

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group Update

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton
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Inclusion Officer on 01743 260236.

1 Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on the work of the Equality, Diversity and
Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group from November 2021 to October 2022.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report.

3 Background

The aim of The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group is:

- To provide a fair service to all our communities and service users
- To ensure all employees understand their responsibilities with regard to EDI
- To create a fully inclusive place of work
- To increase diversity in the Service
- To ensure the Service complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- To promote excellence in EDI practice

4 Main areas of work

The Steering Group has overseen a wide range of work since October 2021,
major elements of which are summarised below. The last steering group
meeting was held on 27 September 2022.

National awards and nominations:

Celebrating Neurodiversity Awards (March 2022) - The Service won the 'Most Inclusive Employer' award.

National Diversity Awards (Sept 2022) - shortlisted for the finals for the 'Diverse Employer Award', 72,000 nominations were received for all categories which were held at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral.

Dyslexia Awards (Oct 22) – shortlisted in the final three for the 'most supportive employer' award, held at Enginuity.

External Activities and Events

The Service attends and supports the following events:

- Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) National Conference
- Attended the Safety Forum for Community Leaders arranged by Shropshire European Organisation CIC.
- Attended the Shropshire Disability Network AGM (September)
- Attended the flying of the Rainbow Flag at Telford & Wrekin Council
- Using social media to promote local and international events e.g. World Mental Health Day, Holocaust Memorial Day, Time to Talk day, Black History Month
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Conferences
- LGBT Rainbow Film Festival and Pride event in Ludlow
- The LGA have requested that the EDI officer present at their Fire Leadership Essential Session, to Fire Authority Chairs and Members from across the UK, on the Service's best practice of EDI and their HMI journey

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training

During the past year the Service has undertaken a range of training:

- Core Code of Ethics online training has been developed
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) training held for the training and development teams
- Dyslexia awareness training has been commissioned and delivered
- EDI induction training has been given to non-uniformed, apprentices, on-call and wholtime firefighters
- International Women's Day Conference attended
- Internal EDI refresher training was started in April 2022 and has been delivered to all wholtime watches and many on call stations to date
- Mental Health First Aid Awareness training and refreshers and Mental Health First Aider courses have been delivered
- Suicide Prevention has been offered to all employees
- A range of information on different issues has been acquired or developed and is available for employees
- A host of EDI webinars have been offered to all staff in the Service

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)

The Service has reviewed and amended their electronic form to streamline the process and improve quality assurance. Further training is being provided to managers along with ongoing support and advice from the EDI Officer.

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

The Service promotes national events internally and uses social media externally. SFRS supported World Mental Health Day in October 2022, with the second release of a video from one of its employee's sharing their personal experiences. This video had a focus on Mental Health and current concerns around money concerns.

The Service signed up to the Mental Health at Work Commitment in February which resulted in undertaking a detailed gap analysis and creating an action plan, which is now part of the Equality Action Plan.

The Service has now trained:

71 people as Mental Health First Aiders (2 day course)
72 people in Mental Health Awareness (half day course)
46 people in Suicide Prevention
17 people in Suicide Safety Planning

National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Equality, Diversity & Inclusion meetings and documents

The EDI Officer attends the National EDI meetings, a new menopause group has been created and our own Voices reps have created the NFCC Neurodiversity Group on workplace to provide advice to all Services.

Operational Secondment

This commenced in January 2022 and employee training has started.

Equality Monitoring Data

The Service has produced a document regarding the purpose and importance of collecting this data and how it is used. This has been put on the Service's internal newsletter, website and included during EDI training.

Reasonable adjustments

The Service continues to support employees with neurodiversity, in particular dyslexia, physical disabilities, such as bad backs, and use Access to Work to provide funding towards some of these adjustments.

The Service provides training to managers on dyslexia awareness and have recently run a training session on ADHD for our training and development teams along with offering online courses to other appropriate employees.

Case Load:

- 33 Current cases
- 5 new cases since last steering group, 0 reopened
- 1 closed

Equality Action Plan

The action plan is monitored and reported to the EDI Steering Group. It details progress on a wide range of EDI initiatives and projects. The Equality Action Plan will be reported on annually and is available at each Steering Group meeting.

Subscriptions and Memberships

Subscriptions have been renewed for:

- Networking Women in the Fire Service
- The Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA)

Taster Sessions for On Call firefighters

The following sessions have been held:

12 February 2022	Whitchurch
30 May 2022	Bridgnorth
7 May 2022	Oswestry
1 October 2022	Shrewsbury
8 October 2022	Wellington

The Service has also started Virtual Taster Sessions, providing information on the role, a tour of the station and a Question and Answer session:

3 February 2022	Much Wenlock – Open to all
13 July 2022	Shrewsbury – Women's session

Voices group



Since the groups inauguration in January 2021 and its launch in September 2021, the Voices reps have been working hard on supporting employees, developing these networks and finding out what employees want from their reps.

Three full Voices meetings take place per year, whilst specific area meetings take place in between with the EDI Officer. An action plan is created for the year which sometimes links to National Key dates. The Service sent out its first Voices Newsletter in July developed with the reps.

Many activities have taken place, given below are some of these:

Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME)

- BAME employee survey sent to all employees to find out what they want from the group / involvement.
- Rep has connected with the West Mercia BAME group
- Ongoing discussions with employees
- Information sent out in the newsletter and social media for Black History Month 2022

Disability – Mental Health

- Mental Health Awareness Week – information put on The Pink and social media to support this
- World Mental Health Day – October. Voices rep created their second Video which covered mental health and concerns around money issues. This was sent to all staff from the Chief Fire Officer (CFO)

Disability - Dyslexia

- Creation of the NFCC Neurodiversity Workplace Group which has arranged three meetings to date, one with an external guest speaker.
- Attendance at the Dyslexia Awards
- Dyslexia Networking event on 9 May, next event is in November 2022
- Closed Neurodiversity Teams area has been created
- EDI officer has attended Hereford and Worcester's Neurodiversity Meeting to provide advice.

LGBT+

- Attendance at conference to review practice in the Service
- Attendance at the LGBT+ Rainbow Film Festival (Oswestry) and History Month (Shropshire Wildlife Trust)
- Attendance at the LGBT+ Ludlow and Birmingham Pride

Menopause Group

- Peri-menopause yoga
Four sessions were held in September / October – these were to encourage employees to try this or to get back into exercise. Each employee could book on two sessions. The feedback has been very positive with a request for future sessions
- Menopause speaker at the Women's event
- Perimenopause / Menopause Books available for all staff to borrow
- Information put in the newsletter for International Menopause Day
- Meetings held to discuss symptoms, medication, exercise and experiences
- Closed Teams area where all members post advice and articles / information
- Fortnightly lunchtime walks - ongoing
- Review / trial of uniform - ongoing

Women's

Women's Safety Survey

Developed with consultation of the Women's Group and sent to all women in the Service, the results have gone to the EDI Steering Group and will now go to Service Management Team (SMT) for consideration and decision on suggested actions and promotion of information.

A Women's Networking Day was held on 24 September and was the first that the Service has held. It was a great success, with a range of speakers and information including:

- Life Skills Coaching
- Menopause Talk
- Yoga Session
- Self Defence Session
- Occupational Health Advice – blood pressure/cholesterol/advice
- Mental Health information

Ongoing work:

- White Ribbon Accreditation has now been agreed by the EDI Steering group and SMT
- Review / trial of uniform – ongoing

The purpose of this group is to:

- Be a point of contact for that group
- Provide support to employees
- Raise any issues
- Make improvements
- Attend events to support inclusion
- Initiative meetings
- Provide advice to SFRS
- Create an action plan
- Assist with recruitment initiatives

These representatives will work closely with the EDI team and report back to the Steering Group.

5 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7 Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) are completed for individual projects contained in this report; this report is a historical report and therefore an EQIA of this is not required.

8 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

9 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.