

# 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 November 2020 to October 2021.

### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the report;
- b) View the 'Working with dyslexia' video <https://t.co/2gptoKrxAN?amp=1>; and
- c) View the positive action video <https://youtu.be/Fx3l9QiA49M>

### 3 Background

The aims of The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 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 (October 2021) Terms of Reference attached in the Appendix to the report.

## **4 Main areas of work**

The Steering Group has overseen a wide range of work since October 2020, major elements of which are summarised below. The last Steering Group meeting was held on 6 October 2021.

### **2020 Dyslexia Awards**

The Service won 'Supportive Employer' at the Dyslexia Awards in December 2020. This is the second time the Service has won this award, for supporting its dyslexic employees.

### **External Activities and Events**

The Service attends and supports the following events:

- Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) National Conference
- FRESH meetings – the group closed in September 2021
- 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 Conferences
- LGBT Rainbow Film Festival and Pride event in Ludlow

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training**

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

- Dyslexia awareness training has been commissioned and delivered.
- EDI induction training has been given to non-uniformed employees, apprentices, on-call and wholetime firefighters.
- Mental Health First Aid Aware 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.
- A host of EDI webinars have been offered to all staff in the Service.

### **Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)**

Service managers have attended training, the Brigade Order is under review and it was agreed at EDI steering group to now include Socio Economic factors as one of the additional areas to be assessed when making decisions.

### **Mental Health and Suicide Prevention**

The Service promotes national events internally and uses social media externally. The Service supported World Mental Health Day in October 2021, with the release of a video from one of our employees sharing their personal experiences.

The Service has now trained:

61 people as Mental Health First Aiders (2 day course)  
57 people in Mental Health Awareness (half day course)  
43 people in Suicide Prevention  
4 people in Suicide Safety Planning.

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

The EDI Officer attends the National EDI meetings, along with specific projects. The Steering Group is also used to promote the Equality of Access to Services and Employment documents produced by the NFCC and have responded to the consultation on each of these.

### **Operational Secondment**

An external secondment for up to 18 months has been created to provide training to all employees and assist with other EDI initiatives.

### **Positive Action**

The Service has promoted positive action through an all staff email and video, which can be viewed via the following link:

<https://youtu.be/Fx3l9QiA49M>

### **Reasonable adjustments**

The Service has recently introduced a Workplace Adjustments Passport as part of the Reasonable Adjustments policy. The Service continue 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 also provides training to managers on dyslexia awareness.

### **Case Load**

- 25 Current cases
- 5 new cases since last steering group, 2 reopened
- 2 closed

### **Equality 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 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**

Sessions to date have included Women's and Open to all at Ellesmere in May and Bridgnorth in September.

## **Voices Group**

The Service officially launched the Voices representatives in September 2021, after recruiting, planning and implementing events with the Reps since January 2021. The Voices group are now included in the EDI Induction and are on the EDI area with their own Voices tile. Three meetings have been held to date along with individual meetings with each of the Reps.

Many activities have taken place, give below are some of the events and activities:

### **BAME**

- Discussions on how to use data
- The rep has had discussions with employees
- Discussion for Black History Month 2022

### **Disability – Mental Health**

- Mental Health Awareness Week – May  
Employees shared their photos of back to nature to show how they improve their mental health on social media
- World Mental Health Day – October  
Employee Video sharing their own journey with mental health shared to all staff along with feedback questionnaire.

### **Disability - Dyslexia**

- Dyslexia Video produced for Dyslexia Awareness Week with our own employees which was sent out on all social media channels  
<https://t.co/2gptoKrxAN?amp=1>
- New quick books purchased

### **LGBT+**

- Attendance at conference to review practice in the Service
- Attendance at the LGBT+ Rainbow Film Festival
- Discussions around how to connect with LGBT+ groups
- Rainbow Epauettes and Lanyards

### **Menopause Group**

- Meetings held to discuss symptoms, medication exercise and experiences
- Online exercise session
- Menopause advice by an external Doctor arranged for Menopause Awareness Day along with a charity cake sale for the Firefighters Charity.
- Weekly lunchtime walks
- Review/trial of uniform

### **Women's**

- Review/trial of uniform
- Online fitness sessions

- White Ribbon Day campaign promotion

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 Fire Alliance / Collaboration / Partnership Working**

The EDI team share best practice with other Services.

## **6 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **7 Legal Comment**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **8 Equality Impact Assessment**

EQIA's are completed for individual projects contained in this report, this report is a historical report therefore an EQIA of this is not required.

## **9 Reputation**

The work around EDI promotes the Service as being inclusive and give a positive impact to the Service's reputation, supporting areas and events such as Black History Month, Dyslexia, LGBT+ events, Mental Health Awareness.

## **10 Appendix**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group Terms of Reference

## **11 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.



## **Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service**

### **Terms of Reference for the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group**

#### **1. Vision**

The vision of the 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
- 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 and a voices rep will be invited to attend all appropriate meetings. An open seat will also be offered in the newsletter.

## **5. Frequency**

The group will meet four 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 SMT 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 October 2021).