

## Equality and Diversity Steering Group Update

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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

### 1 Purpose of Report

This report provides a summary of the work of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group from September 2014 to the beginning of October 2015.

### 2 Recommendations

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

### 3 Background

The remit of The Equality and Diversity 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 employees
- To promote excellence in equality and diversity practice throughout the organisation
- To maintain organisational focus and ensure strategic priorities for Equality and Diversity 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 Single Equality Scheme

The Equality and Diversity team has continued to work closely with the Protect and Prevent Teams on a number of projects and community organisations and groups in the last year.

The reasonable adjustments programme has continued and the Service has recently had an article in the press, which focuses on four employees of the Service, who have dyslexia, and details some of the support they have received, and is creating its own film. It has continued to develop and implement Brigade equality and diversity training for operational and non-uniformed employees.

There have been three positive action events during this period, two for women and one for Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds, which have all been supported well.

The revised Equality Action Plan continues to clarify equality and diversity priorities, and has enabled the Steering Group better to manage planning and outcomes over the year.

## **4 Main Areas of Work**

The Steering Group has overseen a wide range of work since September 2014, major elements of which are summarised below.

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

Progress on implementing equality and diversity policies and actions has been monitored through the revised Action Plan. Actions and priorities have been reviewed in response to their effectiveness in delivering Equality and Diversity outcomes. The revised Action Plan enables the Steering Group to examine and analyse actions and progress in five key policy and practice areas:

- a) Policy
- b) Recruitment, selection, training and development
- c) Communication, external events, networks and partnerships
- d) Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and reporting
- e) Research and consultation

There are currently some 18 live issues / work areas in the Action Plan and some 27 equality and diversity actions, at different stages of progress and implementation, and varying from relatively minor, straightforward actions to major development and project work.

The current version of the Action Plan is attached as an appendix.

### **Policy**

A number of Brigade Orders have been reviewed and created, including the Equality of Opportunity in employment, service and engagement with the public; Disability in employment, service delivery and engagement with the public; Initial Impact Assessment and Transgender guidance written.

## **Initial Impact Assessments**

The Equality Impact Initial Assessment process is currently being reviewed to be mainstreamed with the Risk Management process.

## **Positive Action**

### **Taster Sessions**

As part of the Service's Positive Action Programme to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for posts, the Steering Group has planned and co-ordinated two highly successful Women's Taster Days and one Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) Session since September 2014 to encourage and support women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds to apply for retained duty system (RDS) operational posts:

Women's Tasters

- a) 21 February 2015 – Oswestry Fire Station
- b) 15 May 2015 – Craven Arms Fire Station

BAME Taster

- c) 12 September 2015 - Wellington Fire Station

Each of these has been followed by a session at Telford Central to enable women and under-represented groups to gain a better understanding of the selection process and the job related tests they need to pass to be successful in applications for operational posts.

Outcomes at the time of writing:

Women's Tasters

- 12 women in total have attended the two taster events.
- 10 (83%) have attended the follow-up evening.
- 1 (10%) has so far applied for RDS posts.
- 1 has failed part of the job-related tests but will be returning shortly for a re-test.

BAME Taster

- 5 people attended the taster session.
- 2 (40%) attended the follow up evening on 1 October 2015.
- 1 (20%) so far has applied but more have said they will be applying to the Wellington Station.

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

Three female employees attended this weekend event and took part in work-related workshops and gave them an opportunity to network with people from all over the country, feedback has been excellent.

### **Hate Crime Reporting**

The Service continues to receive regular updates on Hate Crime report statistics from West Mercia Police Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. The Service Reception at Brigade HQ is now a Hate Crime Reporting Centre, staff have been fully trained and there is a poster in the reception window advertising this, the Service plays an active role in the local Hate Crime Reporting Group convened by Shropshire Council. The Cultural Diversity Day was used to relaunch the Hate Crime reporting campaign.

The Shropshire Hate Crime Reporting Group have also provided the Service with funding to have the redesigned Hate Crime posters on appliances and vehicles, which is currently being undertaken and launched for Hate Crime Awareness Week on the 10 to 17 October.

### **Equality and Diversity Training**

During the past year the Steering Group has undertaken a range of Equality and Diversity training:

- Equality and Diversity refresher training has been delivered for whole time watches, again with positive feedback.
- Dyslexia awareness training has been commissioned and delivered for a range of employees.
- Equality and Diversity induction training has been reviewed and re-designed and delivered for new employees.
- Safe Ageing No Discrimination (SAND) has delivered training sessions to our Protect and Prevent teams.
- Dementia Awareness Training has been delivered by Bluebird Care to managers and to the Protect and Prevent teams.
- A range of informational materials on different issues has been acquired or developed, and is available for employees. A deafness awareness leaflet has been designed.

### **Dyslexia film**

The Service is currently developing a film, which details the support process that employees receive and features employees giving their own personal experiences, due for completion December 2015.

### **South Asian Fire Attitudes Research Initiative (SAFARI)**

The SAFARI research has now been completed and the Service has received the report, which includes recommendations. The report went to the Steering Group in September and they have appointed a working group to review the recommendations in the report and come back to the Steering Group in December with their proposals and comments.

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

Among other groups and events the Service actively supports:

- Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) Conference in November 2015 - planning to attend
- Celebrating Diversity Days: 3 and 14 October 2014
- Celebrating Diversity Day: 10 October 2015
- Cultural Diversity Day: 25 July 2015
- Dyslexia Information Day: 18 October 2014 and 16 May 2015
- Fairness, Respect Equality Shropshire (FRESH) Ltd
- 'Kick it Out' football campaign and other activities
- SAND (Safe Ageing, No Discrimination) – a campaigning and support group engaging with the experience of older LGBT people using care services.
- Shrewsbury Rainbow Film Festival (October)
- Shrewsbury Interfaith Forum

## **Subscriptions and Memberships**

Subscriptions have been renewed for Networking Women in the Fire Service and Fairness and Respect Equality Shropshire Ltd (FRESH) Ltd. The Service is currently reviewing its membership of the Asian Fire Service Association.

## **5 Legal Comment**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **6 Initial Impact Assessment**

An Initial Impact Assessment is not required as this report is an update report, looking at historical information.

## **7 Appendix**

Single Equality Scheme Action Plan

## **8 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.

## Single Equality Scheme Action Plan – June to August 2015

### 1.0 Recruitment, selection and training

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Current Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress since last quarter	New Action
		Employment	Service delivery					
1.1	Dyslexia	Improved awareness and initial recognition of dyslexia in employees	Greater confidence in service provision by Service and service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Filming and production of dyslexia awareness film in progress</li> <li>Publicise support to employees in local media</li> </ul>	E & D  Corp Comms Officer (CCO)	09/15  11/15	Film being edited  Press release on dyslexia support for local media completed	Make available on portal when finalised  Promote film to be used in other FRS and other organisations - CCO
1.2	Dementia	Raised awareness of symptoms and appropriate responses to dementia	Dementia-sensitive service provision, leading to appropriate support for relevant service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need for training for operational employees to be reviewed</li> </ul>			Additional session completed on the 04/06/15	Members training has been arranged for elected members to attend 15/10/15 – LM / E&D  Bluebird article to be placed 'in the fire' magazine - CCO
1.3	SAND (Safe Ageing No Discrimination) (LGB)		Sensitive service provision, leading to appropriate support for relevant service users	Explore a review meeting with SAND to find out their views from lessons learned by SFRS – E&D	E & D	07/15  10/15	Training completed for Protection 08/06/15	Arranging a date for a meeting in October.

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Current Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress since last quarter	New Action
		Employment	Service delivery					
1.4	Hearing impairment awareness	Improved awareness and initial recognition of hearing impairment in employees	Hearing impairment-sensitive service provision	Production of awareness leaflet in progress	E & D	07/15	Completed and distributed to all staff	Leaflet on the portal
1.5	E & D refresher training	All employees understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the importance of E&amp;D to the Service</li> <li>their responsibilities for good E &amp; D practice in their work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More sensitive and aware service delivery</li> <li>Service delivery models anti-discrimination practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rolling programme to be arranged</li> <li>Ongoing review and revision of content</li> <li>EDO to review e-learning package on learning pool academy.</li> <li>New programme to be agreed by operational management</li> </ul>	E & D E & D E & D	12/14 → 06/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rolling programme to be prepared</li> <li>EDA training commenced as an administrator and author for e-learning package.</li> <li>Training for Control completed 19/05/15</li> </ul>	
1.6	Induction training	All new employees understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the importance of E&amp;D to the Service</li> <li>SFRS E &amp; D policy framework</li> <li>responsibilities for good E &amp; D practice in their work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New employees understand core values of Service</li> <li>More sensitive and aware service delivery</li> <li>Service delivery models anti-discrimination practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure new non-uniformed employees participate in E &amp; D induction</li> <li>Review supporting materials</li> </ul>	E & D E & D	ongoing 07/15	Completed	Evaluation of revised programme 09/15 E&D

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Current Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress since last quarter	New Action
		Employment	Service delivery					
1.7	Gypsy & Traveller cultural awareness	Increased awareness of the need for sensitivity with colleagues	Greater sensitivity in delivering services to the needs of G&T's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training requested by some whole-time Watches</li> <li>• Discussion with ops management about feasibility of delivery to wholetime FF</li> </ul>	E & D / Op. mgmt.	12/15  11/15		
1.8	Positive action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge to social prejudices about firefighting for under-represented groups</li> <li>• Increased representation of women, BME and LGBT people in operational posts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More representative service delivery</li> <li>• Increased interest in working for SFRS from women, BAME and LGB people</li> </ul>	<p>A programme of positive action events to encourage applications for employment as firefighters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop revised BAME &amp; LGBT PA approaches</li> <li>• WFS development weekend</li> <li>• Women's development programme</li> </ul>	<p>E&amp;D / CFS / T&amp;D / Ops mgmt.</p> <p>E&amp;D</p> <p>E&amp;D</p> <p>ACFO</p>	<p>12/15</p> <p>09/15</p> <p>06/15</p> <p>11/15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 Sept &amp; 01 Oct BAME Taster completed – 5 attended</li> </ul> <p>Using SAFARI results to inform event format</p> <p>3 women attended WFS development weekend</p>	<p>Plan for wholetime positive action in 2015</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed Feedback article on the pink regarding event - Completed 08/15</p> <p>Coaching &amp; development course to be reviewed by new Development Officer stating 11/15</p>



Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Current Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress since last quarter	New Action
		Employment	Service delivery					
1.9	Reasonable adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disabled employees provided with at least their legislative entitlements to reasonable adjustments to their working environments.</li> <li>Disabled employees enabled to perform their job roles to the standards required for their posts</li> </ul>	Services delivered by all employees to the same high standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reasonable adjustments programme to be maintained and developed</li> <li>Set up another dyslexia networking evening to provide ongoing support</li> <li>Encourage recently diagnosed employees to attend</li> </ul>	E&D / T&D / Line mgmt / Ops mgmt	Ongoing  12/15  Ongoing	Dyslexic employees are being offered a joint training session on how to understand training manuals.	Entry done for 'Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards 2015' for our work with dyslexia.

## 2.0 Policy

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Current Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress since last quarter	New Action
		Employment	Service delivery					
2.1	Impact assessments	Current equality, diversity and human rights impact assessments exist for employment policies and procedures	Current equality, diversity and human rights impact assessments exist for all service delivery and community engagement policies and procedures	Monitor progress of suggested Impact assessment process	All managers and officers	Ongoing: annual review in March	SMT sent paper to RMG on 07/09/15 for further recommendations  Finds message has been sent out	Collate FINDS responses – E&D
2.2	Impact Assessment BO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear guidance for employees on IIA process</li> <li>• Framework for analysing potential equality &amp; human rights impacts</li> </ul>	Framework for analysing potential equality & human rights impacts of SFRS policies and practice on communities and service users	New guidance on equality monitoring and impact assessment being prepared	EDO	12/15	Structure of equality policies changed	
2.3	Equality & Diversity Policy Statement	Update: incorporate changes in legislation, Service policy and scope	Update: incorporate changes in legislation, Service policy and scope	Consultation completed	E & D	10/15		Confirm policy has been put on the Portal
2.4	Disability BO	Disability policy framework based on social model and reasonable adjustments.	Disability policy framework based on social model and reasonable adjustments.	Disability policy framework in consultation with managers	E & D	11/15	Consultation with RB's in progress	

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Current Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress since last quarter	New Action
		Employment	Service delivery					
2.5	Transgender guidance	Framework for supporting employees going through gender reassignment		To be added to e-learning and Portal	E & D	09/15	In progress	
2.6	Equality Monitoring BO	Policy framework to enable adequate data on equality characteristics for SFRS workforce and service users	Policy framework enables adequate analysis of service users' equality characteristics	New guidance on equality monitoring and impact assessment being prepared	EDO	12/15	Structure of equality policies changed	

### 3.0 Communication

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Current Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress since last quarter	New Action	
		Employment	Service delivery						
3.1	Images and stereotypes	Positive images of non-stereotypical and/or non-traditional roles	Positive images of non-stereotypical and/or non-traditional roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual review of images used in SFRS material for positive role models</li> <li>Draft review process for annual review of SFRS images</li> </ul>	All	12/15	<p>Meeting held with operations to develop a storyboard for a job related test video featuring women firefighters</p> <p>Reviewing our website for women role models</p>	<p>Follow up progress</p> <p>MS to carry out review</p>	
3.2	Translated materials	Relevant support materials available to enable employees to communicate with speakers of other languages	Information available in languages and imagery appropriate to communities	(Attend monthly fire safety meetings for P & P)	E & D	10/15	In progress	Attended meeting on 16/07/15 with the Chinese Arts community with prevention.	
				Work with Chinese Business Support to incorporate SFRS Risk Assessment information into their material	Protection				
				Publicise availability and use of language line	E & D	07/15			Completed
				Review availability of live translation services in the area	E & D	11/15			Prevention to organise trial run of language line
					E & D	12/15		Survey gizmo being trialled as a survey tool for SFRS – E&D to use for translation of languages for our communities	

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Current Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress since last quarter	New Action
3.3	Visual accessibility (Corporate Identity)	All employees able easily to understand Service documents	Members of the public able easily to understand Service documents	Articles in 'Pink' and Yammer reminding employees about corporate identity standards	CCO	11/15		Reminder to be sent for all communication to be in Arial 12
3.4	Groups, networks and organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service able to hear community concerns and feedback</li> <li>• Service able to communicate information to communities effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better awareness of available services</li> <li>• Engagement with Service policy and service development</li> <li>• Access to Service resources to support their work</li> </ul>	<p><b>FRESH:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing exhibition and photography at Cultural Diversity Day – 25<sup>th</sup> July 15</li> <li>• <b>Attending event Rainbow Film Festival:</b></li> <li>• Attending opening event</li> </ul> <p><b>Shropshire Hate Crime Steering Group:</b> Posters on Service appliances</p> <p><b>Celebrating Diversity Event'</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFRS holding event at Shrewsbury 10<sup>th</sup> October 15.</li> </ul>	<p>E&amp;D</p> <p>E&amp;D/ Execs</p> <p>CCO</p> <p>E&amp;D/SY/ Prevent/ Station</p>	<p>07/15 Completed</p> <p>10/15</p> <p>07/15</p> <p>10/15</p>	<p>Photographer, outreach vehicle, Watch &amp; DCFO attended - completed</p> <p>Sponsorship agreed</p> <p>Presentation of new posters for appliances for Hate Crime Awareness Week 07/10/15</p> <p>Attendance by other organisations; MIND, NHS, Hate Crime</p>	<p>Dates put in execs diary for all events</p> <p>In diary for Oct 15 &amp; fly flag</p> <p>Event organised to include smoke tent, chip pan, ALP, stalls.</p>
3.5	E & D Media Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee awareness of positive impact of SFRS equality work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public awareness of positive impact of SFRS equality work</li> </ul>	Discussions with Corporate Communications Officer	E & D / CCO	07/15 completed	Meeting held with E&DO and CCO 30/06/15	<p>Action plan brought to steering group meeting.</p> <p>Prevent/Protect would like to add to the E&amp;D plan to include P/P.</p>

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Current Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress since last quarter	New Action
		Employment	Service delivery					
3.6	MIND – Blue Light Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To make employees aware of mental wellbeing in the workplace</li> <li>Employees to become more open and seek help when required</li> </ul>		MIND course/project  MIND managers training  MIND pledge and action plan	Contracts manager/ HR/ E&D/ Operational	11/15	Initial meeting held with the CFO  Presentation was given to the steering group on the MIND Blue light programme	Launch the Blue Light Programme to SFRS employees at Health Awareness Day 04/11/15  Working party to be devised to look at the action plan required to sign upto the pledge

## 4.0 Research

Number	Issue/ work area	Outcome		Current Action	Who's responsible	Target date	Progress since last quarter	New Action
		Employment	Service delivery					
4.1	SFRS Cultural Audit (or substitute sampling)	Identification of positive and negative issues about SFRS among employees		ACO to consider smaller-scale project to profile a specific topic or section of SFRS employees	ACO	12/15		
4.2	SAFARI - South Asian communities and attitudes to fire research project	Reliable data on any barriers to recruitment of South Asian people as f/f	Reliable data for South Asian people on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions of SFRS</li> <li>• Any issues of attitudes and/or practice for domestic and business fire safety</li> </ul>	Data analysis in progress and draft research report in progress	E & D  HR/E&D /Prevent /Protect	09/15 Completed  12/15	Report was taken to the E&D steering group with recommendations on the 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2015.	Look to do a workshop at next AFSA conference  Agreed to arrange a working group to review recommendations in the report and bring their suggestions to the next steering group  Consultant to present results to the SG.