

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 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, Diversity and 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 October 2018 to October 2019.

### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report

### 3 Background

The remit of The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 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, diversity and inclusion practice throughout the organisation
- To maintain organisational focus and ensure strategic priorities for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 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 Equality Scheme

## 4 Main Areas of Work

The Steering Group has overseen a wide range of work since October 2018, major elements of which are summarised below:

### **Reasonable adjustments**

The reasonable adjustments programme has continued and the Service supports the majority of people on this with dyslexia, we also support people with physical disabilities such as hearing, bad backs and use Access to Work to provide funding towards some of these adjustments.

We also provide training to managers on dyslexia awareness, use cream paper as standard and have optional e-learning on Autism awareness.

### **Case Load**

- 15 Current cases
- 4 new cases since last steering group
- 5 support programmes completed / closed since last steering group

### **British Dyslexia Association**

SFRS have been shortlisted for the Organisation Award 2019, for the support we provide to our employees.

### **Disability Confident Scheme**

The Service signed up to this in 2017 following the removal of the two ticks scheme, we were Disability Confident Committed and have now moved to a Disability Confident Employer on 29 January 2019.

### **Enable Placement**

The steering group agreed to a supported internship and the HR/EDI team have volunteered to have this internship which is the first internship for SFRS. This commenced in September 2019 and will finish in July 2020. The internship works 2 days a week in the teams and is initially supported by a work coach until they are happy to work independently.

The purpose of this is to help the person get work experience and to get ready for a job.

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

The action plan is monitored and reported to the steering group, it details progress on a wide range of EDI initiatives and projects.

The Single Equality Scheme will be reported at the meeting in March 2020.

### **Menopause awareness training**

7 sessions have been delivered to 142 employees within the Service.

The Talking Menopause Website have used Shropshire as a model employer, and we have written a case study highlighting the support we provide. The CIPD are driving how menopause is supported in the workplace and our Assistant Chief Fire Officer went to the Houses of Parliament to contribute to a debate on menopause as requested by Talking Menopause (10/2019).

## **Mind**

The Service promotes national events and uses social media to promote these. Information packs were sent out to all stations, watches and departments for World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2019, to encourage our employees to be open around Mental Health issues.

The Service has now completed 4 Mental Health First Aid Training sessions resulting in 49 people being trained in the Service. This will then be cascaded down the Service with a 1 day, and half day awareness training courses.

## **Networking meetings**

We held our dyslexia networking meetings on 8 April 2019 and 23 September 2019 and an Operational Women's Meeting on 11 February 2019. Both had useful information to consider for the service.

## **Positive Action**

### **On Call Taster Sessions**

Recruitment Event at Prees Cricket Club – 04 December 2018

Female Students Visit to Telford – 29 March 2019

### **Women's Taster Days**

12 January 2019 - Whitchurch – 5 attended

18 May 2019 - Bishops Castle – 3 attended

### **Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) Taster Day**

20 July 2019 - Wellington - 5 attended

Job Related Tests Taster – Telford Central – 4 attended (2 women, 2 BAME)

## **National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Equality, Diversity & Inclusion meetings**

The EDI Officer has attended several of these meetings which are used to discuss work packages and to network with other Services across the country. The subject areas discussed vary at each meeting and include such subjects as positive action, National Work streams, Fireground assessments, Menopause and implications of this, sharing best practice.

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

2 women attended the event this year both of which were on call firefighters. Feedback and best practice from these events is shared with the EDI Steering Group.

## **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 Trainers, Associate Trainers, Managers, members and other employees.
- Equality and Diversity induction training has been given to non-uniformed, apprentices, on call and wholetime firefighters.
- Mental Health First Aid training.
- A review of the online ED&I training courses is taking place and should be ready for January 2020.

- EDI induction training has been placed onto our online learning forum.
- A range of information materials on different issues has been acquired or developed and is available for employees.
- Unconscious Bias training has now been moved online
- Suicide Prevention for selected managers has been undertaken.

### **Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)**

EIAs have been undertaken on the ground floor refurbishment at Shrewsbury station and on the Telford refurbishment.

### **Allies/networking groups**

The Service is currently investigating the most appropriate type of group and are asking employees in the staff survey for their preferences.

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

The Service attends and supports the following events:

- Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) National Conference
- AFSA workshop on 'Smoke and Mirrors' report
- Fairness and Respect Equality Shropshire Ltd (FRESh) meetings
- Multi-faith and cultural year planner issues to all stations and offices
- Using social media to promote local and international events eg World Mental Health Day, Holocaust Memorial Day, Time to Talk, Black History Month
- Attended Shrewsbury & Telford job centres to promote the Service.
- Currently arranging a visit from the Woodlands specialist school.
- Vaisakhi procession in Telford, with a new banner.
- Jobs fairs.
- LGBT Proud to Provide Conference
- LGBT Conference - 'EMBRACE a Culture of Inclusion' is a new project introduced by SAND (Safe and Ageing No Discrimination) Shropshire

### **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 (AFSA).
- Rainbow Film Festival

## **5 Capacity**

There are no capacity impacts arising from this report.

## **6 Collaboration / Partnership Working**

This is a historical report, some of which will involve partnership working.

## **7 Community Safety**

There are no community safety impacts arising from this report.

## **8 Environmental**

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

## **9 Equality Impact Assessment**

This is a historical report so no impact assessment is required for this, but each area should have an equality impact assessment as required.

## **10 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **11 Health and Safety**

There are no health and safety impacts arising from this report.

## **12 Human Rights (including Data Protection)**

There are no human rights impacts arising from this report.

## **13 ICT**

There are no ICT impacts arising from this report.

## **14 Legal Comment**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **15 Public Value / Service Delivery**

There are no public value or service delivery impacts arising from this report.

## **16 Reputation**

There are positive impacts of having an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion steering group both internally and for the communities we serve.

## **18 Training**

There are no training impacts arising from this report.

## **19 Appendices**

There are no appendices attached to this report.

## **20 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.