

Safest People, Safest Places

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service



Human Resources Committee

16 September 2021

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Report of Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Human Resources (HR) Committee with an overview of the work carried out by the Service's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDIG).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group Update

2. In collaboration with Durham University Business School (DUBS), the Service launched its third culture survey in April 2021 with the results delivered by DUBS via Microsoft Teams on 27 July 2021. The response rate to the survey was 54.7% and the key themes for the 2021 survey included fairness, trust, leadership and wellbeing. Overall, the survey reported positive findings across the majority of the measures included and improvements have been made across a range of measures used in previous surveys. Following receipt of the results an action plan with interventions will be developed to continue to drive improvement in the culture of the Service. A separate report detailing the findings of the culture survey has been developed for SLT and the HR Committee of the Fire Authority.
3. A Project Initiation Document (PID) has been developed and agreed at the Performance and Programme Board (PPB) to integrate the recently launched National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Code of Ethics (CoE) into the Service. A presentation was delivered to the Service Leadership Team (SLT) and the EDIG explaining the five ethical principles of the CoE and outlining the approach to implementation that was to be taken. A separate paper is to be presented to the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) explaining the CoE and the expectations placed on Members as outlined in the Code.
4. Our [Gender Pay Gap](#) report was published on our website. The GPG identifies the difference between the average earnings of male and female employees, comparing hourly rates of pay and any bonuses staff may receive. The aim of the report is to identify any imbalance in pay between genders and encourages organisations to consider positive steps to address any identified gaps. Our GPG has reduced from 9.8% to 8.8% demonstrating a positive direction of travel.
5. The EDI Champions have responded to consultations on a number of Equality of Access (EoA) documents produced by the NFCC relating to Asian Communities,

Vulnerable Rehoused Homeless, Gypsy and Traveller Communities and the Roma Community. The documents provide a range of information about different groups of people and ideas and actions which Service's could take to make a positive difference for these communities.

6. The Service continues to demonstrate its support to our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) staff and communities and is currently developing our submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) prior to the deadline of 5 October. The WEI demonstrates an organisation's commitment to making workplaces, services and products LGBT inclusive.
7. The Sexual Orientation Champion has developed and published a 'Transitioning in the Workplace' Information Note and 'Support Plan'. The aim of this guidance is to provide managers with information and support that may help them to have conversations about sexuality and gender identity in the workplace and to be equipped with the knowledge of what to do when an employee informs them that they are trans. We want to ensure that transgender colleagues have a positive experience and empower them to be their authentic selves. A quiz was developed to launch the guidance and raise awareness of the topic.
8. 'Pride' month in June was supported by the Service with our rainbow flags flown at Service premises. The Comms Team developed Pride themed backgrounds for Microsoft Teams which staff adopted for both internal and external meetings, the Service Vision was adapted for the month to 'Safest People, Safest Places....With Pride' and the EDIG also designed new rainbow lanyards to demonstrate and promote our visible support as allies and as an inclusive employer to our LGBT staff and communities.
9. The Service attended both Durham Pride on 31 July and Darlington Pride on 7 August. On duty staff, volunteers and the Fire Fighters Charity attended the events along with the Pride fire appliance to promote our support to the LGBT community. The Chief Fire Officer delivered a speech of support at Durham Pride and at Darlington Pride we were supported by our colleagues from Cleveland Fire Brigade.
10. To demonstrate the Service as an inclusive and supportive organisation and employer, the Service promoted awareness of key dates and events across the strands of equality with information and activities some of which included Chinese New Year, Ramadan, LGBT History Month, International Womens Day, Autism Awareness Week and SANDS Awareness Month.
11. Cohort 5 of Firefighter (FF) Apprentices have been recruited and commence their career in the Service on 13 September 2021, the cohort has 2 female and 6 male apprentices. Recruitment for future FF Apprentices is expected to commence in December 2021, a positive action plan has been developed with activities commencing in September with the aim to increase applications from underrepresented groups.
12. Prior to the apprenticeship recruitment commencing, an employability skills training session in conjunction with New College Durham was offered to our Fire Cadets. Five

Cadets (2 male, 3 female) took up the offer to support their post-16 journey into employment, education and training with one (male) applying for the FF Apprenticeship Programme. A practical role related test event was held at Crook Fire Station, sixteen Cadets (13 male, 3 female) attended with five (4 male, 1 female) applying for the FF Apprenticeship Programme, from the five applications, three (male) progressed to the final interview stage.

13. National Apprenticeship Week was celebrated and promoted the range of apprenticeship opportunities offered and available for various roles and levels to all of our staff up to and including Degree level apprenticeships.
14. The Service has provided Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA) training for our current cadre of assessors to develop their knowledge of and the requirements of the EqIA process. EqIA is a tool used to consider any potential equality impact that our policies, procedures, projects, services, activities or decisions, etc. might have on our staff and communities. EqIA is a focus of activity for Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).
15. The Service continues to promote the NFCC Lunch and Learn Events and other engagement and educational opportunities which have included Racial Equality to celebrate Stephen Lawrence Day, Engaging with the Gypsy and Traveller Communities, Being an Ally and Role Model and Religion and Belief and the Fire and Rescue Service.

Recommendation

16. Members are requested to:
 - a) **Note** the content of the report.

Sarah Nattrass, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, 0191 375 5587