

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service



Equality and Diversity Strategy

2012-2015

Incorporating the
Single Equality
Scheme

This Equality and Diversity Strategy and Single Equality Scheme is a public declaration and commitment of how we, in County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS), plan to meet the duties placed upon us by equality and diversity legislation and best practice, in managing our staff and meeting the needs and wishes of our local population.

This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format upon request
ENGLISH

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

ARABIC

এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায়, বড় প্রিন্ট আকারে এবং অডিও টেপ আকারেও অনুরোধে পাওয়া যায়।

BENGALI

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

URDU

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

CANTONESE

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

HINDI

Ce document est également disponible dans d'autres langues, en gros caractères et en cassette audio sur simple demande.

FRENCH



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Linked Documents:

This Strategy is linked to the Service's Public Sector Equality Duty documents:

- *Equality Objectives 2012*
- *Equality and Diversity Statistics 2012*

These are available via our web site, on can be accessed via this link:

<http://www.ddfire.gov.uk/performance/equality-and-diversity/public-sector-equality-duty>



Foreword

Welcome to County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service's Equality and Diversity Strategy 2012– 2015.

It is with great pleasure that we introduce our Equality and Diversity Strategy, combining our Single Equality Scheme which incorporates all the responsibilities that we must meet as an employer and service provider. This replaces our existing Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and incorporates all protective characteristics.

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service values diversity both within the organisation and across the communities we serve. We want to deliver a committed, modern, effective service which is transparent, inclusive and respects and understands differences.

The Strategy reflects the values inherent in our organisation which are fundamental to the Service's approach. We have worked steadily to embed equality and diversity into everything we do as we work towards providing inclusive services to our local communities.

Susan Johnson, Chief Executive, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

Equality and diversity are important aspects of the services we provide and much progress has been made in meeting the needs of local communities.

Some examples of our achievements include the award of Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, the Service being a "Positive about disabled people" employer and being a Stonewall Workplace Champion for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual staff.

This Strategy is relevant to all who work in the Service and influences how we treat our service users and each other as colleagues.

I look forward to continuing to champion equality and diversity on behalf of the Service.

Councillor Mamie Simmons, Equality Champion, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority



Susan Johnson
Chief Executive
County Durham and
Darlington Fire and
Rescue Service



Councillor Mamie
Simmons
Equality Champion
County Durham and
Darlington Fire and
Rescue Authority



Introduction and vision

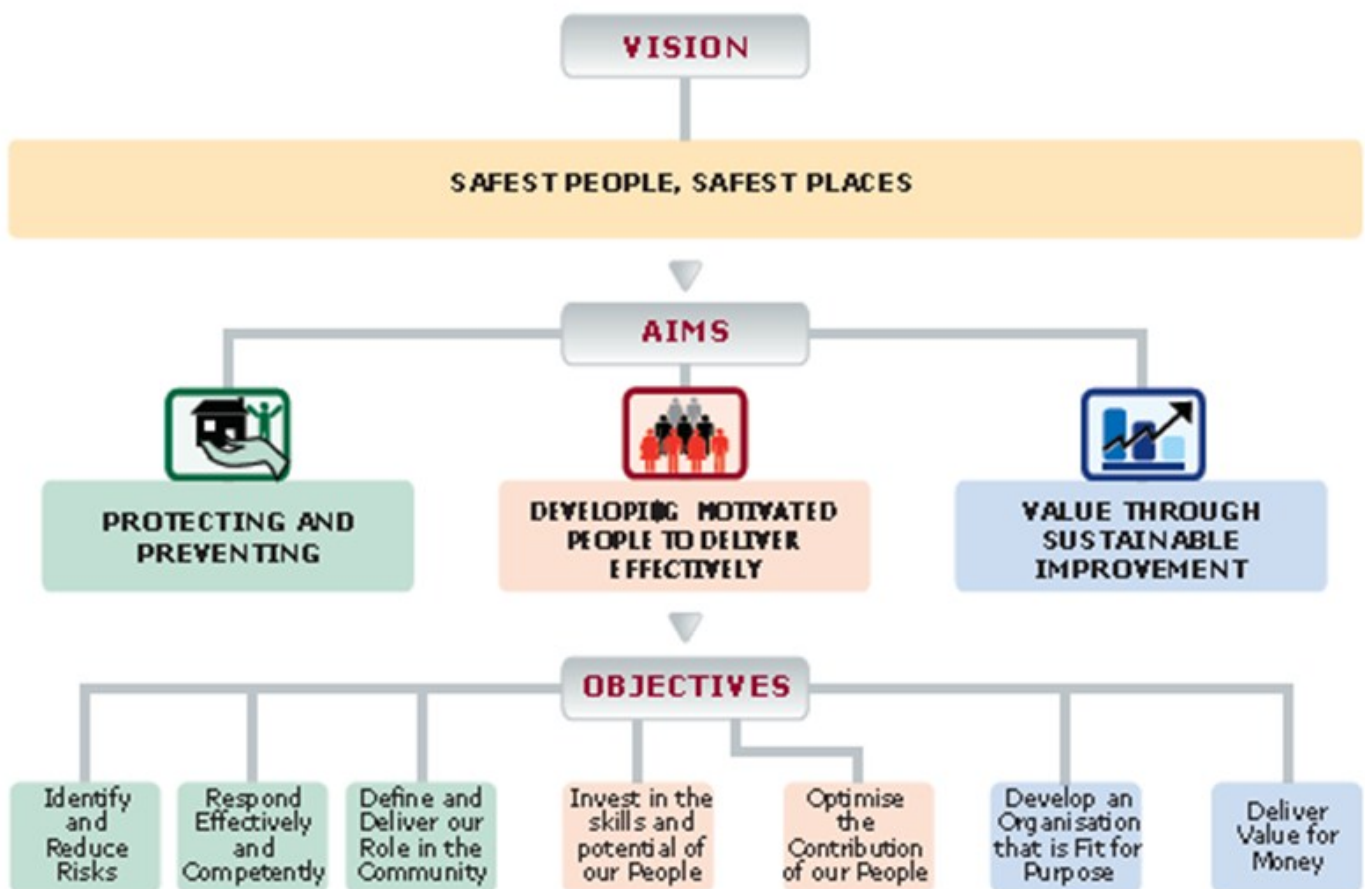
Our new Equality and Diversity Strategy sets out our plans for embedding the delivery of Equality and Diversity.

County Durham and Darlington Fire Authority's vision is Safest People, Safest Places. Our overriding purpose is to make County Durham and Darlington a safer area with the people living, working and visiting safer.

To achieve this we will ensure there are sufficient levels of staff and equipment available to provide an emergency response 24 hours a day every day.

The purpose of this Strategy is to inform our communities, employees, partners and other stakeholders of our approach to diversity and equality. We also intend to demonstrate how we are meeting our legal duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty and promote the activities of the Service.

We have developed this strategy to focus on the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. It is aligned to the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018, and the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework, and incorporates our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan.



Our Core values

As a public organisation we are committed to delivering high quality services. We have a number of core values that help us meet the high expectations of the public.

Service to the Community

We value service to the community by

- Striving for excellence in all we do
- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve

Diversity

We value diversity by

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Providing varying solutions to different needs and expectations
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the Service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

People

We value all our employees by practicing and promoting

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- Personal development
- Co-operative and inclusive working

Improvement

We value improvement at all levels of the Service by

- Accepting responsibility for our Performance
- Being open minded;
- Considering criticism thoughtfully; Learning from our experience
- Consulting others



Our Commitment

We engage positively with all our stakeholders using clear and relevant communication, listening and acting upon their service needs to achieve a strong, community led, values driven culture that is reflected in our work to reduce risk to the our communities.

Strategic Commitment

The Service has made a strategic commitment to all of the equality protective characteristics, we therefore:

- Recognise that inequalities are rarely experienced in isolation but are often interdependent
- We wish to focus on the “whole” picture when planning and delivering services
- We are committed to make the most of resources and deliver value for money

This Strategy demonstrates how the Service recognises the differences between people and how we aim to ensure that as far as possible any gaps and inequalities are identified and addressed.

Workforce commitment

The needs and aspirations of staff vary according to individual needs, but we recognise that choices relating to employment should not be affected by race, disability, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex and sexual orientation.

A diverse workforce has many benefits to us all and will allow us to deliver the very best services to County Durham and Darlington communities. We are guided by the National Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018

Our vision is to make fairness and inclusion fundamental to everything we do to ensure:

- We reduce the impact of fire and other risks on all communities we serve by effective prevention, protection and emergency response
- That our workforce better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve
- That our employees are equally respected and valued
- We serve all communities to the highest standards and tailor services to meet their needs
- Communities know that the Service understands their needs and respects difference
- Instances of bullying and harassment, unfair discrimination are not tolerated and are dealt with quickly



Delivering Equality-

Area Population and Employee Diversity

We serve a population of 604,900 in County Durham and Darlington (Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2007).

From the working population of County Durham and Darlington

- 95.8% are white
- 51% are women
- 49% are men
- 4.2% are from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group or other white
- 20% of the working population has a limiting long term illness/disability (national average 12% - Labour Force Survey 2007)

From the total population of County Durham and Darlington

- 39% are under 18 or over 65
- 82% are Christian
- 9.7% have no religion
- 0.5% make up the next largest groups of Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim combined (ONS 2001 census)

There are no current figures based on sexual orientation. However, the UK government estimates that approximately 6% of the population is Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual.

From our total workforce

- 87.5 % are men
- 12.5 % are women
- 4 % have a disability
- 2 % come from a BME background

From our total number of operational staff, wholtime, Retained Duty System (RDS) and Control Operators.

- 92 % are men
- 8 % are women
- 3 % have a disability
- 5 % come from a BME background

The Service's age profile for operational staff is predominately 36—45 years of age (accounting for 46 % of the total workforce).

Non uniformed staff are predominately between 46—55 years of age. There are no current figures for service employees on the other protective characteristics. The profiles shows that we have challenges in providing a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.

We recognise that fire services nationally and locally are in a period of unprecedented change. Opportunities to improve our employee diversity profile through recruitment is unlikely in the short term as vacancies are limited in number to RDS and specialist staff roles.



Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty was created by the Equality Act 2010 to harmonise the previous race, disability and gender equality duties and to extend protection to the new protected characteristics listed in the Act.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) simplified and replaced all previous equality legislation. The Act included a new general duty for all public bodies with a specific duty that applied to Fire Authorities.

The duty incorporates nine protected characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The General duty

This requires the Fire and Rescue Authority to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The Specific duty

Requires us to:

- Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general duty, by 31 January 2012 and annually thereafter
- Prepare and publish specific and measurable equality objectives by 6 April 2012 and at least every four years thereafter

As required, we published equality information about our employees and those to whom we provide a service. This information is available on the website.

In 2012 the Single Equality Scheme was up dated to incorporate the requirements of the Act. The previous Single Equality Scheme Action Plan has now been incorporated into our Equality Objectives action plan and is available on the website.



Involvement and Consultation

Members of our community are integral to all that we do and we recognise the importance of engaging, consulting and involving them.

Communication

The Service provides for a two way communication with service users, organisations and partnership workers in the community.

Information and messages from "After the Fire" incident surveys, public satisfaction surveys and staff surveys are used by the Service as sources of equality information.

We also give information via our web site and other types of publicity and listen to views collected through questionnaires and other consultation and Involvement events.

Partnership

Some of the organisations and partners we are involved with, who have a special interest in Equality and Diversity, include:

- Durham Equality and Diversity Partnership
- Disability North
- People
- Equality North East
- Age Concern Durham County and Darlington
- Darlington Growing Older Living in Darlington (GOLD)

- Networking Women in the Fire Service
- Gay Advice Durham and Darlington
- Stonewall for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual

Youth Engagement

For young people, the Young Fire-Fighters Association (YFA) is a scheme run by District Fire Service personnel and volunteers to encourage development, discipline, leadership and team skills in young people.

The Community Safety Team successfully runs several schemes such as "Fire Break" for young people not yet fulfilling their potential and other courses for those who are at risk of offending or are already in the criminal justice system.

We work in partnership with Trade Unions within the Service to further embed equality and diversity. They are represented at the Equality and Diversity Working Group and contribute time and resources to initiatives to improve equality delivery.



Leadership Responsibilities

After the introduction of the Public Sector Equality Duty's and following a period of restructure, the Service undertook a strategic project to review how we could further embed equality and diversity delivery throughout the Service.

Responsibility

The Service is led by the Chief Executive supported by two directors, responsible for Community Protection, Organisational and People Development and Corporate Resources.

The Service Leadership Team (SLT) has the effective management of:

- The organisation and its resources
- The delivery of the primary corporate, operational and support services
- The execution of statutory responsibilities

The Service Management Team (SMT) comprises Heads of Service and Section Heads. The SMT has two specific remits, that of making policy and strategy recommendations to SLT and of scrutinising performance.

The Equality and Diversity Working Group

The Service also has an Equality and Diversity Working Group which aims to facilitate and support the continued development of an environment in which equality and diversity principles are fully realised and embedded into the fabric of everything the Service does.

The Group is chaired by the Director of Corporate Resources and is overseen by the an Elected Member of the Combined Fire Authority as the Equality Champion.

Members of the working group are cross service representatives and it is the groups responsibility to ensure equality delivery is embedded within the Service and we fulfil our obligations with this Strategy.

Equality and Diversity is integral to our strategies and plans

We are recognised partners in the Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS) of the local authorities of County Durham and Darlington . We have representatives on each of the 14 Area Action Partnerships in County Durham and engage with communities in Darlington through the local Partners and Community Together (PACT) groups.

This gives the Service the opportunity to promote our core values and vision by consulting with partners and communities regarding the delivery of our own and joint strategies an plans.



Monitoring and reporting on equality performance

We use a variety of methods to monitor information across the protected characteristics and will work to further develop increasingly efficient and reliable data collection, monitoring and analysis

Monitoring and Reporting on Equality Performance

We report on progress against our Equality Action Plan and refresh equality data as part of our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duties. These are available via our website.

Employment Monitoring

We monitor employment information relevant to equality and we report on this at the end of each financial year, this includes:

- Training received
- Involvement in a grievance
- Subject of bullying and harassment
- Subject of disciplinary action
- Ending employment
- Number of job applications, successful applicants at short-listing and successful at interview
- Number of successful promotions
- Number employed in middle and senior management roles
- Length of service
- Sickness/absence rates
- Pay rates – apply to gender only

Service Delivery Monitoring

Collection of equality data is especially challenging in some areas of our work, for example at the scene of an incident where it may be difficult to gather what is essentially personal and sensitive information.

We also monitor our activities and work with young people and local schools including topic talks, hot spotting activity, arson prevention initiatives and road safety campaign initiatives.

We collect information on the delivery of our Home Fire Safety Checks, focusing on vulnerability to fire and service user age profile, those with a disability and those from ethnic minority groups.



Monitoring and reporting on equality performance

We publish a register of our Equality Impact Assessments on our website for stakeholders and the community to view

Equality Impact Assessments

We use Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) as a tool to ensure equality issues are considered when drawing up plans, policies and procedures which affect the delivery of our services and our employment practices.

The Service is committed to ensuring EIAs are undertaken and maintain suitable training and systems to ensure all stakeholders can view the assessments via our website.

Policy's and procedures can not be submitted to the Service Management Team for approval unless accompanied by an EIA.

Consultation is an integral part of the whole process.

Information on all aspects of our Service, our policies and plans are available in a number of formats.

Website

www.ddfire.gov.uk

By Post

Reception,
Fire and Rescue Service HQ,
Framwellgate Moor,
Durham,
DH1 5JR

By Telephone

Call 0845 305 8383

Provision of reports

We generate and provide reports on equality and diversity to the various internal and external group with different frequencies, these include:

- Department for Communities and Local Government
- Members of the Combined Fire Authority
- Service Leadership and Management Teams
- Equality and Diversity Working Group
- Communities and Stakeholders in published annual reports

By Email

ServiceHQ@ddfire.gov.uk

In Person

Appointments may be made by contacting us via any of the above methods

If you require information in an alternative format - Braille, large print, audio tape, CD-ROM or other language please contact us.





County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service

