

Fairness, Respect, Equality Shropshire Ltd.

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 sets out the progress made by Fairness, Respect Equality Shropshire (FRESH) Ltd. from June 2014 to June 2015, as requested by the Fire Authority.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report and that an annual report on the progress of FRESH Ltd. will be brought to the Committee for information.

3 Background

On the 28 June 2013 Fairness, Respect Equality Shropshire (FRESH) Ltd. was incorporated by the Financial Conduct Agency as a community benefit society, replacing the Shropshire Equalities Forum. The Equality Steering Group endorsed the Service's membership and payment of the annual subscription of £100 at its meeting on 24 September 2015.

At the end of June 2015 FRESH had thirty members, comprising community organisations, statutory agencies and individuals. All have made an explicit commitment to developing and improving equality and diversity practice.

From July 2014 to June 2015 FRESH has developed and implemented a range of equality-focused networking, consultation, advisory, training, advocacy and assessment services for and with statutory authorities and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations. These have benefited organisations and their local communities, contributed to the development of FRESH's reputation as a reliable and competent service provider, and contributed to financial resources.

4 FRESH Progress 2014 to 15

FRESH's work over the year has included:

Paid work

- Planning and delivering equality impact assessment workshops and an equality performance assessment for Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group
"I have never seen a more sensitive approach"
- Advising and supporting the National Health Service Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit to prepare for equality impact assessment of the Future Fit programme
- Planning and working on scoping research for Shropshire Hate Crime Reporting Group
- Planning and delivering a range of workshops as part of William Brookes School Diversity Week

Unpaid work

- Planning and running FRESH Equality Forum meetings

"The Equality Forum keeps equality and respect fresh in the mind of Shropshire's businesses...."

"...enjoyed the workshops: fun, interactive, educational and thought-provoking"

"The Forum is a haven of support for me, as I'm the only one working on E & D within my organisation. It makes me feel like I'm not up against this massive task all by myself..."

"...great opportunity to recharge and get news on what's happening locally..."

- Planning and running the FRESH public launch

"Very good, interesting discussions... look forward to seeing FRESH grow, and hearing about future work and priorities ... Well done!"

"A very enjoyable and valuable event"

"Found this really helpful and need to be more involved."

"Great opportunity to network and learn"

- Planning and co-ordinating the British Institute of Human Rights Tour one-day workshop

“Meeting such a variety of people interested in human rights and everyone wanting to educate others. Excellent, thank you”

“...as a young person I feel like today really benefited me. It topped up my knowledge and shaped my views. Please come back next year...”

“The facilitators ... knew their stuff and ... were very sympathetic.”

“... varied...engagement, enjoyable and engaging... really appreciate having two facilitators - realise this is an investment on your part ... well worth it. Thank you!”

“Excellent ... everyone left having learnt something and wanting to pass their knowledge on”

At the time of writing there are more than 70 individuals and organisations on the Forum mailing list. There are now plans to grow their numbers and participation and the impact of the Forum itself:

- Consulting on and drafting a FRESH Human Rights Strategy for Shropshire
- Supportively raising and following up four cases of inappropriate or poor equality practice with different organisations
- Funding and facilitating the FRESH Small Equality Grants Scheme
- Providing advice to several member organisations on different aspects of equality and diversity

Merger with Shrewsbury Action against Racism (SAAR)

In late 2014 FRESH and SAAR agreed to merge their work and resources, while retaining SAAR’s focus on anti-racist campaigns and educational work. The merger took place in December 2015, with the subsequent transfer of SAAR’s assets and activities to FRESH.

The terms of this merger included:

- Ring-fencing SAAR’s money within FRESH
- Managing future anti-racist and racism awareness work under the FRESH umbrella
- Linking anti-racist work into the FRESH Equality Forum programme
- FRESH taking on responsibility for planning and running the Cultural Diversity Day

5 FRESH Directors and Officers at 30 June 2015

Name and position in FRESH	Position elsewhere
Steve Cunningham (Director)	Senior Community Action Officer, Shropshire Council
Marinke Fontein (Director, Treasurer and Deputy Secretary)	Freelancer, Community Campaigner and volunteer at Powys Citizens Advice Bureau
Sue Gorbing (Director)	Director of Changes and Safe Ageing No Discrimination
Andrew Gough (Director and Vice Chair)	Community Safety Team Manager, Shropshire Council
Geoffrey Hardy (Director)	Community Activist, Rainbow Film Festival organiser
Jonathan Hyams (Director and Secretary)	Company Director, Disability Arts in Shropshire and Sostenga llp; Chair and Trustee, Disability Arts in Shropshire
Ann Johnson (Director)	Managing Director, Wave-length Social Marketing plc
Peter Roscoe (Director and Chair)	Ex-solicitor, community campaigner, Rainbow Film Festival organiser
Maureen Turner (Director)	Teacher, William Brookes School, Much Wenlock, Shropshire; community campaigner

6 What FRESH wants to achieve in the next three years

FRESH's 2015 – 18 Business Plan commits to:

- Expand and support an active and participative multi-sector membership
- Continue the development of an effective board and leadership team
- Generate sufficient income to achieve its strategic aims and deliver a cohesive and comprehensive range of services and activities, including the employment as a minimum one part-time worker by the beginning of the 2018 financial year
- Develop wider recognition of FRESH as a reputable organisation, which is the destination of choice for people and organisations with queries and support needs on equality, diversity and challenging prejudice and discrimination
- Continue developing equality networks and links within and beyond Shropshire, to support FRESH's future growth

- Further develop contracted work and consultancy services across Shropshire, the West Midlands, the Marches and Welsh Borders
- Achieve high recognition levels for best practice in equality, diversity and anti-discrimination advice, information, guidance, consultancy and training

7 FRESH and the Fire Service – Value of Membership

FRESH provides the Service with valuable information and networks accessible through the Equality Forum and other FRESH events and initiatives.

8 Financial Implications

The annual FRESH Ltd. membership subscription is currently £100.

9 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

10 Appendix

There are no appendices attached to this report.

11 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.