

County Durham and Darlington  
**Fire and Rescue Service**



# **EQUALITY OBJECTIVES**

## **2012-16**

**Incorporating the Single Equality Scheme Annual Review Report 2012**

**Reviewed and updated March 2016**

## 1. **INTRODUCTION**

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the three aims of the general equality duty:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- 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 duty covers the following eight protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status.

The Authority is required to comply with the specific duty regulations for England. The English specific duties require public bodies to:

- Publish equality information to demonstrate their compliance with the general equality duty, no later than 31st January 2012 and then at least annually, and;
- Prepare and publish one or more objectives to meet the aims of the general duty, by 6 April 2012 and then at least every four years after that.

## 2. **OUR VISION**

Our vision is “Safest People, Safest Places”.

We recognise the importance of equality, diversity and fairness in terms of recruitment and promotion practices, our internal culture, our work with partners, activities in local communities, and the delivery of services.

We are promoting an inclusive culture that enhances our ability to interact with communities and enabling better connection with hard to reach groups so they accept and act on the fire safety advice we provide.

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

### **3. OUR APPROACH TO DEVELOPING OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES**

We plan to meet the duties placed upon us by equality and diversity legislation, best practice in managing our staff and meeting the needs and wishes of our local population are detailed in key documents available on our website:

- Three year strategic plan 2015/16 – 2017/18
- The single equality scheme

These documents show how we meet our obligations and respond to the communities we serve through consultation and partnership.

In conjunction with this information and the review of our published quality data we have equality objectives agreed strategically by the Authority and monitored in a combined equality objective and single equality scheme action plan included in this document.

### **4. OUR OBJECTIVES**

#### **I. Building a culture of respect**

Organisational culture is part of what identifies us as a service and helps determine what we do and how we do it. We will make sure that service users and staff clearly understand our approach through the words and visual images on our website, in policy and procedure documents, and in our behaviour when delivering our services. We are committed to our leadership message.

#### **II. Employing people fairly**

Potential applicants and existing staff will be treated fairly when being selected to

ensure that the workforce represents the communities we serve. Positive action will be used, wherever appropriate, to encourage women and members of BME groups to apply for jobs with the service. We will ensure that our employment policies, terms and conditions of employment do not exclude any staff, and are free from discrimination - for example, ensuring that same sex partners have entitlement under relevant policies, benefits and pensions; that promotions are based on merit and competence and that bullying and harassment are not acceptable under any circumstances.

### **III. Delivering to service users - recognising and striving to meet their needs.**

We will use our service user consultation process to communicate our messages and collect feedback. We will explore using external contacts and partner organisations to provide information and expertise on the needs of our service users such as younger, older or disabled people and others who may be vulnerable.

### **IV. Monitoring/ analysing equality data**

We will use this information to inform and help determine ongoing plans and be transparent with results. We will continue to analyse equality data on staff and service users on an annual basis and will also explore possible improvements in this work to better inform planning and service delivery.

## **5. PROGRESS OF THE EQUALITY OBJECTIVE AND SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN**

Below is the combined equality objectives and single equality scheme action plan, showing key tasks, applicable equality strands/ protected characteristics, evidence of success and progress update. This clearly demonstrates through a traffic light system the services progress in equality and diversity over the last year and our actions for the following four years of the equality objective until its next review.

Objective	Key Task	Year 1-5 / Estimated completion date	Comments	Progress
<b>1. Building a culture of respect</b>	1. Ensure all documents & publications demonstrate inclusive language, behaviours, text & visual images. Consider external consultation by equality groups in each EIA. Maintain a register for EIA & publish on the website.	1-5	Implemented through EA's. EA training complete. New EA Policy & Procedure published. Governance Team gatekeeper for EA process.	<b>Complete with on-going monitoring</b>
	2. Place a link to appropriate partner organisations' websites from/to our recruitment & community safety pages	2/3	E&D support area developed on SharePoint for all strands of equality.	<b>Complete with on-going monitoring</b>
	3. Create a 'Diverse Experiences' section in the Safer Times magazine which a selection of Firefighters & Fire Service staff from all staff groups including minority groups such as LGBT/gender/race/age, appear on the website outlining their experience of working for the Fire Service.	5	Request for contributions to be included in Safer Times articles. LGBT network in development, SN attended meeting on 9 <sup>th</sup> February 2016, invitation received from TWFRS to attend their meetings going forward.	<b>In progress</b>
	4. Review, create & if necessary amend 'people policies' & activities which may include practices to eliminate potential discrimination.	1-2	HR policies & procedures reviewed.	<b>Complete with on-going monitoring</b>
	5. Consider conducting a cultural audit of the Service.	2-3	An objective in the OD Strategy, work commenced on VAO, values and behaviours. OD has commenced work on this.	<b>In progress</b>

<b>2. Employing people fairly</b>	5. Review the grievance procedure to ensure there are mechanisms in place to deal effectively with any problems arising from unfair treatment.	2-3	Policy and procedure published.	<b>Complete</b>
	6. Develop & implement a rolling programme of refresher Equality & Diversity / Cultural Awareness, to take place every three years.	4	Training completed, LearnPro package live, content to be reviewed by Training to refresh the content. Included in the annual Service training plan.	<b>Complete with ongoing monitoring</b>
	7. Ensure that the key equality & diversity/cultural awareness/bullying & harassment messages are included in all new starter induction training & this is recorded. All new starters are included on refresher equality & diversity courses.	1	To include the E&D training electronic package into induction training.	<b>Complete</b>
	8. Develop, deliver & implement Positive Action & Retained Duty Staff recruitment utilising our new firefighter selection vehicle in a programme of events across the Service yearly.	1-5		<b>Complete</b>
	9. Promote mental health, well-being & eliminate discrimination based on mental health within the Service. Investigate the variety of mental health support networks which exist in the county, establish links to appropriate websites & helplines in staff info forums.	5	MHFA trained in 2013 and are the Service's point of contact for staff. MHFA group report 1/4ly to EDWG on activities. Blue light pledge signed on 4 <sup>th</sup> Feb. Presentation given at March meeting.	<b>Complete</b>
	10. Re-launch the bullying & harassment policy & provide refresher training for the Bullying & Harassment Advisers, incorporating issues associated with all strands & groups.	1	Dignity at Work Policy & Procedure published.  D@W Advisor training complete.  D@W training delivered to station based personnel.	<b>Complete</b>

	11. Identify how best to set up staff networks including for LGBT staff & other groups related to other strands.	1	EDWG to continue communicating opportunities / events to staff.  EDWG to consider an LGBT survey in the future.	<b>In Progress</b>
	12. Review all Service benefits to ensure that supporting documentation includes inclusive language & detail. For example, ensure that documents make reference to same sex partners & that, where partner benefits exist, they do in fact cover same sex partners.	1-5	In the review of policy and procedure, language & text is checked as part of the EA.  SMT to ensure EA of all amended documents as well as new ones.	<b>Complete with on-going monitoring</b>
	13. Investigate the possibility of advertising services of such as Stonewall, GADD & other support services (i.e. counselling services) on Service payslips, Safer Times & weekly information bulletins periodically during the five year action plan timescale.	5	To be included in "comms"  Payslip advertising started April 2014.  Info bulletin advertising ongoing as information is received.  Continue to scan for equality networks.	<b>Complete with on-going monitoring</b>
	14. Stonewall, Disability "Two Ticks" & Equality Mark logo to be included on all advertisements & documentation associated with the recruitment & selection process.	1	Disability Two Ticks reaccreditation received.	<b>Complete</b>
	15. Review training processes to ensure that good practice is adopted relating to all protected characteristics.	1-5	HR recruitment docs amended to include management issues e.g. removal of personal details, dealing with disability. Training procedures reviewed, evaluation sheets updated to reflect protected characteristics.	<b>Complete</b>

<b>3. Delivering to service users</b>	16. Ensure that future Service consultations include representation from all the protected characteristic groups.	1	Review & provide equality groups network contacts to the IRMP team each year for consultation.	<b>Complete with on-going monitoring</b>
	17. Develop positive action delivery processes with schools, colleges & voluntary organisations.	1-5	Local initiatives undertaken by District teams and delivered locally with HR support. Work experience Pol/ Proc published.	<b>Complete</b>
	18. Continue relationships with & utilising partner organisations to disseminate Home Fire Safety information to older people in the community.	2-5	CS provided evidence of training to partners on delivery of HFSV in EDWG SharePoint folders.  Safe & Wellbeing visits now conducted with referrals made to partner agencies to seek relevant support.	<b>Complete</b>
	19. Ensure equality & diversity is part of the Service's procurement processes.	2-3	Procurement training included the requirement for E&D to be included in procurement/tender process.  Procurement Officer appointed as member of EDWG.	<b>Complete</b>
	20. Improve ways to interact & deliver information to service users.	2-3	Continue to review website, posters, Safe & Wellbeing sheets, etc. to improve accessibility for service users as produced.  Customer care kits implemented.	<b>Complete with on-going monitoring.</b>
	21. Engage with equality groups & partners to develop alternative ways of delivering our services to users from the protected characteristics.		Continue to attend protected characteristic groups.  GM to speak to GAD.  CS to attend the Traveller Practitioner Group.	<b>Complete with on-going monitoring</b>



4. Monitoring	22. Develop improved & more efficient staff data collation systems for E&D data analysis & reporting purposes. Collate & analyse required equality staffing data consistently & annually to inform Service plans & actions.	1-5	Being developed with the Services Integrated Back office Project.  Fire watch project live for HR and staffing Feb15 – update given by HR on info to be drawn from Firewatch.	<b>Complete with on-going monitoring</b>
	23. Undertake an equal pay audit & publish the results.	3	Report completed, actions to be incorporated into section plans and EDWG work streams.  HR to conduct a review of recent recruitment and promotion processes.	<b>Complete</b>
	24. Develop improved & more efficient service delivery data collation systems for E&D data analysis & reporting purposes. Collate & analyse the required equality service delivery data consistently & annually to inform Service plans & actions. The information will help build a more detailed picture of service users.	2-5	CS collate data based on risk from fire.  Options to expand data collection however cost to altering software.	<b>Complete</b>
	25. Monitor & investigate further methods of capturing diversity information around those who receive community fire safety advice & are injured during fires for the purposes of planning & service delivery focus.	2-5	Review with previous objective.  CS provided evidence into EDWG SharePoint folder.  Review - Service satisfied correct data collated for the purposes of service delivery.	<b>Complete</b>

	26. We have submitted to Stonewall's Annual Workplace Equality Index. We will address issues arising for service plans from the feedback & publicise results.	1-3	Stonewall membership renewed in March 2016.  Index application action plan developed from results of submission – 2015.  Evidence for Stonewall to be submitted every EDWG meeting.	<b>Complete with on-going monitoring</b>
	27. Review E&D Strategy to ensure currency & reporting structures are in place.	2-5	Working group set up to develop the new strategy – updates to be provided.	<b>In Progress</b>