

# Equality and Diversity Steering Group Update

## Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Natalie Parkinson, Equality and Diversity Officer, on 01743 260236.

### 1 Purpose of Report

This report provides a summary of the work of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group from October 2015 to the beginning of September 2016.

### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

### 3 Background

The remit of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group is:

- To improve the services we provide to the wider Shropshire community
- To promote community cohesion and anti-discrimination with people living and working in Shropshire, including issues of rural access, social isolation and income inequality
- To initiate, facilitate, monitor and evaluate projects to improve the wellbeing of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) employees
- To promote excellence in equality and diversity practice throughout the organisation
- To maintain organisational focus and ensure strategic priorities for Equality and Diversity in the organisation and the communities we serve
- To ensure that the SFRS culture encourages employees and service users to be valued and accepted as individuals
- To provide leadership, strategic direction, development and resources to ensure progression of our Equality Framework and Single Equality Scheme

The Equality and Diversity team has continued to work closely with the Protect and Prevent Teams on a number of projects and community organisations and groups in the last year.

The reasonable adjustments programme has continued and the Service has recently launched a dyslexia awareness film. It has continued to develop and implement Brigade equality and diversity training for operational and non-uniformed employees, including dyslexia awareness training.

There have been 7 positive action events during this period, three for women, one for Black or Minority Ethnic backgrounds and three open to all, which have all been supported well.

The revised Single Equality Scheme Action Plan continues to clarify equality and diversity priorities, and has enabled the Steering Group better to manage planning and outcomes over the year.

## **4 Main Areas of Work**

The Steering Group has overseen a wide range of work since September 2015, major elements of which are summarised below.

### **Single Equality Scheme Action Plan**

Progress on implementing equality and diversity policies and actions has been monitored through the revised Action Plan. Actions and priorities have been reviewed in response to their effectiveness in delivering Equality and Diversity outcomes. The revised Action Plan enables the Steering Group to examine and analyse actions and progress in five key policy and practice areas:

- a) Policy
- b) Recruitment, selection, training and development
- c) Communication, external events, networks and partnerships
- d) Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and reporting
- e) Research and consultation

There are currently some 21 live issues / work areas in the Action Plan and some 37 equality and diversity actions, at different stages of progress and implementation, and varying from relatively minor, straightforward actions to major development and project work.

The current version of the Action Plan is attached at the Appendix.

### **Mind - Blue Light Time to Change Pledge**

The Service took the decision to sign up to the Mind Time to Change Pledge in February which is about helping and supporting people with mental health problems. This involved creating an action plan for improving mental health in the Service and involves all departments in the Service.

Mind managers training was held on 23 February 2016 and 10 March 2016 to give managers a better understanding of mental health issues and signs to look for.

The Service has sent all employees leaflets about mental health and the Chief Fire Officer sent an email to all staff regarding the pledge and making time for the 'time to talk' day.

SFRS attended a Mind networking event in March with similar Services and a 'Good Mental Health Works' conference in April in Telford discussing mental health issues and how people can be supported locally in the community.

### **Initial Impact Assessments**

Work has undertaken to make the Equality Impact Assessment process online, which will allow employees to complete this more efficiently and monitor actions from the assessments.

A number of impact assessments have been completed include a full impact assessment on the wholetime shift patterns involving employee Champions.

### **Positive Action**

#### **Taster Sessions**

As part of the Service's Positive Action Programme to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for posts, the Steering Group has planned and co-ordinated three highly successful Women's Taster Days, one Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Session, and three open to all sessions since September 2015 to encourage and support women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds to apply for both the wholetime and on call firefighter posts:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Location</b>		<b>No's attended</b>	<b>Attended Evening</b>	<b>Applied</b>
28/11/15	Women	Minsterley	On call	3	0	0
28/11/15	Open to all	Minsterley	On call	3	0	2
20/01/16	Open to all	Telford	WT	28	n/a	21
23/01/16	BME/ Open	Telford	WT	24 – 11 BME	n/a	5
24/01/16	Women	Telford	WT	16?	n/a	11
16/07/16	Women	Prees	On call	4	2	2
16/07/16	Open to all	Prees	On call	9	3	4

Each of the on call tasters has been followed by a session at Telford Central to enable women and under-represented groups to gain a better understanding of the selection process and the job related tests they need to pass to be successful in applications for operational posts.

## **Women in the Fire Service Event**

Two female employees attended this weekend event, one operational and one non uniformed took part in work-related workshops and gave them an opportunity to network with people from all over the country, feedback has been excellent. One of these has now volunteered to be the Local Service Representative for SFRS on the National Executive Committee.

## **Hate Crime Reporting**

The Service continues to receive regular updates on Hate Crime reporting statistics from West Mercia Police, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils. The Service plays an active role in the local Hate Crime Reporting Group convened by Shropshire Council.

## **Equality and Diversity Training**

During the past year the Steering Group has undertaken a range of Equality and Diversity training:

- Dyslexia awareness training has been commissioned and delivered for Associate Trainers, members and other employees.
- Equality and Diversity induction training has been given to non-uniformed, apprentices, on call and wholetime firefighters.
- Dementia Awareness Training has been delivered by Bluebird Care to wholetime watches.
- A range of informational materials on different issues has been acquired or developed, and is available for employees.

## **Dyslexia film**

This focuses on several employees of the Service, some now retired, who have dyslexia, they talk about their experiences and how the Service has supported them. The film is only available internally via the Portal.

## **Equality and Diversity External Activities and Events**

Among other groups and events the Service actively supports:

- 10 October 2015 - Celebrating Diversity Day at Shrewsbury Station
- 16 October 2015 – Shrewsbury Rainbow Film Festival – attended by uniformed officer
- 26-27 November 2015 - Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) Conference in Area Manager and Equality and Diversity officer attended
- 2 February 2016 – “Your Future, Your Choice” recruitment event held at Wolverhampton University for Secondary schools in Telford, 2 firefighters and the Equality and Diversity Assistant attended
- 4 February 2016 - AFSA held their Executive meeting and development session at Headquarters
- 4 February 2016 – Mind Time to Change Pledge signed at Headquarters
- 8 March 2016 - International Women’s Day, joint event at Shrewsbury College attended by a Female Firefighter and Equality and Diversity

- 12 February 2016 – National LGBT History Festival, attended by an Assistant Group Commander and the Equality and Diversity Officer
- 7 June 2016 – Shropshire Dementia Action Alliance attended by Prevention and Equality and Diversity
- 23 July 2016 - Cultural Diversity Day, attended by the Outreach vehicle, Equality and Diversity Assistant and the watch with appliance
- 17 September 2016 - Multi-Cultural Fun Day arranged by Shrewsbury Interfaith Forum, attended by White Watch Shrewsbury
- 24 September 2016 - Dyslexia Information Day one operational and one non uniformed employee represented the Service
- Fairness, Respect Equality Shropshire Ltd meetings attended throughout the year

### **Subscriptions and Memberships**

Subscriptions have been renewed for:

- Networking Women in the Fire Service,
- Fairness and Respect Equality Shropshire Ltd
- The Asian Fire Service Association

## **5 Legal Comment**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **6 Initial Impact Assessment**

An Initial Impact Assessment is not required as this report is an update report, looking at historical information.

## **7 Appendix**

Single Equality Scheme Action Plan

## **8 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.

## SES Action Plan June - August 2016

### 1.0 Recruitment, selection and training

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress	Status
		Employment	Service delivery					
1.1	Dyslexia	Improved awareness and initial recognition of dyslexia in employees	Greater confidence in service provision by Service and service users	Filming and production of dyslexia awareness film	E & D	08/16	15.9.16 - The final version has been put onto the portal	Completed
				Promote film to be used in other FRS and other organisations – CCO	CCO	03/16	<b>10.3.16</b> - Concerns with the film being made public - did people agreed to take part in it for internal use only?	In progress
				Presentation by Neil Grady to be reviewed and put on portal or e-learning package	E&D	10/16		In progress
				Dyslexia Awareness training	E&D	09/16	Associate Trainers to have Dyslexia awareness training – this has been arranged for the 28 & 29 September 2016	Complete

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress	Status
		Employment	Service delivery					
				SFRS has been nominated for the Dyslexia Awards Best Supportive Employer and is a finalist – promote this internally and externally		12/16	Executives have been informed.	In Progress
1.2	Dementia	Raised awareness of symptoms and appropriate responses to dementia	Dementia-sensitive service provision, leading to appropriate support for relevant service users	Need for training for operational employees to be reviewed	E&D/P revention	2016	Dementia Awareness training arranged for SY station and all RDS stations in CFS training slot.	In progress
				Dementia Action Alliance plan	Prevention	2016	Vulnerable Person Officer and E&D Officer have attended meetings at Shrewsbury and Telford. Waiting for them to merge.	In Progress
1.3	SAND (Safe Ageing No Discrimination) (LGB)		Sensitive service provision, leading to appropriate support for relevant service users	Explore a review meeting with SAND to find out their views from lessons learned by SFRS – E&D	E & D	04/16	Meeting has been held in June. Training was positive, there maybe the opportunity for future connections. Will be useful to have links to their organisation on our website/Portal.	Completed

## 1.0 Recruitment, selection and training

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress	Status
		Employment	Service delivery					
1.5	<b>E &amp; D refresher training</b>	All employees understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the importance of E&amp;D to the Service</li> <li>their responsibilities for good E &amp; D practice in their work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More sensitive and aware service delivery</li> <li>Service delivery models anti-discrimination practice</li> </ul>	Rolling programme to be arranged	E & D		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E&amp;D officer has requested a slot on the on call firefighter training calendar</li> </ul>	In progress
				Ongoing review and revision of content				
				EDO to review e-learning package on learning pool academy.	E & D	Ongoing	E&D officer has met with the E-learning administrator	In progress
				New programme to be agreed by operational management	E & D			
1.6	<b>Induction training</b>	All new employees understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the importance of E&amp;D to the Service</li> <li>SFRS E &amp; D policy framework</li> <li>responsibilities for good E &amp; D practice in their work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New employees understand core values of Service</li> <li>More sensitive and aware service delivery</li> <li>Service delivery models anti-discrimination practice</li> </ul>	Ensure new non-uniformed employees participate in E & D induction	E & D	Ongoing	<b>27.6.16</b> On call firefighters <b>20.9.16</b> – Wholetime firefighters and apprentices	Ongoing



Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress	Status
		Employment	Service delivery					
1.7	<b>Gypsy &amp; Traveller cultural awareness</b>	Increased awareness of the need for sensitivity with colleagues	Greater sensitivity in delivering services to the needs of G&T's	Training requested by some whole-time Watches	E & D / Op. mgmt	2016	Discussion with ops management about feasibility of delivery to wholetime FF	In progress
1.8	<b>Positive action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenge to social prejudices about firefighting for under-represented groups</li> <li>Increased representation of women, BME and LGBT people in operational posts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More representative service delivery</li> <li>Increased interest in working for SFRS from women, BAME and LGB people</li> </ul>	A programme of positive action events to encourage applications for employment as firefighters	E&D / CFS / T&D / Ops mgmt	2016	16.7.16 On call positive action event session for Women and open to all for North Shropshire was held at Prees Station.	Complete
				Wholetime Recruitment	HR/C B	04/16	Women to be invited over the week and not all at the same time due to shortage of smaller uniform and kit. Could work with H & W and use their kit to save costs	<b>Complete</b>

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress	Status
		Employment	Service delivery					
				Women's development programme	E&D/ Devlop Off	05/16	Coaching & development course to be reconsidered by SMT. NP to check with Development officer starting progress on this.  Use survey gizmo to see why women firefighters do not apply for the development weekend	In progress
1.9	Reasonable adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disabled employees provided with at least their legislative entitlements to reasonable adjustments to their working environments.</li> <li>Disabled employees enabled to perform their job roles to the standards required for their posts</li> </ul>	Services delivered by all employees to the same high standard	Reasonable adjustments programme to be maintained and developed	E&D / T&D /Line mgmt /Ops mgmt	2016	Dyslexic employees are being offered a joint training session on how to understand training manuals.	Ongoing
				Set up another dyslexia networking evening to provide ongoing support. Encourage recently diagnosed employees to attend	E&D	11/16	Arranging dates for Oct/Nov	In progress
				E&D SG - all adjustments to be logged including adjustments made operationally for boots, chairs etc	E&D	Ongoing	<b>10.3.16</b> – E&D SG- NP to ask Christine Bound to be told when ordering any new equipment – <b>Complete</b>	Ongoing

## 2.0 Policy

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress	Status
		Employment	Service delivery					
2.1	Impact assessments	Current equality, diversity and human rights impact assessments exist for employment policies and procedures	Current equality, diversity and human rights impact assessments exist for all service delivery and community engagement policies and procedures	Monitor progress of suggested Impact assessment process	All managers and offices	Ongoing  2016  11/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NP &amp; GE to look at integrating EQIA's into Business Planning Process.</li> <li>The EQIA form and the actions form are now available on the portal</li> <li>NP/LG to attend SMT or similar manager meeting to demonstrate how to use the online form</li> </ul>	Complete  Complete  In progress
2.2	Impact Assessment BO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear guidance for employees on IIA process</li> <li>Framework for analysing potential equality &amp; human rights impacts</li> </ul>	Framework for analysing potential equality & human rights impacts of SFRS policies and practice on communities and service users	New guidance on equality monitoring and impact assessment being prepared	EDO	05/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structure of equality policies changed</li> <li>Will be reviewed in line with 2.1</li> <li>NP to work with Jayne Turner.</li> </ul>	In progress

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress	Status
		Employment	Service delivery					
2.4	Disability BO	Disability policy framework based on social model and reasonable adjustments.	Disability policy framework based on social model and reasonable adjustments.	Disability policy framework in consultation with managers	E & D	05/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation completed</li> </ul>	In progress
2.6	Equality Monitoring BO	Policy framework to enable adequate data on equality characteristics for SFRS workforce and service users	Policy framework enables adequate analysis of service users' equality characteristics	New guidance on equality monitoring and impact assessment being prepared	EDO	05/16	Structure of equality policies changed	In progress

### 3.0 Communication

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress	Status
		Employment	Service delivery					
3.1	<b>Images and stereotypes</b>	Positive images of non-stereotypical and/or non-traditional roles	Positive images of non-stereotypical and/or non-traditional roles	Draft review process for annual review of images used in SFRS material for positive role models	All	05/16	Meeting held with operations to develop a storyboard for a job related test video featuring women firefighters - follow up progress	In progress
				Reviewing our website for women role models	MS	05/16		In progress
3.2	<b>Translated Materials</b>	Relevant support materials available to enable employees to communicate with speakers of other languages	Information available in languages and imagery appropriate to communities	Attend monthly fire safety meetings for P&P	E & D	Ongoing	Attended meetings	Ongoing
				Work with Chinese Business Support to incorporate SFRS Risk Assessment information into their material	Protection	2016		In progress

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress	Status
		Employment	Service delivery					
				Publicise availability and use of language line	E & D	04/16	Language line to be used when undertaking a decontamination exercise for all to read. E & D to remind Ops about this.  NP includes language line during new recruits induction	<b>Complete</b>  <b>Complete</b>
3.4	<b>Groups, networks and organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service able to hear community concerns and feedback</li> <li>• Service able to communicate information to communities effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better awareness of available services</li> <li>• Engagement with Service policy and service development</li> <li>• Access to Service resources to support their work</li> </ul>	<b>FReSh</b>		Ongoing	Attendance at meetings.	
				<b>Shropshire Hate Crime Steering Group:</b> Posters on Service appliances	E&D/ CCO	11/16	Meeting held with Prevention, Resources, HR, E&D to discuss distribution.  June 2016 – waiting for the recruitment of the graphics officer so suitable posters can be made in house for Prevention and Recruitment messages	In progress

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress	Status
		Employment	Service delivery					
				<b>AFSA</b>	E&D/ Officers	Ongoing	Attendance at meetings	In progress
				<b>Shropshire Disability Network</b>	E&D	Ongoing	Due to attend AGM & meeting on 29/9/16	In progress
				<b>Shropshire Dementia Action Alliance</b>		Ongoing	7.6.16 VPO and E&D officer attended this meeting	<b>Ongoing</b>
				<b>Telford Dementia Action Alliance</b>		Ongoing	VPO has attended this  Waiting for the two groups to merge together	
<b>3.5</b>	<b>E &amp; D Media Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee awareness of positive impact of SFRS equality work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public awareness of positive impact of SFRS equality work</li> </ul>	Discussions with Corporate Communications Officer	E & D / CCO	05/16	CCO is looking at a recruitment film on all aspects of the fire service. However RDS working group are looking at a JRT film so to link the two up. Recommended that a CFOA message is sent to see what has already been done and to look at schools or colleges for support of the production.	In progress

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress	Status
		Employment	Service delivery					
3.6	MIND – Blue Light Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To make employees aware of mental wellbeing in the workplace</li> <li>For employees to be more open about mental health and get help when needed</li> </ul>		<p>To launch the Blue Light Programme to SFRS employees and roll this out</p> <p>Work on the Action plan</p>	Contract s manage r/E&D/ Operational	<p><b>01/16 Completed</b></p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>11/16</p> <p>11/16</p>	<p>Information put on the pink and portal. Champions process being devised. Staff survey comments being reviewed</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p> <p><b>Complete</b></p> <p><b>In progress</b></p>



## 4.0 Research

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress	Status
		Employment	Service delivery					
4.1	<b>SFRS Cultural Audit (or substitute sampling)</b>	Identification of positive and negative issues about SFRS among employees		ACO to consider smaller-scale project to profile a specific topic or section of SFRS employees	ACO	03/16	Survey complete and results received	Complete
4.2	<b>SAFARI - South Asian communities and attitudes to fire research project</b>	Reliable data on any barriers to recruitment of South Asian people as f/f	Reliable data for South Asian people on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions of SFRS</li> <li>• Any issues of attitudes and/or practice for domestic and business fire safety</li> </ul>	Data analysis in progress and draft research report in progress	E & D /P&P	09/16	Action plan to be looked at in Septembers meeting	In progress
				Making Every Contact Count			Telford and Wrekin are providing this training, and dementia training is included in this.	Ongoing
4.3	<b>Dementia awareness</b>			Dementia Action Plan	E&D/P &P	<b>05/16</b>	Prevention are working on this. Neil Griffiths to cover Dementia Action Plan. Dementia training has been given to Watches	In progress