

Status of Report: *Public*

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority

Date: 26 July 2023

Subject: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Scheme Update

Author: Judi Beresford – Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

For: Information/Decision

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress against the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme 2022 – 2027, and to present the Annual Equalities Report 2022 - 2023.

Recommendation

2. Members are asked to:
 - a. Note the progress made against the EDI Action Plan over the reporting period;
 - b. Approve the consolidation of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion relation actions detailed in the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Scheme 2022 – 2027, HMICFRS Spotlight Report, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service HMICFRS Inspection Report and the Internal Cultural Survey Findings Report; and
 - c. Note the content of the Annual Equalities Report 2022 – 2023.

Executive Summary

3. The CFA has a duty to publish its equality objectives in line with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011. The Act requires listed public authorities to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives that it thinks it should achieve to further the aims set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Public authorities are required to publish these objectives at least every four years.
4. The CFA has opted to continue using the EDI Scheme as a means of setting out its equality objectives to meet the statutory obligation to prepare and publish its equality objectives and this is subject to annual review to remain current.
5. Since the previous Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion update there have been a number of significant reports issued which have highlighted additional key actions in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion within the service including:
 - HMICFRS Fire and Rescue Service Inspection of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (January 2023),
 - HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services (spotlight) report (March 2023)
 - Independent cultural review by a consultant in addition to the LFRS cultural survey in October 2022

- Communication and implementation of the Core Code of Ethics across the service
6. The Annual Equalities Report 2022 – 2023, attached as Appendix B to this report, contains equality monitoring data covering the workforce and the communities receiving service delivery activities.
 7. The data captured within this report is used to inform the content of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme Action Plan and will support implementation of recommendations from the HMICFRS Reports and the independent cultural review.

Background

8. The EDI Scheme 2022 – 2027 provides a platform for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) to meet its statutory obligation to prepare and publish equality objectives, and the action ensures that specific actions can be measured in achieving these objectives.
9. The governance for monitoring the progress of the action plan is achieved through quarterly meetings of the Strategic Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Board (SEDIB) which is attended by a representation from the CFA and is chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Service Support. A further tactical level meeting – Tactical Equality Diversity and Inclusion Board (TEDIB) will now be Chaired by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Manager to give greater scrutiny and professional guidance to the Service's work and workforce.
10. The level of impetus had slowed a little in relation to professional support for the ongoing development of the Service's approach to Inclusion. Whilst a number of key activities have continued to be progressed, the service will see greater movement and integration through all its departments following the successful appointment to the newly created role of EDI Manager. As part of a desire to move forward the ACFO has asked the EDI Manager to consolidate a number of areas for action into a more comprehensive updated plan.
11. As part of the annual EDI Scheme review a number of recommendations for improvement have already been identified by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager and these will be presented to the LFRS Senior Leadership Team for approval. These will be presented to Corporate Governance Committee as part of the next update report.

Progress to Date:

- Core Code of Ethics workshops rolled out.
- Gap analysis undertaken by external consultant.
- Recruitment of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager.
- Review of recruitment marketing materials undertaken.
- Undertaken community engagement to better understand views of the community.

Next Steps:

- The appointment of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager in May 2023 has provided the service with an opportunity to review the recommendations in all reports, and to align these into “themes” with revised delivery dates and ownership where appropriate and these will be implemented into the EDI Scheme in due course.
- Review of EDI related training by Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager to ensure fit for purpose and meets organisation needs.
- Re-invigorate Staff Networks to support informed organisational decision-making.
- Development and roll-out of Senior Leadership Team staff engagement events linked to key themes from cultural survey.
- With the appointment of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager “Brew with a Crew” monthly engagement sessions with all crews and departments to recommence.
- Equality Impact Assessment Training and guidance to be delivered by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager.
- Improve community and stakeholder engagement to increase the knowledge, understanding and needs of diverse communities. This is to be separate to joint engagement undertaken with Leicestershire Police.
- Rollout of next phase of mandatory EDI training.

Report Implications/Impact

12. Legal (including crime and disorder)

- a. The EDI Scheme 2022 – 2027 will assist LFRS in complying with its legal responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulation 2011.
- b. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has responsibility for assessing compliance against the specific duties, and for their enforcement and has the power to issue a compliance notice to a public body that it believes has failed to comply with the Specific Duties. The Commission can also apply to the courts for an ordering requiring compliance where appropriate.
- c. Unlike the Equality Duty, the Specific Duties cannot be enforced by judicial review.

13. Financial (including value for money, benefits, and efficiencies)

Any additional financial resources identified as part of the review by the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager appointment will be presented to the CFA for consideration and agreement as part of budget discussions for 2024.

14. Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

The number of existing action plans detailing required improvements pose a risk to LFRS in relation to none-delivery of targets and key elements being missed.

15. Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

Progress made towards achieving the CFA equality objectives is intended to positively impact on LFRS's workforce, service users and all stakeholders, creating equal opportunities for all.

16. Environmental

There are no environmental issues identified as a result of this report.

17. Impact upon "Our Plan" Objective

This proposal contributes towards our purpose of "Safer People, Safer Places" and supports all of the strategies within Our Plan.

Appendices

Appendix A – Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Scheme 2022 – 2027
[equality-diversity-and-inclusion-scheme-2022-2027_web-pages.pdf \(leics-fire.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix B – Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Annual Equalities Report 2022 – 2023
Will need to input link from website

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