

Progress on Implementation of the Equality Scheme Action Plan

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report updates Members on progress on the main actions identified in the
Equality Scheme Action Plan from March 2020 to February 2021.

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; and
- The latest version of triannual Action Plan.

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

The revised Action Plan for the final period of 2020/21 is attached for
Members information.

5 Examples of 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 these specific groups to apply for employment as Wholetime Firefighters on the following dates:

- 1 and 11 August 2020 - Women's
- 28 July and 15 August 2020 – BAME (Black Asian or Minority Ethnic)
- 5 August 2020 – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT)
- 5 September 2020– BAME, LGBT+ and Women joint session
- Bootcamp sessions

In addition, Open to All sessions, were held on 7 and 14 October 2020.

Covid age calculator was implemented using the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) document after undertaking our own equality impact assessment.

Mental Health:

- 2 day Mental health first aid course for managers has been completed.
- Ongoing work on the action plan
- Chief Fire Officer sent information to all employees about the 'Time to Talk Day' in February 2021
- 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
- Online courses now available due to the Covid restrictions

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 costs are partly met by Access to Work. The programme continues to be highly effective in enabling employees to carry out their roles with increased confidence and effectiveness and giving some the opportunity to go for a promotion. The Service purchased a dyslexia font available for all employees.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Induction Training completed for new employees and several catchup sessions have been held.

The Service has now launched a Voices group; employees have been asked to volunteer to represent specific employees of the Service. The role of these representatives is to be a voice for those groups, a point of contact, listen to gain feedback, initiate ideas and projects and work alongside the EDI team.

The Service now has representatives for the following employees:

- Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic Employees (BAME)
- Disability
- Disability – Dyslexia
- Disability – Mental Health
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT +)
- Women
- Women – Menopause
- General representatives

The Officer and Service Managers briefing on Equality issues was held; topics covered included Black Lives Matter, positive action, unconscious bias and white privilege. Information was provided in advance and 2 short videos were used to inform the group, an open discussion was then held, and feedback was compiled after the event.

Full Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken for the Telford new build and for the Integrated Risk Management Plan utilising involvement sessions to get qualitative feedback.

Period products are now available in all buildings and stations to those who need them including visitors.

Staff Survey – three feedback sessions were held with staff giving an overview of the survey results, highlighting areas of strength and areas for focus.

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 Womens Day on 8 March – the theme for 2020 was 'each for equal' and many female employees posted a picture on social media with their poses.

NFCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Meeting, the EDI officer attends these and is involved in one of the NFCC's projects.

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

- Attendance at and support for Fairness, Respect, Equality Shropshire (FRESH) Ltd meetings
- Attendance at LGBT+ events and Rainbow Film Festival by a Senior Officer at the launch.
- Flying Rainbow flags over Headquarters and Training Centre to mark International Day against Homophobia (May 2020), LGBT History Month (February 2021) and Rainbow Film Festival (October 2020)
- Attendance at the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) webinar conferences.
- Attendance at the LGBT History Month Launch online event February 2021

Due to Covid restriction many events have been unable to take place during 2020.

6 Capacity

There are no capacity impacts arising from this report.

7 Fire Alliance / Collaboration / Partnership Working

Working with other agencies as detailed within the report.

8 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

10 Community Safety

There are no community safety impacts arising from this report.

11 Environmental

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

12 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.

13 Health and Safety

There are no health and safety impacts arising from this report.

14 Human Rights (including Data Protection)

There are no human rights impacts arising from this report.

15 ICT

There are no ICT impacts arising from this report.

16 Public Value / Service Delivery

There are no public value or service delivery impacts arising from this report.

17 Reputation

There are no reputational impacts arising from this report.

18 Security

There are no security impacts arising from this report.

19 Training

There are no training impacts arising from this report.

20 Appendix

Equality Scheme Action Plan

21 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Equality Scheme

Action Plan

July 2020 – January 2021

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 24 live cases of dyslexia.	EDI	Ongoing	Ongoing work supporting employees with assessments and equipment	Ongoing
Dyslexia Awareness Training for Watch Managers	EDI & JT	2021	Currently on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions, dates provisionally being arranged for May onwards	In progress
Explore cost of dyslexie font as open dyslexia font was not found to be as good, EDI to research dyslexie font	EDI	03/2020	Font available and being used by employees. Dyslexia friendly version of the COVID-19 briefing being provided.	Complete
Set up another dyslexia networking evening to provide ongoing support. Encourage recently diagnosed employees to attend	EDI	2021	Unable to hold in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Future events will be organised by Voices group dyslexia representative alongside EDI. Virtual session is being considered as an interim.	Ongoing
Explore purchasing Read and Write to be networked	EDI/IT	05/2021	Quotes have been obtained.	In progress

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

Dementia friends film was developed with partners and is now being used	Prevention	05/2021	Film is planned to be used as part of Dementia Action Week (17-21 May) as one of the prevention campaigns.	In progress
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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	EDI	On hold	Review completed of EDI packages, 2 selected and amendments made. 11/19 - Further amendments to be made to incorporate positive action statement. Put on hold for capacity to develop this module.	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:	EDI	Ongoing	Inductions have been ongoing during the COVID-19 period; 2020 courses completed: 22/01, 10/02, 09/07, 17/09, 25/11. 2021 courses complete to date: 25/01	Ongoing
Complete backlog of induction sessions.	EDI	2021	Virtual sessions being considered	

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
Positive action Taster Sessions for on call recruitment	EDI / Rural	Various dates throughout 2021	<p>At the On-Call Recruitment & Retention meeting 09/12/20 it was agreed that we would have the following in 2021:</p> <p>March: Women - Postponed*</p> <p>March: BAME – Postponed*</p> <p>22/05: Women</p> <p>12/06: LGBT</p> <p>18/09 or 25/09: Women</p> <p>2/10 or 9/10: BAME</p> <p>Further discussion/planning to take place 24/02</p> <p>*Due to Covid restrictions the Women and BAME sessions planned for March 2021 will be rescheduled</p>	In progress
Positive action Taster Sessions for wholetime recruitment: Women's 2 dates – 4 sessions BAME 2 dates – 3 sessions LGBT+ 1 date – 2 sessions Joint session 1 date- 2 sessions	EDI	2020	A number of sessions were undertaken for whole time recruitment, these sessions were successful, and all the places were fully booked.	Complete
Bootcamp for wholetime recruitment	EDI/instructors	September 2020	A bootcamp was held but cancelled early due to COVID-19 restrictions.	Complete

Working with Prevention on community initiatives	EDI/ Prevention	Ongoing	Discussions have taken place on how we can link prevention and recruitment initiatives Sharing of campaign calendars now in progress for prevention, protection and EDI Activities limited due to COVID-19 restrictions	Ongoing
Women's development programme	Development	On hold	This is currently on hold.	On hold
Introduce annual uniformed services visits using appropriate role models and targeted attendance at other events (IFSG 3.3)	EDI/HR	2021	Arrange for Woodlands specialist school to visit one of our stations once COVID-19 restrictions permit.	In progress
		2021	EDI to contact TCAT once COVID-19 restrictions permit.	In progress
		2021	Severndale School - Careers Week June; virtual session with the watch to be considered if COVID-19 restrictions remain in place.	In progress
Communication to explain positive action and positive discrimination (IFSG 3.5/HMI) to increase understanding	EDI	07/20	Positive action statement updated, promoted internally and externally. Officers briefing held to discuss black lives matter, positive action, unconscious bias, external videos were used to increase understanding of managers. Slide introduced into the EDI induction.	Complete

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 mgmt	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	SFRS are currently at this level	Ongoing
EDI to attend Jobs-fair at the Jobcentre Plus to promote our jobs to potential recruits who have a disability.	EDI	2021	Jobs-fairs did not take place during 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Awaiting update on potential dates for 2021.	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	January / February 2020	3 feedback sessions were held with staff giving an overview of the survey results, highlighting areas of strength and areas for focus.	Complete
Consider EDI champions – we will ask for expressions of interest from a broad range of areas, including protected characteristics and other areas such as mental health and menopause (IFSG 2.6)	EDI	08/20	EDI officer researching allies' programme. Interest received from a number of individuals across the service. Discussion held with EDI officer and individuals. Group has now formed and will be referred to as 'Voices'.	Complete Complete
Regular meetings to be held with Voices group, to discuss feedback, event participation, setting up support groups	EDI	Ongoing	Groups first meeting held 20/01/21. Vision and promotion of the group was discussed. Agreement on best working practises discussed. Members were offered half day mental health awareness training (where they had not already completed this training). Next meeting to be held 03/21	Ongoing
Review the role of mentors/coaching programmes for employees wishing to progress (IFSG 4.2)	HR / Development	04/21	Coaching skills training was implemented in February 2020; 118 managers have attended to date. A half day workshop provided managers with a basic overview of what coaching is/isn't and what benefits it can bring to the individual and Service. 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
Sanitary Provision	Tech Services / EDI	06/2020	Period products are now available in all SFRS building to employees and visitors.	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	Electronic EIA has been devised, EDI to monitor usage	Ongoing
Complete a full impact assessment of the IRMP recommendations	EDI / Transformation & Collaboration	09/20	Online meeting held with external community groups to assess the IRMP proposals	Complete

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		

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	03/21	Going to SMT and S&R Committee for approval in March 2021	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 drop-in Session	EDI	05/21	Guidance document completed. We now have a Voices representative for menopause initiatives. Virtual session to be considered due to COVID-19 restrictions.	In progress

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: Positive Action for Disabled People, renamed to: Supporting individuals with reasonable adjustments in the workplace. (IFSG 2.4)	EDI	04/21	In draft	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)	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	04/2021	Review process and schedule currently in operation – learnings to be taken where necessary	In progress
Reviewing our website for women role models.	Communications	04/2021	Website review underway	In progress
International Women's Day 'Choose to Challenge' promoting women in the Fire Service and the different type of roles.	EDI/ Comms	08/3/21	EDI have contacted all women and the Voices representatives to see if they would like to participate in this social media campaign	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		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 2020/2021	EDI	2021	During 2020 SFRS employees attended a number of free webinars provided by AFSA.	Ongoing
Fairness Respect Equality Shropshire (FRESH)	EDI	2021	Online meetings have taken place in 2020.	Ongoing
Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dementia Action Alliance	Prevention	2021	Prevention currently working with Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dementia Action Alliance	Ongoing
NFCC EDI strategic meetings		Ongoing	EDI officer has attended the NFCC project meeting.	Ongoing
National IFSG (Inclusive Fire Service Group) meetings		Ongoing		Ongoing
Voices internal group	EDI	2020	Group representatives in place and group have met	In progress

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
Discussions with Corporate Communications Officer	EDI / Communications	01/2021	An EDI calendar of events has been created.	Completed
Build employee and public awareness that we are an employer that promotes equality, diversity and inclusivity within the workplace.	EDI	Ongoing	<p>Internal and external content shared in line with Holocaust Memorial Day 2021. Flags at half-mast SHQ and TTC.</p> <p>Internal and external content shared in line with LGBT+ History Month. Rainbow flags flown at SHQ and TTC.</p> <p>Official sponsor of Shrewsbury LGBT History Month festival.</p> <p>Internal and external content shared in relation to Mental Health in line with Time to Talk Day. Resource packs to generate discussion around mental health were provided to all watches and managers.</p> <p>Representatives from the Voices group were available over the course of 4th and 5th Feb for informal chat and as a sounding board</p>	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 / Operational Training / Development	2020	Champions to be reviewed. Invite is being sent out to all staff to obtain interest in a champions training event.	In progress
SFRS to train the recommended 10% of the workforce in Mental Health First Aid awareness Half day Mental Health First Aid Course	Development	Ongoing	Since January 2019, 61 managers have attended the MHFA 2 Day course and 48 people have attended the half day MH Awareness session. Work is underway to identify those stations/watches/teams that do not have a mental health first aider and they are the target audience for the next 2-day course.	Ongoing
Support mental health awareness events such as mental health awareness week and time to talk day.	EDI	Ongoing	In line with Time to Talk Day 2021, 04/02/21, EDI shared access to a number of online resources and support tools with all colleagues. Resource packs to generate discussion around mental health were provided to all watches and managers. Representatives from the Voices group were available over the course of 4 th and 5 th Feb for informal chat and as a sounding board.	Complete
			Events to be researched and scheduled in line with Mental Health Awareness Week 10-16 th May	In progress

Update the positive action for disabled people policy statement	EDI	04/21	This is in draft	In Progress
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	There is now a Voices representative for Mental Health that will be looking at taking initiatives forward with the EDI team.	In progress

EDI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

IFSG Inclusive Fire Service Group (improvement strategies actions)