

Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Corporate Governance Committee

Date: 23 July 2024

Subject: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2024-2027

Report by: The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

Author: Isla Dixon, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

For: Information

Purpose

1. This report presents the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2024 – 2027.

Recommendation

1. The CGC is asked to:
 - a. Note the content of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2024 - 2027.
 - b. Authorise the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer to make any necessary amendments prior to publication.

Executive Summary

2. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service has developed a new three-year Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme following release of the National Census Data in 2021, and the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024 - 2027.
3. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme, attached as Appendix A to this report, sets out how the Service proposes to fulfil its statutory Public Sector Equality Duties (General Duties) taking into account the recommendations included in His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) Spotlight Report on Culture in the Fire and Rescue Service (2021), the principles of the Fire Standards Core Code of Ethics and the feedback from staff and communities.
4. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme sets out how the Service will commit to developing an inclusive culture ensuring the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to promote and advance equality of opportunity and to promote and foster good relations between all people.

Background

5. The EDI Scheme 2024 – 2027 provides a platform for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service 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.

6. 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 representative from the Combined Fire Authority and is chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer, People and Organisational Development.

Progress to Date:

7. The Service is proud of its achievements against the equality objectives set in the previous Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2022 – 2027, which are listed below:
- a. Develop an inclusive culture where all staff are valued
 - The Core Code of Ethics had been embedded across LFRS through delivery of mandatory Core Code Workshops
 - Mandatory “introduction to EDI” training has been delivered across LFRS
 - An independent review of the Service was commissioned to better understand areas of concern and areas requiring improvement to support delivery of the EDI agenda.
 - Supervisory management training has been delivered to support leaders in promoting an inclusive workplace environment.
 - The EDI Manager has played an integral part in the creation, and rollout, of EDI toolkits from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).
 - b. Embed knowledge and understanding of EDI across the workforce
 - An EDI calendar has been introduced, which is accessible to all employees and is embedded across stations and teams.
 - The EDI Manager continues to visit stations to engage in conversation with crews around equality, diversity and inclusion.
 - Volunteer EDI champions have been recruited across stations and departments to work with the EDI Manager to promote and embed knowledge and understanding.
 - The approach to staff voice has been enhanced through the creation of an EDI Forum, which welcomes members from all protected characteristics and promotes an understanding of EDI from an intersectional lens.
 - Awareness of key EDI and religious dates is promoted, with articles and promotional material being shared across the Service.
 - c. Increase knowledge, understanding and needs of our diverse communities
 - Events have been held to raise awareness of Ramadan and Diwali which have been well received and attended.
 - New wholetime firefighter recruits spent a day learning about the diverse communities that make up the City of Leicester.
 - Operational staff actively attend and engage in local events and workshops to increase their knowledge of their local communities.
 - d. Embed a culture of evidence based decision making
 - The Equality Impact Assessment process and documentation has been reviewed and updated, with training having been delivered to both strategic leaders and practitioners.

- A new statistical database has been introduced which allows staff to view up to date, accurate statistical data across a range of services.
- e. Promote equality in commissioning and procurement activity
- Weighted EDI checks have been introduced into all commissioning and procurement activities.
- f. Increase diversity across the workforce
- The Service's Positive Action Statement has been updated to reflect the commitment to increasing the diversity of the workforce.
 - Changes have been introduced to the Service's promotion processes to ensure additional support is offered to under-represented groups.
 - The Service continues to run "have a go days" for under-represented groups which has seen a rise in females joining the Service during this period.

Next Steps

8. The Combined Fire Authority (CFA) objectives for 2024 – 2027, supporting the Aim of the Our People strategy, are detailed within the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme in Appendix A of this report.
9. The Service will demonstrate how it is meeting these priorities through relevant scrutiny at appropriate Board Meetings or departmental action plans and updates will be presented annually to the Combined Fire Authority (CFA).

Report Implications/Impact

10. Legal (including crime and disorder)

The EDI Scheme 2024 – 2027 will assist LFRS in complying with its legal responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulation 2011.

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

Any additional financial resources identified as part of the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2024 - 2027 will be presented to the CFA for consideration and agreement as required.

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

None.

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

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

14. Environmental

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

15. Impact upon “Our Plan” Objective

This proposal contributes towards the 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 2024 – 2027

Officers to Contact

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