

Progress on Implementation of the Equality Action Plan

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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

1 Purpose of Report

This report updates Members on progress on the key actions identified in the Equality Scheme Action Plan from March 2023 to February 2024.

2 Recommendations

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

3 Background

This report provides members with:

- Details of key actions within the Action Plan.
- Provides Members with the latest version of quarterly Action Plan (dated September 2023 – December 2023).

4 Progress on the main Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) actions

The revised Action Plan for the final period of 2023 is attached for Member's information.

5 Examples of the Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service EDI Work

Employment-focused EDI work over the past year has included:

The Positive Action programme aims to encourage under-represented sections of the community to apply for employment with the Service and is sanctioned under the Equality Act 2010.

The following Taster Days have been held to encourage specific groups to apply for employment:

Date	Location	Type
10 June 2023	Market Drayton	On Call
17 June 2023	Ludlow	On Call
10 November 2023	Shrewsbury	Wholetime
11 November 2023	Shrewsbury	Wholetime
24 February 2024	Tweedale	On Call

Mental Health:

- Implementation of the Mental Health at Work Commitment action plan is ongoing.
- Chief Fire Officer sent a direct email to all employees about the 'time to talk day' in February 2024.
- A pack was sent to each station/watch or department in the service for time to talk day.
- Information on the newsletter and portal about MIND and mental health support.
- Mental Health awareness and suicide prevention courses are ongoing.
- Occupational Health referral form amended to include specific questions around mental health.

The programme of reasonable adjustments to the working conditions of employees who have a disability has continued. The majority of support is to operational employees who have dyslexia, providing personal tuition, specialist equipment and peer support as appropriate.

The Service wide software 'read and write' was launched in May 2023 for our neurodiverse employees and will be available to all our employees.

Three Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Induction Training sessions have been delivered for new employees during the year.

Equality Impact Assessment training has been delivered along with internal training on the online form and process by the EDI officer. In addition to this the policy has been reviewed.

Dyslexia Awareness training has been delivered to managers and relevant employees.

Two Women have attended the Womens Development Programme which was created in association with Women in the Fire Service and delivered by Women to Work. In addition to this the Women in the Fire Service development weekend was attended by 2 employees.

The Voices employee support group is now embedded, and the representatives have undertaken many initiatives and events working with the EDI team including the following:

- BAME working group meeting was held. BAME rep attends the newly created National Black Firefighters Network and West Mercia Network. Providing feedback to the voices group and EDI steering group.
- Mental Health rep held their first coffee morning for World Mental Health Day at HQ
- Attendance at local LGBT events and a display at HQ for Pride Month.

- Peri-Menopause walks and active, 'Microsoft teams' chat and sharing of information, Peri menopause library books available to all employees are all ongoing. 2 Menopause 'chomp and chat' sessions held over the past 12 months.
- Menopause Rep attends the National NFCC Menopause meetings, and the Service have trained 2 Menopause Champions.
- Menopause nutrition course was offered to all employees.
- Women's networking roadshow is in creation for 2024, to take the concept of the networking day to on call stations.
- International Women's Day, March 2023 – 2 guest speakers, The Mayor of Shrewsbury and a former Female Chief Fire Officer, well attended by a range of employees.
- Representative attends EDI steering group to provide an update on their specific area and other reps.
- A four monthly newsletter is created and sent out around the service to update staff on what the Voices reps have been doing and any future events coming up.

The Voices information area on the intranet has been reviewed and redesigned to incorporate more information/support, links and events that link to each of the Reps specific areas.

White Ribbon Accreditation - The service held its first steering group meeting and has created a draft action plan, currently with White Ribbon for approval. The Service has supported white ribbon day and the 16 days action against domestic violence campaign both internally and externally on social media.

Work on the Women's Safety Survey action plan was agreed at SMT and the actions have been ongoing, including areas such as the lone working policy, risk assessments at stations and review of training requirements.

Confidential reporting line 'Say so' was launched in May 2023, briefings were given to employees, there is an ongoing programme of employee staff briefings throughout 2023 and 2024. This is also included in the induction programme for new starters.

Yoga courses have taken place in 2023, with a review of other types of health and wellbeing activities being considered for 2024.

NFCC – responded to all EDI consultation documents, attended NFCC EDI meetings.

Externally focused EDI actions over the year have included:

The Service is a member of the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dementia Action Alliance and regularly attends meetings. A multi-agency video has been created to increase understanding of dementia.

Frequent articles and notices on social media and in 'The Pink' on providing employees and the public with information about equality-related issues and events including:

- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Time to talk day
- LGBT History Month

- International Women's Day
- Autism Awareness Month
- Black History Month
- White Ribbon Day (against domestic violence)

International Women's Day on the 8 March, theme was 'Embrace Equity' every woman in the service received an envelope in the post for this week, social media to promote this day.

The EDI officer has supported the LGA by delivering a second training session at the Fire Leadership Essentials Course in March 2023.

Attendance at and ongoing support for local equality, diversity and inclusion groups and events, including:

- Attendance at LGBT+ events such as Ludlow Pride, Rainbow Film Festival.
- Flying Rainbow flags over HQ to mark International Day against Homophobia (May 2023), LGBT History Month (February 2024) and Rainbow Film Festival (October 2023).
- Attendance at the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) conferences.
- Attendance at Shropshire Disability Network in February 2023.
- Attendance at the newly created Telford and Wrekin EDI multi-agency group.
- Attendance at careers fairs and events such as the Nova Training Centre and Meole Secondary School during their engineering week.
- The Service signed up to the SAND (Safe and Aging No Discrimination) Covenant and are creating their action plan.

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

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is on historical information, all projects that impact on people will have a separate assessment.

9 Appendix

Equality Scheme Action Plan (October 2023 – December 2023)

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.