

Status of Report: Public
Meeting: Combined Fire Authority
Date: 22 September 2021
Subject: Equalities Scheme Annual Report 2020-2021
Report by: Callum Faint – Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
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For: Information

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to seek the Combined Fire Authority's (CFA) approval for the draft Annual Equalities report for 2020 – 21, appended to the report.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the CFA approves the draft Annual Equalities Report for 2020 -21.

Executive Summary

3. The Equality Act 2010 places a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on all public authorities, including the CFA. The PSED requires all listed bodies to have due regard, in the exercise of their functions, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations across all nine protected characteristics (i.e. The General Duty).
4. Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, the CFA is required to produce and publish equality objectives and to report annually on how it is meeting the objectives. The CFA has opted to continue using the Equality Scheme as a means of outlining and publishing its equality objectives while using the Annual Equalities report to update on progress.
5. Members should also note the increasing success in terms of recruiting a diverse workforce and the proactive training being delivered to the entire workforce.

Background

6. In 2019, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) implemented the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme 2020 - 25. The scheme includes an action plan which is intended to support the delivery of the CFA's objectives. Although the EDI Scheme runs until 2025, some of the actions listed will be completed at different stages during the life span of the scheme.

7. The draft Annual Equalities report 2020 – 21, appended to the report, provides an update on the progress made against the CFA's objectives as set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2020–25.

Training

8. Acknowledging the outcomes of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection and subsequent report together with the findings of the State of Fire and Rescue, the Service has introduced a revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training programme.
9. The training is delivered to every member of staff in two phases;
 - i. Phase One includes an introduction to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), which covers inclusive language, bias, harassment and discrimination, and the nine protected characteristics under The Equality Act 2010.
 - ii. Phase Two develops areas including unconscious bias training, neurodiversity awareness and training, mentoring and developing and community engagement.
10. Both phases will also deliver Positive Action workshops, which will focus on embedding Positive Action into all that the Service does, ensuring continued progress in recruiting and attracting people from underrepresented groups.

Workforce

11. It has always been the CFA's ambition to diversify the workforce by recruiting more women and people from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. A wide range of activities to promote LFRS to members of the public, including those underrepresented in the workforce, continues to be a priority. These activities have the greatest impact on wholetime recruitment.
12. It is pleasing to note the positive effects of this work on the profile of those recruited in 2020-2021, recruiting a total of 54 new staff across all areas of the Service. This also includes the previous wholetime recruitment intake that joined the service in May 2020:
 - i. 3.7% of new recruits declared a having a disability;
 - ii. 11.1% of new recruits declared as BAME;
 - iii. 35.2% of new recruits declared as female;
 - iv. 7.5% of new recruits declared as LGBT+;
 - v. 39% of new recruits declared as ages between 25 – 35 years old.
13. Whilst improving, the overall diversity of the workforce is still some way off fully representing the community. This is mainly driven by the makeup of the wholetime operational workforce.
14. Over the next few years LFRS is anticipating a significant turnover in the wholetime operational workforce due to a number of factors. Whilst this will present a number of challenges for the Service in terms of a loss of experience

and exposure, it also presents a real opportunity to improve the diversity of the workforce.

15. Through the Service's Strategic Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Board (SEDIB), a number of work streams have already begun on this, including:
 - i. Positive Action;
 - ii. Review of the entry requirements for wholetime recruitment, allowing for maximum diversity of applicants;
 - iii. Mentor support, including workshops to assist at each stage of the recruitment process;
 - iv. Internal and external recruitment of all operational managerial posts to allow increased diversity.
16. Page 30 of the Annual Equalities Report 2020 – 21 covers the number of Bullying, Harassment and Grievance cases reported to the service. These are grouped together in the report to ensure individual cases are not identifiable. This shows a total of 10 cases were reported to the Service and covers a very broad age, gender and religious belief range.
17. Although the numbers of reported cases are low, it is encouraging to see that staff are comfortable in raising their concerns about the Service and the process that is followed.
18. Page 33 of the Annual Equalities Report 2020 – 21 refers to the Gender Pay Gap, which is the difference in average pay between men and women working in an organisation. It is expressed as a percentage of the difference in the hourly rate of pay between males and females. There are two calculations: the mean (average) and the median (the middle point in the sample).
19. The hourly median for combined staff has decreased from 23.7% in the previous year to 16%. This decrease is a positive change in bridging the gender pay gap and is very close to the national average of 15.5%.

Service Delivery and Equality Monitoring

20. The Annual Equalities Report also provides equality monitoring data around satisfaction levels based on Fire Protection activities. A total of 778 fire protection inspections were undertaken in 2020/21 of which 202 (26.7%) responses were returned.
21. This data allows the Service to analyse fire protection activities based on the protected characteristics and provides statistical data to build a picture of which communities are more affected by fire protection activities.
22. The Service also complies data through the 'After the Incident Survey'. This informs the CFA about the quality of services offered to residents of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland following an incident.
23. The Survey is undertaken through a questionnaire to members of the community who have accessed LFRS emergency response services. Those

responsible in the household are asked a number of questions about their experiences of using LFRS services.

24. Equalities data is captured within the survey as highlighted on page 43 and 44 Annual Equalities Report 2020 – 21. This information is then used to inform policy development and changes to policy and processes to ensure that both the Authority and the Service’s commitment to equality and diversity results in practical improvements as well as targeting any specific section of the community that are being disproportionately affected.
25. In 2020-21 a total of 236 responses to the survey were received;
 - i. 47% involved a fire;
 - ii. 25% involved a ‘Special Service’ incident (e.g. animal rescue, flood, medical incident or gaining entry);
 - iii. 9% involved a false alarm;
 - iv. 1% involved a road traffic collision;
 - v. 17% were classified as ‘other’ (e.g. triggered carbon monoxide alarms, children locked in cars and ring removal).
26. Overall, positive feedback was received in every section of the survey and 99.6% of respondents (235/236) expressed overall satisfaction with the service they received from LFRS.

Report Implications/Impact

27. Legal (including crime and disorder)

The draft Annual Equalities Report 2019-20 will assist Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service in fully complying with its legal responsibilities. Non-compliance may result in the Equality and Human Rights Commission issuing a notice of non-compliance.

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

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

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

Failure to produce and publish progress against equality objectives may lead to a significant risk of legal action against the service for failure to comply with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011.

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

The positive outcomes of the progress outlined in this report are intended to positively impact on staff, service users and all stakeholders including those with protected characteristics. Good equality and inclusive practices contribute to the achievement of all Service aims.

31. Environmental

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

32. Impact upon “Our Plan” Objectives

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is central to good service provision and in promoting a positive working environment. Good equality and inclusive practices contribute to the achievement of all Service aims. The Service will not only be complying with its legal obligations but will also be ensuring that “Staff are skilled, equipped and motivated to deliver its purpose” of “Safer People, Safer Places”

Background Papers

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2020 – 2025

[equality-diversity-and-inclusion-scheme-2020-2025-status-update-april-2021-v3.pdf \(leics-fire.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix

Annual Equalities Report 2020 – 21

Officers to Contact

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