

## Progress on Implementation of the Equality Action Plan

### 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 updates Members on progress on the main actions identified in the Equality Scheme Action Plan from March 2021 to February 2022.

#### 2 Recommendations

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

#### 3 Background

This report provides members with:

- Details of major actions within the Action Plan
- The latest version of triannual Action Plan (dated October 2021 – January 2022).

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

The revised Action Plan for the final period of 2021/22 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.

Taster Days have been held to encourage specific groups to apply for employment as On Call Firefighters on the following dates:

- 22 May 2021 - Women's/all - Ellesmere
- 12 June 2021 – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) – cancelled
- 3 July 2021 – Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic/ all Ludlow - cancelled
- 18 September 2021 – Women's / all - Bridgnorth
- 25 September 2021 – Women's / all – Minsterley - cancelled
- 3 March 2022 - Virtual taster session planned – Much Wenlock

### **Mental Health:**

Mental Health at Work Commitment – signed in February 2022.

- Chief Fire Officer sent information to all employees about the 'time to talk day' in February 2022
- 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 courses ongoing
- Suicide prevention courses offered to employees
- Health and Wellbeing courses offered to employees

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.

EDI Induction Training completed for new employees; EDI secondment recruited to carry out EDI awareness training to employees during 2022. Equality Impact Assessment training attended by 19 employees.

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

- Creation of a new dyslexia awareness video – created by employees sharing their experiences
- Mental Health video – created by an employee who shared their personal experiences
- Mental Health awareness week – sharing of employee's photos to improve mental health
- Time to talk day – involved in packs and animation
- Attendance at Ludlow Pride event
- Guest at Oswestry Rainbow Film Festival open evening and Virtual Rainbow film festival.
- Menopause coffee mornings, walks and active 'Microsoft teams' chat and sharing of information
- Menopause fitness sessions
- Menopause event with guest speaker giving advice
- Menopause / Women's trial of uniform

- White Ribbon Day – promoting this and investigating accreditation
- External guest speaker for dyslexia awareness week
- Rainbow lanyards and epaulettes
- International Women’s Day – packs, photo’s, attendance at conferences
- Representative attends EDI steering group to provide an update

National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) – responded to all EDI consultation documents, attended NFCC EDI meetings and EQIA 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 8 March – the theme for 2021 was ‘choose to challenge’ some of our female employees were interviewed about their roles and this was shared on social media and on our website.

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

- Attendance at LGBT+ events and Rainbow Film Festival by a Senior Officer at the launch.
- Flying Rainbow flags over HQ and Training Centre to mark International Day against Homophobia (May 2021), LGBT History Month (February 2022) and Rainbow Film Festival (October 2021)
- Attendance at the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) webinar conferences.
- Attendance at the LGBT History Month Launch online event February 2022

**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 2021 – January 2022)

## **10 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.

# **Equality Action Plan**

## **October 2021 – January 2022**

## 1.0 Recruitment, selection and training

### 1.1 Dyslexia

**Employment** - Improved awareness and initial recognition of dyslexia in employees

**Service delivery** - Greater confidence in service provision by Service and service users

| Action  | Who's responsible | Target date | Progress  | Status      |
|---|-------------------|-------------|---|-------------|
| Service currently has 31 live cases of dyslexia.  | EDI               | Ongoing     | Ongoing work supporting employees with assessments and equipment  | Ongoing     |
| Dyslexia Awareness Training for Watch Managers  | EDI & JT          | 2022        | Training for 2022 being arranged  | Ongoing     |
| Set up another dyslexia networking evening to provide ongoing support. Encourage recently diagnosed employees to attend | EDI               | 2022        | Date being arranged in Feb/March with Voices rep  | Ongoing     |
| Explore purchasing Read and Write to be networked   | EDI/IT            | 07/2021     | Quotes have been obtained. Information with IT for review.  | In progress |
| Dyslexia Film   | EDI/Comms         | 10/2021     | Film has now been shared internally and externally  | Complete    |
| Guest Speaker   | EDI               | 10/21       | Invited an external person to share their experience of being dyslexic, to have a live discussion. Several SFRS employees attended this live event. | Complete    |

### 1.2 Dementia

**Employment** -Raised awareness of symptoms and appropriate responses to dementia

**Service Delivery** -Dementia-sensitive service provision, leading to appropriate support for relevant service users

| Action  | Who's responsible | Target date | Progress  | Status      |
|---|-------------------|-------------|---|-------------|
| Need for ongoing training for operational employees to be reviewed. | Prevention        | 05/2021     | Training package requires development in order to make available on LEO. Prevention investigating the possibility of virtual dementia friends training. | In progress |
| Dementia Action Alliance plan                                       | Prevention        | Ongoing     | Prevention team continue to meet regularly with the Shropshire & Telford & Wrekin merged group.   | Ongoing     |

## 1.0 Recruitment, selection and training

### 1.5 EDI refresher training

**Employment** - All employees understand: the importance of EDI to the Service and their responsibilities for good ED&I practice in their work

**Service delivery** - More sensitive and aware for service delivery, Service delivery models anti-discrimination practice

| Action  | Who's responsible | Target date | Progress  | Status      |
|---|-------------------|-------------|---|-------------|
| EDI Officer to review e-learning work packages and devise new training for employees (EDIP 5.4.1.a) | EDI               | 2022        | Review completed of EDI packages, 2 selected and amendments made. Further amendments to be made to incorporate positive action statement. Put on hold for capacity to develop this module. Modules available on LEO – need to agree launch date | Complete    |
| Review EDI training requirements for senior and middle managers                                     | EDI               | 2022        | Jan 2022 EDI met with MakeUK for a quote, sent a new spec for review  | In progress |

### 1.6 Induction training

**Employment** - All new employees understand: The importance of EDI to the Service, SFRS EDI policy framework, responsibilities for good EDI practice in their work

**Service delivery** – That employees are considering EDI in all of their working practices

| Action   | Who's responsible | Target date | Progress   | Status  |
|--|-------------------|-------------|--|---------|
| Ensure all new employees participate in EDI induction: (EDIP 5.4.1a/b) | EDI               | Ongoing     | 4 October 2021 – 11 employees<br>27 September 2021 – 8 employees<br>6 January 2022- 9 employees<br>20 January 2022 – 8 employees | Ongoing |
| Complete non uniformed / missed sessions.                              | EDI               | 2022        |  |         |

### 1.8 Positive action

**Employment** -Challenge to social prejudices about firefighting for under-represented groups and increased representation of women, BME and LGBT people in operational posts

**Service Delivery** - More representative service delivery and increased interest in working for SFRS from women, BAME and LGBT people.

| Action   | Who's responsible | Target date                   | Progress  | Status                   |
|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Positive action Taster Sessions for on call recruitment (EDIP 5.4.1.c)</b>  | EDI / Rural       | Various dates throughout 2022 | At the On-Call Recruitment & Retention meeting it was agreed that we would have the following in 2022:<br><br>Oswestry- 07 <sup>th</sup> May<br>Bridgnorth- 30 <sup>th</sup> April<br>Shrewbury- 1 <sup>st</sup> October<br>Wellington- 08 <sup>th</sup> October<br>Other dates currently being confirmed.<br><br>18/09/21: Women (open to all) Bridgnorth - completed<br>25/09/21: Women (open to all) Minsterley – cancelled due no responses | In progress              |
| <b>Working with Prevention on community initiatives</b>  | EDI/ Prevention   | Ongoing                       | Discussions have taken place on how we can link prevention and recruitment initiatives<br>Sharing of campaign calendars now in progress for prevention, protection and EDI<br>Activities limited due to COVID-19 restrictions   | Ongoing                  |
| <b>Women's development programme</b>   | Development       | On hold                       | This is currently on hold.  | On hold                  |
| <b>Introduce annual uniformed services visits using appropriate role models and targeted attendance at other events (IFSG 3.3)</b> | EDI/HR            | 2022                          | Arrange for Woodlands specialist school to visit one of our stations once COVID-19 restrictions permit.   | On hold                  |
|  |                   | 2022                          | EDI to contact TCAT, careers events were postponed due to Covid, GST – North making contact with TCAT.  | In progress              |
| Communication to explain positive action and positive discrimination (IFSG 3.5/HMI) to increase understanding                      | EDI               | Ongoing<br>April 2022         | Secondment to EDI team in January 2022<br>Training being developed for all firefighters/control/non-uniformed.  | Completed<br>In progress |

### 1.9 Reasonable adjustments

**Employment** - Disabled employees provided with at least their legislative entitlements to reasonable adjustments to their working environments.

Disabled employees enabled to perform their job roles to the standards required for their posts

**Service Delivery** - Services delivered by all employees to the same high standard



| Action   | Who's responsible         | Target date | Progress   | Status      |
|--|---------------------------|-------------|--|-------------|
| Reasonable adjustments programme to be maintained and developed  | EDI / T&D /Line mgmt /Ops | Ongoing     | EDI are continuously receiving requests of help from individuals with potential dyslexia and other disabilities. Employees are typically supported by providing tuition, coaching, equipment, etc. Records are held confidentially, only shared with relevant individuals only once authorisation from the employee has been obtained. | Ongoing     |
| Disability Confident Employer Level 2  | EDI                       | Ongoing     | NP renewed SFRS level 2 December 2022  | Ongoing     |
| EDI to attend Jobs-fair at the Jobcentre Plus to promote our jobs to potential recruits who have a disability. | EDI                       | 2022        | Awaiting update on when this activity will resume.   | In progress |

### 1.10 Promoting an inclusive culture

#### Employment and Service Delivery – Promoting an inclusive culture

| Action   | Who's responsible | Target date | Progress   | Status      |
|--|-------------------|-------------|--|-------------|
| Managers are trained in people management skills, including having difficult conversations and their responsibilities on promoting an inclusive culture (IFSG 2.1) | Development       | A&O         | Management development programme: ILM level 3 and ILM level 5 included in this. EDI is included in module 1 and runs through all modules.  | Ongoing     |
| Staff survey to monitor that senior managers challenge bullying and harassment at all levels (IFSG 2.2)  | Execs/Development | April 2021  | The Exec team have been undertaking station/watch/team visits to discuss the staff survey results  | Completed   |
| Regular meetings to be held with Voices group, to discuss feedback, event participation, setting up support groups   | EDI               | Ongoing     | Full group meeting held 13 January 2022<br>Individual meetings will be organised with the EDI officer and Representatives throughout the year.<br>Voices external launch and group photo planned for March 2022.<br>Workplan for the year in progress. | Ongoing     |
| Review the role of mentors/coaching programmes for employees wishing to progress (IFSG 4.2)  | HR/Development    | 04/22       | The Coaching, Mentoring and Buddying Strategy is due to formally launch in April and also incorporates external coaching which is accessed via West Midlands Employers.  | In progress |

|  |     |       |  |          |
|--|-----|-------|--|----------|
| NFCC Equality of Access Documents              | ALL |       | These documents are now available on the EDI tile.<br>Managers to share these with their teams | Ongoing  |
| Attendance at Shropshire Rainbow Film Festival | EDI | 10/21 | One of the Voices reps attended and spoke at at the opening event                              | Complete |

## 2.0 Policy

### 2.1 Impact assessments

**Employment** - Current equality, diversity and human rights impact assessments exist for employment policies and procedures.

**Service delivery** - Current equality, diversity and human rights impact assessments exist for all service delivery and community engagement policies and procedures

| Action   | Who's responsible | Target date | Progress  | Status               |
|--|-------------------|-------------|---|----------------------|
| Monitor progress of new electronic Impact assessment process | EDI               | Ongoing     | Dec 2022 amendments made to the electronic form   | Ongoing              |
| Equality Impact Assessment Training for all managers         | EDI/Dev           | Ongoing     | NFCC EQIA training has been offered to managers – 19 attending<br>External trainer being sourced for training when NFCC training completed. | Completed<br>Ongoing |

### 2.2 Impact Assessment BO

**Employment** - Clear guidance for employees on EIA process and framework for analysing potential equality & human rights impacts.

**Service Delivery** - Framework for analysing potential equality & human rights impacts of SFRS policies and practice on communities and service users.

| Action   | Who's responsible | Target date | Progress   | Status                   |
|--|-------------------|-------------|--|--------------------------|
| When progress of electronic EIA is gathered, Action number 2.1, review whether documentation needs amending to assist employees. | EDI               | TBC         | EDI officer is attended (02/21) NFCC EQIA group to discuss good practice in this process and how to improve these nationally.  | In progress              |
| Review Current EQIA form with the NFCC form.   | EDI               | TBC         | August 2021 BO currently being reviewed along with the form. Feedback received from employees on process<br>10/21 EDI steering group approved socio economic status to be included<br>12/22 electronic form reviewed and updated | In progress<br>Completed |

### 2.3 Gender Pay Gap Report

**Employment** - Clear guidance for employees on EIA process and framework for analysing potential equality & human rights impacts.

**Service Delivery** - Framework for analysing potential equality & human rights impacts of SFRS policies and practice on communities and service users.

| Action                                | Who's responsible | Target date | Progress                               | Status      |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|--|-------------|
| Gender Pay Gap Report to be published | EDI / HR          | 03/22       | First draft completed in December 2022 | In progress |

### 2.4 Menopause (IFSG 5.2)

**Employment** - Clear guidance for employees on EIA process and framework for analysing potential equality & human rights impacts.

**Service Delivery** - Framework for analysing potential equality & human rights impacts of SFRS policies and practice on communities and service users.

| Action            | Who's responsible | Target date | Progress   | Status  |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|--|---|
| Menopause Session | EDI               | 2022        | Menopause information is shared frequently on the teams group<br>Questionnaire was sent to employees<br>Menopause walks offered weekly<br>Work in progress to review/trial uniform<br>Menopause Awareness Day in October 20/10/21<br>Charity bake sale and a Dr gave advice on Chiropractic care | Ongoing<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Complete |

### 2.4 Brigade Orders / Guidance

**Employment** – Employees are aware and understand policies

**Service Delivery** – The outcome of this will be dependent on the Brigade Order being reviewed

| Action  | Who's responsible | Target date | Progress   | Status      |
|---|-------------------|-------------|--|-------------|
| EDI policies for review: (IFSG 2.4)<br>Equality Impact Assessment – see 2.2   | EDI               | 04/22       |  | In progress |
| Report to be produced on disciplinary and grievances using protected characteristics to ascertain trends (IFSG 2.5) | HR                | Ongoing     | Monthly performance stats detailing this information is sent to Head of HR | Ongoing     |
| Review carers support and reasonable adjustments (IFSG 4.4)   | EDI               | On hold     | Project currently on hold  | On hold     |
| Monitoring the results of exit interviews for any themes (IFSG 4.4)   | HR                | Annual      | Exit interviews are routinely reviewed and logged when received into HR    | Ongoing     |

### 3.0 Communication

#### 3.1 Images and stereotypes

**Employment** - Positive images of non-stereotypical and/or non-traditional roles

**Service delivery** - Positive images of non-stereotypical and/or non-traditional roles

| Action  | Who's responsible | Target date         | Progress   | Status      |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|--|-------------|
| Draft review process for annual review of images used in SFRS material for positive role models | Communications    | 04/2022 update date | Review process and schedule currently in operation – learnings to be taken where necessary     | In progress |
| Reviewing our website for women role models.  | Communications    | 04/2022 update date | Website review underway  | In progress |
| Black History Month   | EDI/Voices/Comms  | October 2022        | The Voices rep is working on portraits and information to promote our Black Heritage employees | In progress |

#### 3.2 Translated Materials

**Employment** - Relevant support materials available to enable employees to communicate with speakers of other languages.

**Service Delivery** - Information available in languages and imagery appropriate to communities

| Action   | Who's responsible | Target date | Progress  | Status  |
|--|-------------------|-------------|---|---------|
| Attend monthly fire safety meetings for Protection & Prevention as requested | EDI               | Ongoing     | Advice given to prevention team on obtaining an interpreter | Ongoing |

#### 3.4 Groups, networks and organisations

**Employment** - Service able to hear community concerns and feedback, service able to communicate information to communities effectively.

**Service Delivery** - Better awareness of available services, engagement with service policy and service development, access to service resources to support their work

|   |               |         |   |             |
|---|---------------|---------|---|-------------|
| AFSA  | EDI/ Officers | Ongoing |   | Ongoing     |
| Shropshire Disability Network                         | EDI           | Ongoing | No meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions  | In progress |
| AFSA Conferences 2022                                 | EDI           | 2022    | 2 x Officers attended Winter conference 11/21<br>Summer Conferences being arranged      | Ongoing     |
| Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dementia Action Alliance | Prevention    | 2022    | Prevention currently working with Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dementia Action Alliance | Ongoing     |
| Voices group (internal)                               | EDI           | 2022    | Meetings held Sept 2021 & Jan 2022  | In progress |

|   |     |      |                                |         |
|---|-----|------|--------------------------------|---------|
| NFCC Equality Impact Assessment Working Group | EDI | 2022 | Ongoing attendance at meetings | Ongoing |
|---|-----|------|--------------------------------|---------|

### 3.5 EDI Media Strategy

**Employment** - Employee awareness of positive impact of SFRS equality work

**Service Delivery** -Public awareness of positive impact of SFRS equality work

| Action  | Who's responsible | Target date | Progress  | Status  |
|---|-------------------|-------------|---|---------|
| Build employee and public awareness that we are an employer that promotes equality, diversity and inclusivity within the workplace.<br>(EDIP 5.4.1.a/c) | EDI               | Ongoing     | The Service promotes diversity and inclusion through social media posts. Positive action events, positive action video before all events, Mental Health, LGBT+ events | Ongoing |

### 3.6 Mental Health

**Employment** - To make employees aware of mental wellbeing in the workplace.

For employees to be more open about mental health and get help when needed.

| Action   | Who's responsible                     | Target date | Progress   | Status  |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------------|--|---------|
| MIND – Blue Light Programme  | Contracts manager/E&D/OpTraining /Dev | Ongoing     | Discussion with Mental Health reps undertaken in Aug 201. See ongoing activities by voices reps  | Ongoing |
| SFRS to train the recommended 10% of the workforce in Mental Health First Aid awareness<br><br>Half day Mental Health First Aid Course | Development                           | Ongoing     | Since January 2019, 62 people have attended the 2 day MHFA course, with the next one planned on the 29 & 30 June 2022. Target audience is those teams/stations with no MHFA or TRiM practitioner.<br><br>59 people have attended the ½ day MH Awareness course delivered through joint training at Shropshire Council.<br><br>27 People have also completed the MH Foundation Skills e-learning module on LEO. | Ongoing |

|   |                  |         |   |             |
|---|------------------|---------|---|-------------|
| Support mental health awareness events such as mental health awareness week and time to talk day.     | EDI              | Ongoing | 10 October World Mental Health Day – Voices reps met to discuss activity, employee video of their experiences has been produced and will be sent to all staff for this day along with a memo giving contacts for help and discussion points.<br><br>In the voices meeting held on 13 <sup>th</sup> January – MT stated that we are going to trial a mental health and fitness video or via live stream.<br><br>01/22 Time to talk day, information put on newsletter and sent to all stations/watches, social media content to go out | Complete    |
| Continue to purchase relevant MIND promotional materials  | EDI              | Ongoing | Ongoing activity  | Ongoing     |
| Actively seek and support employees with Mental Health issues that are willing to share their stories | EDI/all managers | Ongoing | Information was given to all staff on suicide prevention week, each employee received a postcard on where to get help.  | In progress |

EDI – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

IFSG – Inclusive Fire Service Group (improvement strategies actions)