



**HAMPSHIRE  
FIRE AND  
RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

Purpose: Noted

Date: **3 June 2020**

Title: **ANNUAL STATEMENT OF EQUALITY**

Report of Chief Fire Officer

## 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. The published information must be accessible to employees and members of the public.
2. This report and its appendix provides a snapshot of the HFRS equality information and highlights some of the actions we have undertaken to improve the diversity of our workforce.
3. Our workforce demographic is a continued reminder of our need for action on Inclusion and Diversity, but there has been positive progress, particularly in recruiting women into operational roles. There has been less progress in respect of our numbers of Black, Asian, Minority and Ethnic (BAME) staff. Therefore, we are actively working to gain a greater insight into the barriers of people from BAME backgrounds applying to join HFRS.
4. Despite efforts to encourage more employees to self-populate their personal data within ESS, gathering information on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity remains a challenge and one to be progressed further by the Inclusion and Diversity team.

## BACKGROUND

5. 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. 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.
  - 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. One of the specific duties is to publish information relating to the employees who share protected characteristic and to do so in a manner that is accessible to the public.

#### HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE'S EQUALITY INFORMATION

8. Our equality information at **Appendix A** provides a snapshot of the Service's workforce demographics as at April 2020, based on information we currently collate in relation to gender, ethnicity and age.
9. The Service is pleased to be able to report increased percentages of female employees across all our employment groups. The biggest improvement has been amongst our on-call workforce where the percentage of females has increased from 5.4% to 7.8%. We believe this is largely attributable to the national on-call recruitment campaign and our effective use of social media to increase understanding of the role of an on-call firefighter.
10. Our employment of BAME staff remains very low at 1.2% of the workforce. 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.
11. Our current equality information is limited to gender, age and ethnicity. However, we are actively encouraging employees to use the updated functionality within Employee Self Service (ESS) to allow employees to enter more details about themselves. This will enable us to collate information on sexual orientation, religion/belief, gender identity and type of disability. 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.

## HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE'S POSITIVE ACTION

12. To demonstrate our commitment to improving the diversity of our workforce, we have published a positive action statement 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 purpose to make life safer. It also outlines our intention to use positive action to encourage and support applications from groups who are under-represented in our workforce.
13. The Inclusion and Diversity Team have led a wide range of positive action activity to ensure we are reaching as many of our under-represented groups as possible. However, given our workforce demographics, there has been a specific focus on activities in BAME communities. Specific activities include:
  - Targeted social media campaign featuring female and BAME role models to reinforce message that being a firefighter is a job for all.
  - Using facebook advertising to promote recruitment 'have a go days' to specific target groups – this reached nearly 350,000 people.
  - Regular recruitment newsletter sent to those who have registered their interest at community events attended by the Inclusion and Diversity team. The newsletter provides information about 'have a go days', fitness standards, and updates them on the recruitment process and when it will go live.
  - Building strong networks with local Mosques, Gurdwaras and Hindi Vedic temples and providing information about the variety of roles within the fire service.
  - Regular radio interviews and adverts on Unity 101 promoting the fire service as a career choice and providing details of 'have a go days' in the local community.
  - Held a BAME focussed 'have a go day' in the St Mary's community where 80% of those attended identified as BAME.
  - The Fire REACH (Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage) network are developing a questionnaire designed for members of our BAME communities to find out if there are any barriers to them seeing HFRS as a potential employer.
  - Focus groups are being established with partners from Unity 101 and Southampton Solent University and with those involved in Black History Month to improve engagement and understanding of our BAME communities.
14. The impact of Covid-19 has meant that some of our planned positive action activity and wholetime firefighter recruitment campaign has had to be postponed. However, this gives time for the team to develop further on-line materials and they continue to use social media to reach our under-represented groups. Maintaining and building on these relationships and partnerships is key to us increasing the diversity of our workforce.

## SUPPORTING OUR SAFETY PLAN AND PRIORITIES

15. This paper supports the priority relating our people within the Safety Plan.

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

16. No additional resources have been identified.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

17. There are no environmental or sustainability concerns.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18. 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.

## PEOPLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

19. The proposals in this report are compatible with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998.

20. The equality information in Appendix A is anonymous and has been scrutinised to ensure that individuals cannot be identified.

## OPTIONS

21. Option A to note the contents of this report and endorse the recommendations.

22. Option B to not note the contents of this report and not endorse its recommendations.

## RISK ANALYSIS

23. 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

24. HFRS has a general and specific duty under The Equality Act 2010 to publish equality information on an annual basis.

## RECOMMENDATION

25. Option A: That the Annual Statement of Equality (Workforce Demographics) be noted by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

## APPENDICES ATTACHED

26. Appendix A shows the workforce demographics as of April 2020.

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