



Purpose: Noted

Date: **5 JUNE 2019**

Title: **ANNUAL STATEMENT OF EQUALITY**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Equality Act 2010 established general and specific duties for public sector bodies in order to improve their equality performance. In order to meet the duties, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) must publish equality information on an annual basis and set equality objectives every four years. The published information must be accessible to employees and members of the public.
2. This report and its appendices provide a snapshot of the HFRS equality information and highlights some of the actions we have undertaken to improve the diversity of our workforce. It also provides an update on progress towards achievement of the Service's equality objectives which were approved by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) in July 2018.
3. Our workforce demographic is a continued reminder of our need for action on Inclusion and Diversity. Although in some areas of the Service we are performing above the national average in terms of numbers of female employees; such as control and retained firefighters, we know there is still work required in respect of wholetime firefighter recruitment and our green book roles.
4. Our employment of Black, Asian Minority and Ethnic (BAME) remains very low and is not representative of the community we serve. Therefore, it is important we work with these communities to gain a greater insight into the barriers which prevent people from BAME backgrounds applying to join HFRS.
5. Wholetime recruitment, where large numbers of staff are recruited at one time, provides a real opportunity to attract applicants from diverse backgrounds. Our current recruitment campaign, which was supported by a number of positive action events aimed particularly at female applicants, is showing early signs of success compared to previous years.

## BACKGROUND

6. The Equality Act 2010 established a general duty for the public sector which aims to ensure that people with protected characteristics are not excluded, discriminated, or otherwise treated less favourably than anyone else, due to their protected characteristics. The protected characteristics covered by the general equality duty are age (including children and young people), disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.1 In summary, organisations are required to comply with the general equality duty and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
  - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
7. The general duty is further supported by specific duties that are intended to help public bodies improve their equality performance by improving their focus and transparency. In summary each public body is required to:
  - Publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty on an annual basis. This information must include information relating to people who share a protected characteristic that are either employees or people affected by the organisation's policies and practices;
  - Publish one or more objectives that it thinks it needs to achieve to further any of the aims of the general equality duty. This must be done every 4 years; and
  - Publish both the equality information and the equality objectives in a manner that is accessible to the public.

## HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES EQUALITY INFORMATION

8. Our equality information at **Appendix A** provides a snapshot of the Service's workforce demographics as at March 2019, based on information we currently collate in relation to gender, ethnicity, age and disability.
9. To demonstrate our commitment to improving the diversity of our workforce, we have published a positive action statement of intent that outlines our aspiration for our workforce to be reflective of our community as we believe this will improve the Service we provide and support our mission to make Hampshire safer. It also outlines our intention to use positive action to encourage and support applications from groups who are under-represented in our workforce.
10. The Service is pleased with progress within the retained duty system where the percentage of females has increased from 3.9% to 5.4% and is now

above the national average. We believe this is partly attributable to the national on call recruitment campaign we have led on, and to the additional support we have established for the retained personnel through the creation of RDS Support Officers. We will continue to review the retained duty system and look for opportunities to make the role more attractive to female and BAME applicants.

11. Our employment of females in wholetime operational roles remains below the national average, and is clearly not representative of the gender split of our community. In respect of wholetime recruitment, the Service has delivered numerous positive action days aimed at encouraging females to apply, which is showing early signs of success.
12. We have not taken the same approach to our recruitment of green book staff and this may be something we consider in the future. In the short term, a review of our employment material on our website will take place to ensure we are promoting HFRS as an employer of choice.
13. Our employment of BAME staff remains very low at 1.2% of the workforce and is not representative of the community of Hampshire which is approximately 7%. Our Inclusion and Diversity Team has developed links with many local community groups and attends a number of events throughout the year where they represent HFRS. We need to strengthen these links to gain a greater understanding of the barriers that prevent members of these communities from joining HFRS.
14. Our current equality information is limited to gender, age, ethnicity and disability. However, Shared Services have recently updated the functionality within Employee Self Service (ESS) to allow employees to enter more details about themselves. This will mean that information can now be collected on sexual orientation, religion/belief, gender identity and type of disability. As this data entry is the individual's responsibility and choice, the Inclusion and Diversity team, along with the Communications and Media Team, are now developing communications to engage and encourage employees to do this. The intention is that this will provide richer equality information in the future and help to inform our priorities in respect of inclusion and diversity.

#### EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

15. In July 2018 HFRA approved the Service's equality objectives for 2018 – 2022, which are part of our duties under the Equality Act. Achievement of these objectives has been monitored by the People Committee, which was chaired by the Head of Inclusion and Diversity. A summary of our progress is outlined below.
16. **Objective 1: We will take actions to increase the diversity of job applicants to help us reflect the community focusing particularly upon women and Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME).** Indications from recent positive action and targeted social media campaigns have already shown that a higher proportion of females have applied to be firefighters

within HFRS. With the release of the National On-Call Campaign, led by HFRS, we have also seen an increase in the number of females enquiring about the role. There has not been any change to numbers of enquiries from our BAME communities. Further work needs to be done to focus in on our BAME communities and understand the barriers for applying.

17. **Objective 2: We will create an inclusive environment that will enable us to maximise the potential of a diverse workforce.** The Inclusion and Diversity Team have a revised Action Plan for 2019 which sets out the initiatives that will be carried out to embed inclusion into the organisation and equip our employees to be inclusive role models. A Third-party organisation, Inclusive Employers, will be reviewing this Action Plan and all work carried out to assess our progress as part of the National Inclusion Standard. Results should be ready in July.
18. **Objective 3: We will proactively engage with our diverse communities to understand their needs and promote HFRS as an employer of choice.** To engage with our communities effectively we first need to understand more about where these communities are and what are their needs. The Inclusion and Diversity Team, along with the Knowledge Management Team, are currently developing a Community Insights Tool. A prototype is due in June and the tool will allow us to map our communities using data from a number of sources. This tool will allow users to add information about how we have engaged with our communities and what we understand about their needs/risks. It will also highlight any areas where engagement is limited.

#### WHOLETIME RECRUITMENT UPDATE

19. Current figures from Wholetime recruitment show that the positive action and targeted social media campaigns seem to be had a positive effect thus far, increasing the number of applications from our target groups. A breakdown of the current figures can be found in **Appendix B**.
20. 697 men and 97 women applied for the recent WDS recruitment. There were 26 applications from those who classed themselves as BAME. These applicants have been through an intensive round of mental and physical tests and interviews. 71 candidates have passed this process. We have offered employment to 42 of these candidates, 22 are current retained firefighters who will start imminently and 20 are external applications who will be on the June trainees course at the Academy.
21. The gender breakdown of the 42 individuals who have been offered employment is 29 males (69%) and 13 females (31%). The employment of 13 female wholetime firefighters will raise our employment statistics to above the national average.
22. The percentage of BAME applicants who have passed the process and offered employment is 2.3%. This is higher than our current workforce demographic of 1.2% and therefore this recruitment campaign has also

helped the Service to better represent the diversity of the community we serve.

#### SUPPORTING OUR SERVICE PLAN AND PRIORITIES

23. This paper supports the Inclusion priority within the current Service Plan as well as the delivery of our safer and stronger principles that underpin the vision of HFRS.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

24. There are no positive or negative impacts to the environment or sustainability which may result due to this report.

#### RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

25. No additional resources have been identified other than those already working in the assisting Inclusion and Diversity Team

#### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

26. Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service have a legal duty under:

- Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (public sector duty)
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011

to collate and publish equality information on an annual basis, as well as equality objectives at least every four years.

#### EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

27. The proposals in this report are compatible with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998.
28. The equality information in Appendix A is anonymous and has been scrutinised to ensure that individuals cannot be identified.

#### RISK ANALYSIS

29. The Equality and Human Right Commission has a statutory duty to enforce the general and specific duty. Failure to do so can result in a compliance notice being issued.

#### CONCLUSION

30. HFRS has a general and specific duty under The Equality Act 2010 to publish equality information on an annual basis and set equality objectives every four years. The equality objectives will next be published in 2022. Within the objectives the organisation must set out clearly what they are recommending and the rationale.

### RECOMMENDATION

31. That the Annual Statement of Equality (Workforce Demographics) be noted by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

### APPENDICES ATTACHED

32. Appendix A Workforce Demographics
33. Appendix B Current Wholetime Recruitment statistics for 2019

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