadership and Culture, & Role of A Firefighter

Following the Mayors announcement for a Root and Branch review in 2018, the Programme for Change (PfC) Outline Business Case (OBC) has set out an ambitious agenda for GMFRS to transform and make positive changes to meet future demands that will be placed on the service, with a clear focus on:

- More devolved power to the frontline
- Focus on the role of the firefighter
- A place-based approach that meets the specific needs of communities
- Maximising fire cover with available resources
- Building a service which has a culture of trust, respect, and accountability.

This places a direct impact on how we attract, select, recruit, promote and retain our people – including a greater focus on diversity and inclusion performance, and aligning our processes closely to the NFCC Framework.

To complement these changes, the plans set out in this strategy will focus on attracting candidates who represent and demonstrate the values, behaviours, skills, and ability aligned to the future workforce of GMFRS.

Supporting the following key actions as recommended in the Programme for Change Outline Business case and subsequent workstreams:

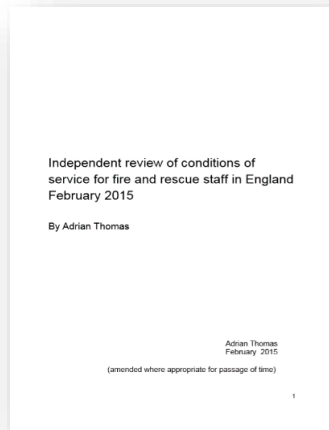
- “Renew and recommit to making significant improvements to the Service’s Diversity and Inclusion performance” -OBC “*Leadership and Culture*” point 213, page 32
- “Encouraging the involvement of the Chief Fire Officer and the senior management team in adopting professional development and applying the best recruitment and selection practices is a crucial strategic element of driving these changes.” OBC “*Leadership and culture*” point 206, page 31





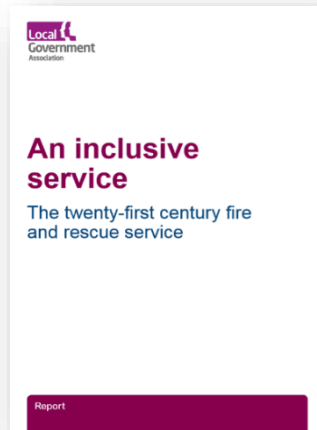
## National ED&I Ambition

Nationally, there is a drive to improve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion focus across the Fire and Rescue Service Sector, with reference to the Attraction, Recruitment and Selection process. Our Attraction Strategy takes lessons and builds on recommendations from these national activities and strategies, ensuring that our Strategy at GMFRS is aligned to the national picture.



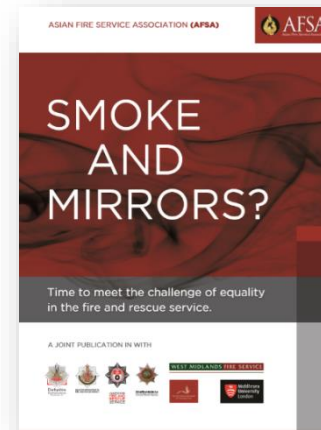
Adrian Thomas

Independent review 2015



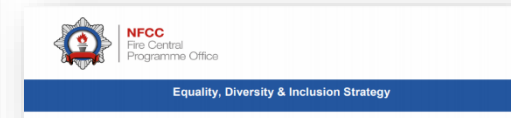
Local Government Association

An Inclusive Service, 2017



Asian Fire Service Association

Smoke and Mirrors, 2018



National Fire Chief's Council

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion  
Strategy 2019



## H.M.I.C.F.R.S.

The inspection found that improvement is needed in the area of People – with specific reference to the inadequacy of “Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity”. The work carried out under the previous attraction strategy was positively recognised in the report as being effective until the attraction work was paused in 2018.

The plan outlined in this attraction strategy contributes directly to the H.M.I.C.F.R.S. recommendation of “put in place a programme to ensure that inclusion, fairness, equalities and professional development are priorities for the service”

# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) Strategy

Launched in 2019, with a clear pledge to five key areas:

- Our organisation
- Our workforce
- Our partners
- Our communities
- Showcasing our success

This Attraction Strategy delivers against the “Our workforce” pledge to:

*“We will work towards a truly diverse workforce and service provision that reflects all our communities. We will value, respect and embrace difference, for all our employees, volunteers and young people. Enabling everyone to recognise the benefits that equality, diversity and inclusion bring to our Service.”*



Our Attraction Strategy is focused on working with our local Greater Manchester communities to recruit and employ the next generation of Firefighters. So that we can fully reflect the communities that we serve.

More about how the Attraction Strategy and the ED&I Strategy connect and work together can be found on page 16.



## Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS)

The GMS “Our People, Our Place” sets out the GMCA’s vision to make Greater Manchester one of the best places in the world to grow up, get on and grow old. The strategy outlines specific relation to equality, fairness & inclusion – which affects 7 out of 10 of the GMS priorities.

This Attraction Strategy directly supports the organisation in achieving those priorities.



Our Strategy for 2019 to 2022 is also fully inclusive and committed to the GM Good Employer Charter, by ensuring that we offer and promote;

- Secure work;
- Flexible work;
- A real living wage;
- Workplace engagement & voice;
- Excellent recruitment practices & progression;
- Excellent people management;
- A productive & healthy workplace.

# Moving Us Forward; 2019-2022 Attraction Strategy

Our future Attraction Strategy will build on the successes of the previous years, including retaining the 'join us' brand, the community focus and the taster day model – whilst enhancing our approach with **three objectives**;



## Tool Enhancement

Including digitalisation of our 'join-us' database, a greater social media platform, tailored branding and messages to suit different audiences.

- Automation of our join-us database
- Improved look, functionality, information, positive messaging on the GMFRS website
- GMFRS recruitment social media handles
- Bank of positive images for media
- Awareness Videos of Job-Related Practical Tests
- Digital promotional pack (Info, poster, flyer)
- Physical promotional flyers, posters, brochures, business cards + messaging
- Virtual taster days
- Online sifting assessments
- Promotion of a career in the fire service, not just the role of a Firefighter
- Recruitment promotional video available online for anyone to access



## Self-Sustaining model

Increasing engagement and involvement in attraction work from colleagues and partners in supporting the promotion of career opportunities - creating resilience and a self-sustaining model for attraction in the future.

- Annual recruitment cycles
- Attraction information packs available for pumps and stations
- Direct engagement with community groups online and face to face
- Rolling taster day calendar, tolling recruitment events and activity calendar that coincides with National and Local events (i.e. Prides, Black History Month, International Women's Day)
- Open and consistent opportunities and work available for our modified duty colleagues to get involved in
- Regular consultation and engagement with staff networks & EDI Working Group.
- Formal reporting and progress updates to ED&I Strategy Group.

**GREATER  
MANCHESTER**  
DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

## Social Value

Creating opportunities for individuals to stay engaged with the service outside recruitment windows, including creating alliances with GM partner agencies through our existing contracts and social value commitments.

- Targeted taster days delivered at community fire stations throughout GM
- Employability skills offered to prospective candidates
- Fitness support through partnerships
- Creation of referral pathways for Under Represented Groups, through our partner organisations
- Inclusion of Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) as part of our target Under Represented Groups

# Attraction Strategy:

## Positive Action & Community reach

Our focus will now move us beyond not only increasing representation for underrepresented Gender and Ethnicity groups, but also placing a greater focus on supporting young people and those who are classed as not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) into employment to align us further to the Greater Manchester Strategy “Our People, Our Place”.

It is important to us that we attract and recruit candidates who demonstrate the very best skills and behaviours that we require in a modern Firefighter. Our ambition is to attract and retain members of the GM community, who may not see a role in the Fire Service as an achievable career option due to unseen barriers, through **Positive Action**. Our key focus for 2019 – 2022 will be on attracting the following community groups to engage and sign up to express their interest in working for us;

- People who identify as Female
- People who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, + (LGBT+)
- People who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)
- Ethnically Diverse (under-represented ethnic groups)

**Positive Action** enables us to target our advertising campaigns and activity to encourage applications from Groups (defined by the Equality Act 2010) that are Under Represented in our workplace. Positive action is legal and is used widely across the Fire and Rescue Industry. Positive Action is NOT Positive Discrimination. Positive Discrimination is unlawful in the UK and gives candidates an unfair advantage in the recruitment process. For example, an employer appointing a person because they have a relevant protected characteristic rather than because they are the best candidate would be committing discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

### Positive Action:

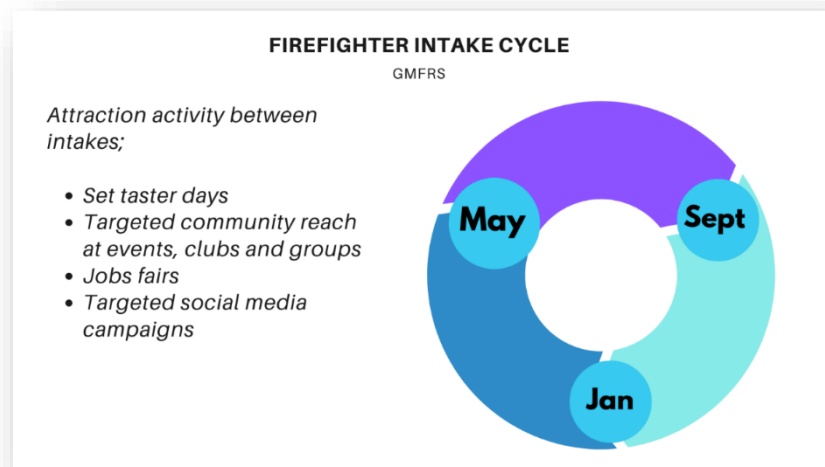
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*Positive Action is **NOT** Positive Discrimination*

## Attraction Strategy: Intake cycle & KPIs

To give stability to our attraction approach, GMFRS commits to run an intake cycle of 3 courses per annum up to **September 2023**. This commitment supports our attraction activity, by providing the opportunity for us to engage with our GM communities on a longer term basis. This will include building talent pipelines for school and education leavers, and enable us to take time to invest and support prospective candidates who have lots of potential, but may need to take more time to meet our entry level requirements in areas such as Functional Skills or Fitness.

This will also allow us to run a periodic cycle of fixed attraction activity between intakes.



### Measures of success



Success of our new starters; apprenticeship performance



Retention of our workforce; the number of apprentices completing their apprenticeship



Increased number of people from the following groups starting in operational roles:

- People who are Ethnically Diverse (under-represented ethnic groups)
- People who identify as Female
- People who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, + (LGBT+)
- People who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)

12

To run 4 taster days per cycle (12 per annum)



Positive candidate recruitment experience from taster days to induction week



## Attraction Strategy: Partnerships and Pathways

To achieve this Strategy, we cannot do this on our own. Partnership working and collaboration will be key to its success. Our ambition is to establish links and partnerships with local, regional and national groups who can support us with our campaign. **Our key partners will include;**



Through our existing 'agency supplier' contract with Reed, they offer additional Social Value services, including CV and interview skills and access to jobs fairs.



The GMCA are part of the greater.jobs collaboration. Our strategy will continue to use the greater.jobs brand, Local Authority partners and public sector talent reach to promote our opportunities to the communities of GM



Our staff networks have connections across GM and beyond. We aim to utilise and team up with our staff networks and their partners to ensure we are promoting a strong brand across GM that is fully representative of our diverse workforce.



Our Blue Light partners GMP and NWS also have similar recruitment challenges and ambitions. We will continue to work with our partners to explore a more collaborative approach to attraction, including Blue Light careers events and marketing.



The Growth Company are key GMCA partners already, and can support us and our prospective candidates through employability skills development. With a particular focus on NEET members of our communities.



We will continue to partner with our existing pathways, including giving access and support to apply from those on our Youth Engagement Programmes or clubs. Including; Cadets, Firefly, Prince's Trust and Moss Side Boxing Club. We will also explore how we can partner and develop pathways to employment with other Prince's Trust teams and programmes across GM.



Voluntary Sector & Covenants - As the GMCA further supports our Voluntary Sector and National Covenants we will continue to explore how we can create pathways and support specific groups who are recognised by these organisations.

## Attraction Strategy: A more Inclusive Workplace

A key ingredient for the success of our future Attraction Strategy is how we can support the aims of our ED&I Strategy, specifically around ensuring that the organisation is a **fully inclusive place to work**. Employee experience and staff retention must be a core focus for us to achieve this.

Three pillars of the ED&I Strategy that our Attraction Strategy 19 to 22 will complement are;

<b>We will all understand and support our people; including the volunteers and young people that engage with our service, by:</b>	Gather data on who we are Impact assessments Monitor our effectiveness Staff networks	Training Induction Appraisals
<b>We provide environments that foster dignity and respect, through ensuring;</b>	Facilities that are suitable for all Transparent data Robust & fair recruitment and promotion processes Supportive and proactive leaders	Zero tolerance approach to Communication Embed approach into our policies, procedures, and practices
<b>We develop our people, through;</b>	Learning and development Holding managers accountable Value CPD Leadership programme opportunities for all	360-degree feedback Equality across promotional pathways Benchmark ourselves against other organisations

To achieve this, we aim to;

- Create opportunities for apprentice recruits to start thinking about career development including access to our I.F.E. exams, reverse mentoring opportunities and access to the Crew Manager Development Workbook.
- Ensuring Talent and Resourcing team representation in the ED&I Working Group.
- Asking about and measuring our candidate experience, from Taster Day to Induction. Feeding this back into the employee experience work.
- Be transparent about our recruitment and selection processes online, and improve our website content.
- Be involved in the scrutiny of our exit interviews and data. Ensuring we constantly learn and improve from this data.
- Ensure our approach to attraction and selection is regularly reviewed and Equality Impact Assessed.
- Undertake and commission research into the barriers that Under Represented Groups face to employment within operational roles and the workplace.

End.