

## Reasonable Adjustments update

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton  
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Inclusion Officer on 01743 260236.

#### 1 Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with an overview of the reasonable adjustments made to support employees in their work roles.

#### 2 Recommendations

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

#### 3 Background

The Equality Act 2010 requires Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to make reasonable adjustments to enable employees who have a disability to carry out their work.

This report provides Members with an overview of the number and types of adjustments the Service has made to support employees who have a disability in the past year, and the associated costs.

#### 4 Reasonable adjustments – caseload

SFRS has supported 131 employees to date and currently has 26 reasonable adjustment cases, the majority of which are for employees with dyslexia, others include dyspraxia, dyscalculia, ADHD and bad backs. The duration of cases varies according an employee's needs, with support lasting from a few months to the whole of somebody's employment.

Cases will be closed when all support has been provided but then can be reopened if the individual's circumstances change, for example if they get a promotion or move to a different type of role.

## **5 Reasonable adjustments – process**

Depending on their needs, employees are referred to an appropriate expert for advice on adjustments to their work processes, and equipment may be provided to enable them to carry out their work role.

Initial referrals may include Occupational Health and Access to Work for specialist advice and/or potential funding for workplace support and equipment. Dyslexia accounts for the majority of our cases, and employees who self-refer or are referred to the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Team are assessed by a professional psychologist who diagnoses whether they are dyslexic and if so, the probable level and the type of support and equipment they need.

Other reasonable adjustment cases have included back, neck and wrist problems, hearing and visual impairments and foot support. These involve the provision of workplace equipment.

When an assessment is received the employee meets with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer and a manager to discuss and agree an action plan. Only those recommendations that are agreed as necessary are put in place, and may include combinations of equipment, tuition, training, support, mentoring and training.

It is also good practice to obtain research from other Services who have experienced more cases, for example with dyspraxia and knee replacements.

## **6 Types of Adjustments**

The need for adjustments depends on individual circumstances. Among the more common are:

### **Employees with Dyslexic**

- One to one tuition with a member of SFRS
- Providing training presentations or notes in advance
- Allowing extra time to discuss and clarify training on an individual basis
- Specialist dyslexia tuition to help with subjects including spelling, grammar, organisation skills, and memory techniques (mind mapping)
- Adapting teaching styles to suit employees' needs – the training and development teams are notified in advance
- Using specific coloured paper for the individual instead of white
- Software such as Read and Write and Claro-reader, to help with spelling grammar and with writing long documents
- Specialist noise cancelling headsets

- Changing text size and colour
- Changing the colour of the computer screen background to make it easier to read
- Dictation machines to help with memory and organisational skills
- Highlighter pens for important information
- Notebooks to write down key words and definitions
- Coloured overlays to help with reading
- Audio documents and headphones
- Livescribe Echo pen
- We also hold dyslexia networking evenings to support our employees

The Service also allowed training sessions to be recorded to aid process and short-term memory.

#### **Employees with a hearing impairment:**

- Specialist headsets
- Hearing equipment

#### **Employees who require other adjustments:**

- High/low desk, to enable individual to work standing up
- Computer equipment, such as a specialist mouse
- Specialised chairs and seat inserts
- Specialist desk or vari desk (which sits on top of a desk)
- Additional equipment such as document holders
- Changes in rest times and/or working hours

## **7 Costs**

Every assessed employee is asked to contact Access to Work (ATW) to see if they can provide funding. ATW will only contribute towards tuition and a percentage of equipment or software costs, but the Service has to pay for the majority of these, they do not support the cost of professional assessments.

From 14 February 2020 to 24 February 2021, SFRS has spent £2390.43 on reasonable adjustments for employees. The Service will be able to reclaim a proportion of these costs from ATW.

#### **Year-on-year total costs of Reasonable Adjustment programme (excluding ATW funding)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Cost</b>
2008 - 09	£555.62
2009 – 10	£3,146.33
2010 – 11	£5,528.69
2011- 12	£6,612.94

2012 – 13	£7,984.64	
2013 – 14	£9,088.73	
2014 – 15 (up to 28 Feb)	£11,233.28	
	£12,254.50	(annualised)
2015-16 (up to 29 Feb)	£19,637.72	
2016-17 (up to 16 Feb)	£9,431.37	
2017-18 (up to 28 Feb)	£5,613.00	
2018-2019 (up to 28 Feb)	£2,517.50	
2019-2020 (up to 13 Feb)	£5,949.75	
2020-2021 (up to 24 Feb)	£2,390.43	

## 8 Conclusions

The Service has been recognised again for its good practice in supporting our neurodiverse employees, particularly those with dyslexia, at the Dyslexia Awards (covering the West Midlands Region) winning ‘Supportive Employer’ for a second time in November 2020.

<https://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/news/supportive-employee-title-service-dyslexia-awards>

The Service has shared our good practice with Dr B A Clark in the USA, who is sharing this with Microsoft and the North American Fire Training Directors Association to increase awareness in American Fire Services.

## 9 Capacity

There are no capacity impacts arising from this report.

## 10 Fire Alliance / Collaboration / Partnership Working

The Service has shared its practices and policies in this area with a number of UK fire services and has been contacted by individuals in America to share our good practice.

## 11 Financial Implications

All financial implications have been considered as part of the Business Planning process. Any new actions will be considered at the time and either absorbed into current workloads or included within next year’s Business Plans.

The costs for year 2020-2021 are significantly lower than previous years due to the restrictions COVID-19 has placed upon carrying out assessments, and subsequently having a knock-on effect to any proposed tuition, coaching and equipment. It is expected that costs for year 2021-2022 will increase due to

the number of colleagues who are awaiting assessment and support carried over from the previous year.

Should ATW funding be withdrawn in future, costs of meeting the Authority's statutory obligations will rise further. In addition, as the programme attracts more employees, costs are likely to rise.

## **12 Legal Comment**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **13 Community Safety**

There are no community safety impacts arising from this report.

## **14 Environmental**

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

## **15 Equality Impact Assessment**

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

All the actions contained in this report provide a positive impact to employees.

## **16 Health and Safety**

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

## **17 Human Rights (including Data Protection)**

There are no human rights impacts arising from this report.

## **18 ICT**

The Service are currently investigating the purchasing networked software to replace individual equipment.

## **19 Public Value / Service Delivery**

Positive impact to Service delivery as our employees are able to be more confident and efficient.

The Service also promotes the work around Dyslexia to our communities which helps education around this subject.

## **20 Reputation**

The work around reasonable adjustments, particularly with Dyslexia provides a positive image and the Service have been contacted by many other Services for our good practice and as far as America.

The Service won the Supportive Employer Award in November 2020 at the Dyslexia Awards covering the West Midlands Region.

## **21 Security**

There are no security impacts arising from this report.

## **22 Training**

The Service provides dyslexia awareness training to our managers and relevant employees.

## **23 Appendices**

There are no appendices attached to this report.

## **24 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.