



Meeting	Service Leadership Team	Agenda Item No.	6a
	Performance & Resources Board		12
Meeting Date	11 May 2021		
	28 June 2021		
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Subject	Public Sector Equalities Act Objectives progress report		
Type of Report	Information		

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is for information.

OVERVIEW

This report provides an update against the published Equality Objectives.

BACKGROUND

In March 2018, ECFRS published six equality objectives as part of its legal obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011. The Service is required to publish at least one Equality objective every four years. The current set of six objectives are due to be delivered by March 2022.

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

As part of its commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Service published six Equality Objectives in March 2018. An overview of achievement for each objective is set out below:

- 1) To improve the recruitment, retention, progression, development and experience of the people employed by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service to enable the organisation to become an inclusive employer of choice.**





Progress in support of this objective includes the following:

- Whole-Time Recruitment campaign
- Positive action opportunities identified by operational women sub-group and ethnic minority forum to inform approach to WT campaign
- Induction – Inclusion and Diversity input for new joiners
- Dignity in our workplace sessions being delivered to all employees
- Revised Grievance Policy – informal resolution where possible, led by HR
- Trained Dignity at Work Supporters to provide a listening ear and peer support and signpost concerns to I & D team or HR

- LRS – new approach to development to enable progression being shared with networks and forums to encourage improved participation of underrepresented groups
- Employee Networks and Forums, Women’s Forum created, including an Operational Women subgroup, Being for our LGBTQ+ colleagues and Allies. During 2020, we created an Ethnic Minority Forum and in 2021, we will create a Disability network to provide peer support and a voice for colleagues who are impacted by disability or provide care for a disabled person.
- Our Staff Networks and Forums provide peer support, however, they give our colleagues a voice, a way to identify any concerns or to provide feedback. Our networks and Forums are able to assist in development of policies and projects and inform our People Impact Assessments by sharing lived experience or perspectives ahead of final decisions being made.
- Coaching provision made available for neurodiverse colleagues via Genius Within
- Coaching provision has been identified for Ethnic Minority colleagues by qualified Ethnic Minority coaches
- Learning and Development opportunities shared via Employee Networks and Forums to ensure that underrepresented groups are aware of opportunities available.
- Inclusion & Diversity Workplace group created to share information with colleagues
- Social Media Channels regularly demonstrate support and value diversity, responding to any inappropriate or derogatory comments
- Inclusion Insights, monthly newsletter launched April 2021
- Introduction to the concept of Allyship included in Inclusion Insights in April 2021 as part of our spotlight on Race and as a first step in our journey towards being an Anti-Racist organisation.

2) To promote and encourage employees to voluntarily declare their self-classification diversity data to ensure ECFRS actions as an employer are evidenced and improvement focused.

Since August 2019, our employees have updated a total of 1640 data fields, below identifies the number of records that were outstanding on 16th April 2021, for each employee group and diversity classification, compared with the number of records outstanding on 31st August 2019. The percentage of the current workforce that have data records outstanding is also confirmed, for each diversity category.

	Control	On Call	Support	Whole time	Total number of outstanding data records as at 31 st August 2019	Total number of outstanding data records as at 16 th April 2021	% of workforce yet to complete, as at 16 April 2021	No. of updated data records since 31 st August 2019
Ethnicity	1	128	24	123	677	276	18.1%	 401
Sexual orientation	7	215	48	168	940	438	28.6%	 502
Gender	1	30	8	29	126	68	4.4%	 58
Religion or Belief	5	210	43	173	1110	431	28.1%	 679

3) To improve the mapping, quality and extent of equality information in order to better facilitate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty in relation to service delivery including IRMP additional activities.

Progress in support of this objective includes the following:

- Risk & Harm Model includes data such as incidence of deprivation, previous fire calls, informs prevention and protection work
- Home safety are currently reviewing the equality data they collect, we met with Beds FRS in April 2021 to compare what data we collect, this was an action from the Regional EDI group
- New Inclusion role being introduced within the prevention team in 2021 to improve the focus on Inclusion in our prevention activity.

4) To review the equality impact of key organisational policies for differential impact in areas such as: recruitment and selection, learning and development, absence management, modified duties, talent management, appraisal, disciplinary and grievance.

Progress in support of this objective includes the following:

- ECFRS introduced a new People Impact Assessment (PIA) process in January 2021, adopting the approach recommended by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)
- All People policies are reviewed at regular intervals, each policy will be assessed using the new PIA as they are reviewed in accordance with the People policy review schedule. All new policies require a PIA to be completed prior to Consultation, this is so that identified impacts can be fully considered and where possible, any negative impacts mitigated prior to final decisions being made or Policies being published.
- NFCC PIA training dates for 2021 circulated and shared in Inclusion Insights May 2021
- PIA Workshops being held in Service in May 2021, led by I & D BP
- Guidance being created in May 2021

5) To ensure that all staff are treated with dignity and respect and have a workplace that is free from harassment and bullying by changing the culture of the organisation to one that is genuinely inclusive. All employees are high performing because we value their differences, which includes gender or gender identity, race, or religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, pregnancy, caring responsibilities or membership of a trade union.

Progress in support of this objective includes the following:

- Dignity in our Workplace training delivered to 61 teams across the Service, reduction in cases being raised via DAWS throughout 2020, training paused due to the pandemic and the need for the training to be delivered face to face, to be effective. Training will resume in Q2 21/22.
- Grievance policy has been reviewed with a greater emphasis on informal resolution, where possible.
- Inspiring Inclusion, Developing Diversity, Ensuring Equality is our approach in 2021, as part of this, we have introduced 'Inclusion Insights', a monthly e-newsletter with spotlight topics and a range of relevant learning and development content to inspire colleagues to be inclusive and develop diversity of thought, at all levels of our Service.
- International Women's Day Conference in collaboration with Essex Police and East of England Ambulance Service delivered March 2021
- LGBTQ+ conference in collaboration with Essex Police and East of England Ambulance Service being held for IDAHOBIT day on 17th May 2021

- Joined Inclusive Employers as Corporate Members in March 2021 to ensure that we are expert led in our work to be an inclusive employer of choice and in our commitment to become an Anti-Racist Organisation.
 - Corporate members of the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA), Women in the Fire Service (WFS), Business Disability Forum
 - Disability Confident Employer
 - Access to Webinars hosted by Inclusive Employers and AFSA, being shared in Inclusion Insights and on the L & D intranet pages
 - Access to Conferences and Development opportunities provided by AFSA and WFS
 - Access to NFCC EDI Lunch and Learn opportunities, our I & D BP is part of the working group creating the Lunch and Learn programme.
 - Access to a range of best practice advice and guidance from Inclusive Employers, Business Disability Forum, AFSA, WFS and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) project.
- 6) To seek external review, challenge and accreditation of ECFRS' actions as an employer by actively participating with relevant equalities standards and benchmarks including the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework.**

Progress in support of this objective includes the following:

- Completed a self-assessment of the FRS Equality Framework in December 2020
- We shared our People Strategy Action Plan with Oxfordshire and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services, both achieved outstanding in the first round of HMICFRS inspections in the People element. They have provided feedback to help us further improve our delivery of the People Strategy.
- Utilising the HMICFRS framework, judgement criteria and themes to identify any gaps or areas of focus
- Will be completing the 'Inclusive Employers Standard' in Q3 2021/22.

Year three of the People Strategy, Fair Kind and Inclusive Workplace Action Plan sets out next steps, with the aim of achieving our Equality Objectives by March 2022.

BENEFITS AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

Minimise risk of discrimination and progress our commitment to be an inclusive employer of choice.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None. There are no negative equality impacts identified by this work under the Equality Act 2010.

<i>Race</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Religion or belief</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Sex</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Gender reassignment</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Age</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Pregnancy & maternity</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Disability</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Marriage and Civil Partnership</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	<i>No</i>		<i>No</i>

The content of this report further enhances equality.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

Our Staff Network and Forums are regularly engaged in our progress in Inclusion, Diversity and Equality and help to inform our action.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None associated with this report. However, the Service has a legal obligation under the following:

Public Sector Equality Duty 2011
Equality Act 2010

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None identified.