



Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Decision Report

Please ensure all sections below are completed

Report reference number: 42-22

Government security classification Not protectively marked

Title of report: Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives

Area of county / stakeholders affected: Service wide

Report by: Jagtar Singh, Independent Consultant
Mohammed Jogi, Independent Consultant
Colette Black, Director of People Services

Date of report: 1 November 2022

Enquiries to: Colette Black, Director of People Services

1. Purpose of the report

To seek approval for the four new Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives.

2. Recommendations

Approval is sought for the adoption of 4 new Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) objectives. The proposed objectives will replace those that have been in place since 1 March 2018. The objectives have been reviewed by the Plain English Campaign, following discussions at the Strategic Board on 7 September 2022.

The recommended PSED objectives are:

1. We will consistently demonstrate 'due regard' (give genuine attention and thought) to equality and diversity in our organisation and aim to be leading practitioners of workplace diversity and inclusion across Essex.

2. We will invest in a diverse workforce with the skills, knowledge and attitude needed to build a culture of diversity and inclusion.
3. We will deliver inclusive evidence-based services that show 'due regard' when assessing risks and behaviour in the community, to help make sure services are accessible and fair to everyone.
4. Demonstrate community-focused leadership by working in partnership, and making the most of our presence in the region to stress the importance of socio-economic factors, and how they affect both employment and services.

3. Benefits of the proposal

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010 obliges public sector organisations to demonstrate that they have due regard when exercising their functions. In particular, the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

4. Background and proposal

Our existing PSED objectives were adopted on 1 March 2018. They were approved by the Inclusion and Diversity Steering Group and were in place until 28 February 2022. An initial review on 5 April 2022 approved the addition of one objective and the commissioning of a full and independent review of all PSED objectives. An independent consultancy was selected to carry out the review.

The consultants were tasked with preparing and conducting a staff and public consultation to review and assess effectiveness of the 2018-2022 objectives and to prepare new objectives. The full scope of the review is shown in appendix 1.

The process followed to complete the review included a desk top review, an internal staff survey (survey shown in appendix 2), a public facing survey, external targeted engagement and staff engagement workshops. Full details of process are shown in appendix 1.

The review took place between 1 June 2022 and 9 August 2022. Full timetable is shown in appendix 1.

A) Feedback from first engagement workshop

Full feedback from the first engagement workshop on 12th July 2022 is shown at appendix 3. 12 people attended the first workshop. When 'looking back' at perceived

performance relating to the existing PSED objectives, attendees rated performance as 'good' in 4 areas and 'very good' in 2 areas.

Draft themes for potential new objectives were discussed and reflected the need for a greater orientation towards inclusive provision of services in the community. The themes were supported in the workshop and are shown in appendix 3.

B) Feedback from survey

Full feedback from the survey is shown at appendix 4. 72 people responded to the survey. Key feedback includes;

- The range of people who answered 'Don't know' ranged from 21% to 37%
- ECFRS are at the midpoint of their PSED journey
- Objective 1, 2 & 5 (according to the survey) has made most progress and objectives 3, 4 & 6 require even more attention
- 78% of respondents agreed for the need to focus on civic reasonability
- In terms of how the organisation could support future performance the following key areas were highlighted:
 - ✓ More face-to-face engagement across diverse communities and forums
 - ✓ Use the stations as the centre for community engagement
 - ✓ Engage with multifaith groups
 - ✓ Link and support diverse businesses
 - ✓ Staff engagement
 - ✓ Invest in the education of staff
 - ✓ Produce an action plan with the public and make senior leaders accountable

C) Feedback from second engagement workshop

The objective of the second workshop was to test out the proposed objectives with a group of stakeholders. Objectives were supported and are reflected in the recommendations.

D) Proposed objectives for 2022-2026

There are 4 proposed new objectives for 2022-2026. The new objectives integrate consideration of inclusion and diversity into the service we provide so that we can demonstrate that we are paying due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. This means:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics,
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Based on the feedback from the desk top review, discussions, workshops and feedback from the Commissioner's Strategic Board the proposed PSED objectives for 2022-26 are:

1. We will consistently demonstrate 'due regard' (give genuine attention and thought) to equality and diversity in our organisation and aim to be leading practitioners of workplace diversity and inclusion across Essex.
2. We will invest in a diverse workforce with the skills, knowledge and attitude needed to build a culture of diversity and inclusion.
3. We will deliver inclusive evidence-based services that show 'due regard' when assessing risks and behaviour in the community, to help make sure services are accessible and fair to everyone.
4. Demonstrate community-focused leadership by working in partnership, and making the most of our presence in the region to stress the importance of socio-economic factors, and how they affect both employment and services.

How we will achieve these objectives is detailed in appendix 5. Achievement of these objectives will be monitored via the Portfolio Management Board as part of the People programme. Performance measures will be presented to future Performance and Resources Board Meetings as part of the People Strategy Update, to reflect the progress that is being made against the objectives, as requested by the Strategic Board on 7 September.

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

ECFRS has a legal duty to publish at least one new public sector equality duty objective every four years. It is possible for the objectives to be different to those which are proposed. However, the proposed objectives are the result of significant stakeholder consultation and provide the best opportunity for the Service to make a meaningful contribution through its public sector equality duty.

The newly proposed objectives balance our continuing focus on investing in our people and delivering inclusive evidence-based services and community focussed leadership.

6. Strategic priorities

Fire and Rescue Plan:-

- Promote a positive culture in the workplace
- Be transparent open and accessible

Annual Plan

- AP20222021 Culture – Involved and valued
 - Build our Service Employee Relations capability - "raise the bar on ER" to support our ambitions for continuous improvement and fair culture

- AP2022022 Fair, Kind, and Inclusive workplace
- AP202207 Culture – Involved and Valued Embed NFCC Core Code of Ethics

7. Operational implications

The outcome of having a Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives includes community focussed activity.

8. Financial implications

There are no legal implications associated with the publication of objectives.

9. Legal implications

The Service has a legal duty to publish Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives to comply with the Equality Act. It also has a responsibility to report against these through an annual report on how they have delivered against the objectives. The Service will continue to utilise existing mechanisms to support and monitor delivery of the Objectives. In particular, the Inclusion and Diversity Action Group and Project Board, Portfolio Management Board and Continuous Improvement Board.

10. Staffing implications

Whilst there are no direct staffing implications, all staff have inclusion responsibilities and we are ensuring colleagues are aware of this through mandatory training.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

Consideration has been given at every stage of consultation to the equality, diversity and inclusion impacts of this decision; a positive impact is anticipated for all. We have considered whether individuals with protected characteristics will be disadvantaged as a consequence of the actions being taken. Due regard has also been given to whether there is impact on people who identify as being part of each of the following protected groups as defined within the Equality Act 2010:

Race	Yes	Religion or belief	Yes
Sex	Yes	Gender reassignment	Yes
Age	Yes	Pregnancy & maternity	Yes
Disability	Yes	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Yes
Sexual orientation	Yes		

The Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard has been fully considered and incorporated into the proposals outlined in this paper.

12. Risks

This is a control measure for SRR150019

There is a risk that the Service fails to provide a safe and inclusive culture which ensures the well-being of staff and contributes to attracting a diverse workforce.

13. Governance Boards

The Objectives were considered by the ECFRS Service Leadership Team on 9 August and recommended for onward submission to the Strategic Board for approval.

The Strategic Board, at its meeting on 7 September, requested that the objectives be reviewed under plain English guidelines and for the performance measures to be presented to future Performance and Resources Board Meetings, to reflect the progress that is being made against the objectives.

14. Background papers

- Appendix 1 – PSED objective review, process and timetable
- Appendix 2 – Survey questions
- Appendix 3 – First workshop feedback
- Appendix 4 – Survey feedback
- Appendix 5 – Proposed new objectives

Decision Process (042-22)

Step 1A - Chief Fire Officer Comments

(The Chief Fire Officer is asked in their capacity as the Head of Paid Service to comment on the proposal.)

.....I support this recommendation.....

Sign:  Date:.....2/11/22.....

Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies

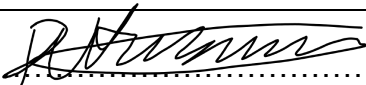
(The Chief Fire Officer is to set out the consultation that has been undertaken with the representative bodies)

Proposed objectives have been shared with representative bodies.

Step 2 - Statutory Officer Review

The report will be reviewed by the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority's ("the Commissioner's") Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the Commissioner or their Deputy.

Monitoring Officer

Sign: 

Print: .. Darren Horsman - Deputy Monitoring Officer ..

Date: .. 28.11.2022 ..

Chief Finance Officer

Sign: 

Print: ...Neil Cross...

Date: .. 2/11/22 ..

Step 3 - Publication

Is the report for publication? YES

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'none' if applicable)

.....

If the report is not for publication, the Monitoring Officer will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Step 4 - Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1 Of Decision Sheet NO

2 Of Appendix NO

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

.....

.....

Date redaction carried out:

If redaction is required, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer are to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign: Print:

Date signed:

Step 5 - Decision by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner or Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign:  (PFCC / ~~DPFCC~~)

Print: ... ROGER HIRST Date signed: 9 December 2022

I do not agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: (PFCC / DPFCC)

Print: Date signed: