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LEICESTERSHIRE
FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE



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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme

2024 - 2027



CONTENTS

Foreword

Introduction

Our Legal Duties

Our Core Values

Roles and Responsibilities

Our Strategy

Making it happen

Support and Resources

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Foreword

Contributing to the ongoing economic, social and overall safety and wellbeing of our diverse communities remains a priority for the Combined Fire Authority by ensuring the Service proactively responds to emergencies and saves lives, but also ensures the safety and wellbeing of those considered most vulnerable.

We are proud to present our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme for 2024–27 which sets out the framework for how the Service will continue to implement, and embrace, an environment that values and celebrates the diversity of our staff and the communities that live and work in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland whilst continuing to strengthen relationships across our diverse communities and showcase Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service as an employer of choice.

Callum Faint
Chief Fire Officer

Nicholas Rushton
Chair of Combined Fire Authority



Introduction

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 our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024 - 2027.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme sets out how we propose to fulfil our statutory Public Sector Equality Duties (General Duties) taking into account the recommendations included in His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) Spotlight Report on Culture in the Fire & Rescue Service (2021), the principles of the Fire Standards Core Code of Ethics and the feedback from our own staff and communities.

Our 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.

All the strategies, which are included in the Community Risk Management Plan ("Our Plan") have a key role in embedding equality and inclusion and details of each strategy can be found within the published Community Risk Management Plan on our website www.leics-fire.gov.uk

Our purpose of Safer People, Safer Places defines our scope and describes what we are all working towards, and it is at the heart of everything we do as a Service.

We aim to do this by working together with our staff, partners and communities to:

- Prevent incidents from happening;
- Limit their impact when they happen;
- Respond in the right way at the right time when we're needed

Delivery of our Purpose is supported by our values and behaviours **Positive, Professional, Honest** which reflect how our people actually feel about working within LFRS and are embedded throughout the Service to positively influence our recruitment, promotion, appraisals and performance management.

Professional

- Competent
- Reliable
- Respectful

Positive

- Constructive
- Confident
- Enthusiastic

Honest

- Truthful
- Trustworthy
- Fair



Our People Strategy Priorities

The People Strategy, published in our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) outlines the aim of the People Strategy, which is:

An engaged and productive workforce

- Striving to improve the service we deliver;
- Listening and engaging with our employees and our communities;
- Ensuring our people know that their health and wellbeing is important to us;
- Being uncompromising in our commitment to diversity and an inclusive, cohesive workforce.

This aim is supported by actions which will be used to deliver the Aim.

- Deliver our Annual Equalities Plan and improve the diversity of our workforce;
- Enhance our approach to employee engagement;
- Enable a positive working environment for all our employees and hold people to account against the core values;
- Develop our people at all levels;
- Ensure appropriate health and wellbeing interventions are implemented and maintained to support our staff;
- Delivery of effective workforce planning and succession planning to ensure progression;

We will seek to embed a sense of belonging through the Service and encourage an environment where everyone can feel comfortable to be their authentic self at work. We want everyone who comes into contact with us, whether face to face or online, and regardless of reason to feel respected, treated with dignity and to experience our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and our Values.

Values, Culture and Ethics

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service has a responsibility to address the recommendations in the Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services Report issued by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and to learn the lessons from the various culture review reports issued following independent reviews at London Fire Bridge and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the ITV investigation into the culture at Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service all of which highlight the need for robust equality and inclusion initiatives to promote a safe and welcoming environment for all staff, visitors and contractors.

We are committed to creating a positive, inclusive workplace culture, where everyone feels valued, respected and engaged and bullying or harassment is not tolerated in any form. This commitment is supported by the Core Code of Ethics which defines how all Fire and Rescue Services deliver their service.



Achievements against the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2022 - 2027

We are proud to detail below our achievements against the equality objectives set in our previous Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2022 – 2027.

Develop an inclusive culture where all staff are valued

- We have embedded the Core Code of Ethics across LFRS through delivery of mandatory Core Code Workshops
- We have delivered mandatory “introduction to EDI” training across LFRS
- We commissioned an independent review of the Service to better understanding areas of concern and areas requirement improvement to support delivery of our EDI agenda.
- We have started to delivery supervisory management training to support our leaders in promoting an inclusive workplace environment.
- Our EDI Manager has played an integral part in the creation, and rollout, of EDI toolkits from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

Embed knowledge and understanding of EDI across the workforce

- We have introduced an EDI calendar which is accessible to all employees and is embedded across our stations and teams.
- Our EDI Manager continues to visit our stations to engage in conversation with our crews around equality, diversity and inclusion.
- We have recruited volunteer EDI champions across our stations and departments who work with our EDI Manager to promote and embed knowledge and understanding.
- We have reinvigorated our approach to staff voice through the creation of an EDI Forum which welcomes members from all protected characteristics promoted understanding of EDI from an intersectional lens.
- We promote awareness of key EDI and religious dates with articles and promotional material being shared across the Service.

Increase knowledge, understanding and needs of our diverse communities

- We have held events to raise awareness of Ramadan and Diwali which have been well received and attended.
- Our new wholtime firefighter recruits spend a day learning about the diverse communities that make up the City of Leicester.
- Our operational staff actively attend and engage in local events and workshops to increase their knowledge of their local communities.

Embed a culture of evidence based decision making

- We have reviewed and updated our Equality Impact Assessment process and documentation with training having been delivered to both our strategic leaders and practitioners.



- We have introduced a new statistical database which allows us to view up to date, accurate statistical data across a range of services.

Promote equality in commissioning and procurement activity

- We have introduced weighted EDI checks into all commissioning and procurement activities.

Increase diversity across the workforce

- We have updated our Positive Action Statement to reflect our commitment to increasing the diversity of our workforce.
- We have introduced changes to our promotion processes to ensure additional support is offered to under-represented groups.
- We continue to run "have a go days" for under-represented groups which has seen a rise in females joining the Service during this period.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Objectives 2024 - 2027

The Combined Fire Authority (CFA) objectives for 2024 – 2027, supporting the Aim of Our People strategy are detailed below.

The Service will demonstrate how we are meeting these priorities through relevant scrutiny at appropriate Board Meetings or department action plans.

Priority 1: Increase the diversity of our workforce, at all levels to support the Service in becoming a truly representative workforce.

Why is this important?

Leicestershire (Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland) is recognised as one of the most diverse Counties in the UK and we want to reflect the community we serve and be recognised as an employer of choice. We acknowledge that our workforce diversity is low, when comparisons are made against the Census 2021 data, but it is improving.

By increasing the diversity of our workforce in recruitment, retention and progression cycles we will increase our reputation as an employer of choice, promote diverse thinking and decrease staff turnover whilst encourage greater cultural sensitivity by encouraging an environment where different cultures and viewpoints are understood and embraced.

Objectives and Actions

Objective 1: Increase workforce diversity across all under-represented groups throughout recruitment, retention and progression pathways.

Action 1: Review all marketing and recruitment material to ensure inclusive and reflective imagery and language is used to ensure representation from all under-represented areas of diversity.

Action 2: Use all appropriate platforms, including social media and face to face activity, to engage with our diverse communities to share recruitment information.

Action 3: Explore flexible working opportunities for all roles that will meet organisational objectives to ensure appropriate family friendly working arrangements are incorporated into all relevant policies and procedures.

Action 4: Review personal protective equipment and facilities provision across the Service to recognise and promote the diversity of our workforce and ensure employees feel psychological safe to be their authentic self within the workplace.



Objective 2: Implement a framework that supports and promotes equal opportunities throughout recruitment, retention and progression pathways.

Action 1: Measure the impact of existing Positive Action initiatives to identify areas for improvement to support design, delivery and measurement of updated and fit for purpose initiatives.

Priority 2: Embed knowledge and understanding of EDI across the Service to ensure the ongoing development and capability of all our staff.

Why is this important?

If our staff are to embed EDI into their day-to-day activities we need to ensure they are provided with the most up-to-date and accurate information to enable them to enhance their professional curiosity and make the best decisions in the workplace.

We acknowledge that the time demands on our operational, and non-operational staff, require us to provide learning and development opportunities that are relevant and will provide opportunities to make real difference – the key focus is on ensuring every member of staff understands their role in building a positive, inclusive and authentic workplace culture.

Objectives and Actions

Objective 1: Ensure all staff understand their contribution to delivery of Public Sector Equality Duties and Core Code of Ethics to promote an inclusive culture.

Action 1: Deliver mandatory training, identified through staff engagement and trends and patterns.

Action 2: Design and produce relevant bitesize training material which will be available to all employees via Oracle.

Action 3: Create and make available access to guidance notes which are available to all employees via the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Page of The Portal.

Action 4: Embed EDI into all relevant people programmes.

Objective 2: Identify, develop and maintain EDI champions across the Service

Action 1: Continue to establish service-wide EDI champions through raising awareness and encouragement to participate.



Action 2: Design and implement appropriate training and development for EDI champions to support knowledge and understanding.

Action 3: Deliver informal EDI drop-ins across the Service to enhance knowledge and understanding and promote EDI champion roles.

Objective 3: Communicate EDI initiatives to raise awareness and promote engagement.

Action 1: EDI Calendar will be maintained and communicated across the Service to support EDI initiatives and promote their importance as a service-wide priority.

Action 2: Staff will be encouraged to engage with local communities and take part in events and festivities.

Action 4: Information about the Tactical EDI Forum will be promoted as part of all new starter induction and details published on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion page of The Portal.

Objective 4: ensure that all managers are trained in people management and that all managers recognise their responsibilities in promoting an inclusive culture.

Action 1: Consolidate evaluation from courses to identify additional gaps.

Action 2: Consolidate evaluation from courses to identify, and showcase, areas of best practice.

Action 3: Develop resource hubs to support inclusive culture.

Priority 3: Embed a culture of evidence-based decision making into policies, processes, systems and governance arrangements.

Why is this important?

An evidence-based decision-making approach ensures the organisation uses both quantitative and qualitative data to develop and inform its business functions which includes identifying trends and patterns through historical data comparisons and utilising best practice to provide informed outcomes and impacts which will support greater successful outcomes, challenge assumptions and stereotypes and remove bias from decision making.



Encouraging all staff to be involved in decision-making will also improve engagement and satisfaction if opinions and views are sought before decisions are made leading to increased morale and a positive workforce culture.

Objectives and Actions

Objective 1: Improve the quality, transparency, access, and use of data to support the EDI Manager with public duty and Equality Scheme monitoring requirements.

Action 1: We will produce a public-facing annual Equality Monitoring Report which will include top-level data across key areas of business for the Service.

Action 2: We will produce a public-facing annual Gender Pay Gap Report which will include top level data in relation to gender across key areas of business.

Action 3: We will run a data transparency communications campaign, to communicate how data is being collected, analysed and why (rationale and benefits).

Action 4: We will run an annual equalities audit of our workforce to ensure accurate and up to date information is held for all employees which will ensure accurate reporting in our legal publications.

Objective 2: Develop and improve use of demographic data to support evaluation and inform and underpin decision-making processes.

Action 1: Implement an annual campaign to encourage all staff to declare their protected characteristic data and update proactively when required.

Action 2: Collate equality monitoring data at all touch points throughout the recruitment, retention and progression cycle to design, deliver and measure the impact of positive action activities and identify areas for improvement.

Action 3: We will continue to promote inclusive and self-describe options for demographic categories in our systems, forms and surveys, and reduce labelling groups as 'Other'.

Priority 4: Develop, and embed, an inclusive culture where all staff are valued and engaged.

Why is this important?

Creating an inclusive culture allows everyone to feel a stronger sense of belonging, encouraging greater engagement across all areas of the Service and allows all staff to actively contribute to and support delivery of outcomes.



An inclusive culture will ensure Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is able to not only attract diverse talent but to retain the diverse talent we already have.

Objectives and Actions

Objective 1: Establish an EDI-focused survey.

Action 1: Undertake an organisational cultural survey which includes specific questions that link to cultural inclusivity.

Objective 2: Ensure that leaders at all levels are committed to diversity and inclusion.

Action 1: Leaders at all levels to demonstrate commitment through behaviours, communication and decision-making processes.

Action 2: EDI to be included as an agenda item at all relevant meetings.

Action 3: Ensure active engagement by all teams and departments with EDI initiatives and awareness sessions to ensure support and sustainability of a reformed culture.

Objective 3: Senior managers should lead by positive example challenging bullying and harassment behaviours at every level, ensuring where necessary that management styles change in order to drive a different and improved culture.

Action 1: Senior managers to give confidence to the Service to be able to effectively challenge unacceptable behaviour in an appropriate manner.

Action 2: Senior Managers to empower individuals across the Service to have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment.

Action 3: Senior Managers to promote of a culture where challenge is always accepted and welcomed as a positive contribution. This should be in both directions.

Objective 4: Ensure all onboarding, probation and exit interviews include questions that identify cultural inclusivity.

Action 1: Utilise data captured in onboarding, probation and exit interviews to identify trends and patterns which can be shared with EDI Manager to support training and development across the Service.

Action 2: Utilise themes identified within bullying and harassment, grievance and disciplinary cases to support organisational training and awareness.



Action 3: Dashboards, surveys, Equality Monitoring forms and other sources collecting EDI data should seek guidance from the EDI Manager to ensure terminology, groupings and questions are appropriately framed.

Objective 5: Embed ethical and inclusive leadership techniques into Organisational Development training or interventions that meet the Public Sector Equality Duties, Core Code of Ethics and Service Values.

Action 1: Ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is included as a core element of all L&OD training to support ethical and inclusive leadership techniques.

Action 2: EDI Manager to work with L&OD to identify appropriate delivery platforms/methods for delivering EDI relevant training (such as unconscious bias, cultural competence and inclusive leadership).

Objective 6: Embed accessibility by design.

Action 1: Accessibility will be embedded across all learning platforms and technologies with relevant unit and faculty ownership identified.

Action 2: Implement appropriate Positive Action development interventions for under-represented groups across all functions and responsibilities.

Priority 5: Increase our knowledge and understanding of our diverse communities to become an inclusive organisation that better reflects the communities we serve.

Why is this important?

By understanding the needs of, and barriers faced by, our diverse communities will allow us to communicate effectively and build supportive relationships with all community groups, including those seldom-heard communities.

Improving cultural awareness across the Service will allow our staff to break down barriers and integrate respectfully with all our communities by promoting self-awareness, leadership and communication skills.

Objective 1: Promote Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service as an employer of choice.

Action 1: Establish Community Advisory Groups to support effective policy development and delivery and communication of Service functions.



Action 2: Establish community based focus-groups to better understand barriers to recruitment and retention.

Action 3: Establish links with voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) colleagues to support community participation work, sharing of key feedback and to establish opportunities for liaison.

Objective 2: Identify and engage with seldom-heard community groups to ensure a better understanding of their needs and barriers to engagement.

Action 1: Stations and Community Educators to work with relevant stakeholders to identify seldom heard community groups and establish mechanisms for engagement.

Action 2: EDI Manager to create supporting documentation to assist stations and Community Educators in establishing relationships with seldom heard community groups.

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Consultation

The CFA, working with the Chief Fire Officer and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager will consult with members of the Tactical EDI Forum and representative bodies on a regular basis to ensure the effective delivery and updating of the EDI Scheme.

We will ensure all feedback received is fully documented, considered and where necessary we will ensure that the EDI Scheme is updated or amended where appropriate.

Review

The EDI Scheme will be reviewed quarterly by the Strategic Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board (SEDIB). The review will be based on the objectives and associated action plan.

The results of the review will be supplied to the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer and elected members as and when required.

The EDI Scheme will be subject to an annual refresh to remain current and updates will be included on our website.

Publication

The Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme will be published on the our website at www.leics-fire.gov.uk

This document will be made available to all departments, stations, partners, local equality organisations and interested parties on request, either as a one off or on an on-going basis.

The Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme will be made available in other formats upon request.

Please contact our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager about this Scheme or if you would like it in an alternative format



Compliments and Complaints

For information regarding the complaints procedure or to lodge a complaint, please visit our website.

Alternatively, you can contact the Service Information Team on the contact details below:

Service Information Team
Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
Birstall
LE4 3BU
Tel: 0116 210 5555
Email: info@leics-fire.gov.uk

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