

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 Steering Group from October 2019 to October 2020.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report

3 Background

The updated aims of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering
Group are:

- 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.

Please find the reviewed and updated (April 2020) Terms of Reference
detailed in the Appendix to the report.

4 Main Areas of Work

The Steering Group has overseen a wide range of work since October 2019, major elements of which are summarised below. A Steering Group workshop was held in December 2019 to ascertain key priorities for the Group.

British Dyslexia Association

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) won the British Dyslexia Association's Organisation Award in December 2019, for the support we provide to our employees.

Disability Confident Scheme

SFRS is continuing its work as a Disability Confident Employer since January 2019.

Enable Placement

The supported internship started in September 2019 and due to Covid-19 restrictions was completed early in March 2020. It was a successful placement, the placement worked in both the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and the Human Resources and Admin Support teams to broaden their work experience.

External Activities and Events

The Service attends and supports the following events:

- Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) National Conference
- AFSA workshop on Positive Action – various online briefings have been available throughout the pandemic for employees to attend
- Fairness, Respect, Equality Shropshire (FRESH) meetings
- Multi-faith and cultural year planner issued to all stations and offices
- 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
- LGBT Conference - 'EMBRACE a Culture of Inclusion' is a new project introduced by Safe and Ageing No Discrimination (SAND) Shropshire
- NHS Conference on Equality and Diversity

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.
- Equality and Diversity induction training has been given to non-uniformed, apprentices, on call and wholetime firefighters.
- Mental Health First Aid training.
- A range of information materials on different issues has been acquired or developed and is available for employees.
- Suicide Prevention for selected managers has been undertaken.
- Various online courses have been available.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)

The completion of these is part of day to day activities, a full EIA is currently in process for the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) proposals.

Menopause awareness training

These training sessions have now been made available as an e-learning module on LEO since September – the content replicates the face to face presentation with interactive presentations and videos which we delivered pre Covid-19.

MIND

The Service promotes national events internally and uses social media externally. SFRS supported World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2020, to encourage our employees to be open around mental health issues.

The Service has now trained a total of 61 people as Mental Health First Aiders. Due to Covid-19 we will now be offering managers a virtual 2-day course in the future.

The half day Mental Health Awareness session is also being delivered virtually and 30 employees have completed this training.

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 projects and sharing best practice.

Officer and Service Manager Briefing by the Chief Fire Officer in June 2020 on equalities issues

This covered various topics including Black Lives Matter, white privilege, positive action and unconscious bias. Various information was presented and discussed during this session including the Service's updated positive action statement. It gave all participants the opportunity to share their understanding of these topics.

Operational Secondment

The Steering Group have agreed to have an operational secondment to the EDI team to undertake various inclusion activities throughout the Service and in our communities, this is currently in progress.

Positive Action Statement

The EDI Steering group were involved and consulted on the updating of this, which can be viewed via the following link:

<https://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/equality-diversity/positive-action>

Reasonable adjustments

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

We also provide training to managers on dyslexia awareness and have recently purchased the Dyslexie font which is available for all employees to use which maybe their preference if they have dyslexia.

Case Load

- 22 current cases
- 6 new cases since last Steering Group meeting
- 1 support programme completed / closed since last Steering Group meeting

SFRS get many requests to share their best practice from other Fire Services in the UK, individuals and recently one from the United States.

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 to this Committee at its meeting in March 2021.

Subscriptions and Memberships

Subscriptions have been renewed for:

- Networking Women in the Fire Service
- Fairness and Respect Equality Shropshire Ltd (FRESH)
- The Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA)

Taster Sessions for Wholetime firefighters

Date	Number of sessions	Session	Total
28/07/20	1	Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME)	6
01/08/20	2	Women	11
05/08/20	2	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT+)	13
11/08/20	2	Women	12
15/08/20	2	BAME	12
05/09/20	2	BAME/LGBT+/Women	10
07/10/20	3	Open to All	16
07/10/20	3	Open to All	16
		Total Attendance	96

Voices Group

The Service has now launched a new Voices Group and has obtained interest from a number of employees to be representatives for the following areas:

- Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME)
- Disability
- Disability - Dyslexia
- Disability – Mental Health
- LGBT+
- Women
- Women - Menopause

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
- Initiate 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 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.

17 Security

There are no security impacts arising from this report.

18 Training

There are no training impacts arising from this report.

19 Appendix

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group Terms of Reference (updated April 2020)

20 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

Terms of Reference for the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group

1. Vision

The vision of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group is to ensure that the culture of the Service allows all employees to feel valued and are treated appropriately at work and that our services meet the needs of Shropshire's and Telford and Wrekin's diverse communities.

2. Aims

- 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.

3. Objectives

- Provide leadership, strategic direction, development and resources to ensure progression of EDI and our Equality Scheme.
- Ensure we consider all of our communities' needs.
- Ensure that all departments and teams set EDI objectives.
- Make equality improvements to the 9 protected characteristics of diversity, and other areas as identified by the Steering Group, including rurality, carers and social and economic exclusion.
- Ensure that members of staff understand and support the implementation of SFRS EDI priorities.
- Implement best practice and positive action initiatives for EDI.
- Use the employee equality monitoring data to identify areas for improvement on the 9 protected characteristics.

4. Membership

The core membership will consist of individuals representing the range of services and departments across the Service as detailed below. The Group will be chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

- Chief Fire Officer
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Chair)
- Head of Human Resources and Administration
- Head of Finance

- Head of Resources
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer
- Human Resources Manager
- Member Champion for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Area Managers
- Group Managers
- ICT Manager
- Planning and Programme manager
- Fire Crime Officer
- Representative bodies from each trade union: FBU, FOA, FRSA, Unison.
- Co-options – the committee may at its discretion co-opt other members.
- Corporate Communications Officer

Representative bodies will be invited to attend all appropriate meetings.

5. Frequency

The Group will meet three times per year.

6. Governance

The group will send update reports to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

An update will be given to the Chair of the Fire Authority during Chair's Briefings as required.

7. Responsibility of the membership

- To attend meetings regularly and send a representative if you cannot attend
- To contribute fully, to enable the group to comply with its terms of reference
- To undertake duties assigned by the group
- To act as champions of the EDI Steering Group and the broader EDI agenda within their area.
- To ensure that the work of the Group and the broader EDI agenda are communicated to their teams/areas and to feedback views to the steering group.

8. Role of representative bodies

- To contribute fully to the group enable it to comply with its terms of reference
- To represent the views of their members on EDI issues in SFRS
- To feedback EDI issues to their members

9. Scrutiny

The EDI Officer will attend Service Management Team as necessary and report to the Strategy and Resources Committee. External equality groups are used for peer and/or critical friend challenge as required.

10. Review

These terms of reference will be reviewed annually.
(last updated April 2020).