

Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority

Date: 27 September 2018

Subject: Equalities Annual Progress Report 2017-18

Report by: Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

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For: Decision

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek the Combined Fire Authority's (CFA) approval for the Equalities Annual Progress report for 2017-18.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the CFA approves the draft Equalities Annual Progress Report for 2017-18.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. The Equality Act 2010 places a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on all public authorities, including the CFA. The PSED requires all listed bodies to have due regard, in the exercise of their functions, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations across all nine protected characteristics (i.e. The General Duty).
- 3.2. Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, the CFA is required to produce and publish equality objectives and to report annually on how it is meeting the objectives. The CFA has opted to continue using the Equality Scheme as a means of outlining and publishing its equality objectives while using the Equalities Annual Progress report to update on progress.

4. Background

- 4.1. LFRS implemented a new Single Equality Scheme in December 2017 outlining its equality objectives over a two year period. The Equalities Annual Report 2017 -18 provides the progress made in progressing the CFA's objectives as set out in the Equality Scheme 2018 -2020. The report covers both the workforce as well as service delivery activities.
- 4.2. The CFA will note that changes to the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRSEF) and the introduction of other equality, diversity and inclusion approaches through the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) has

meant that some objectives, and in particular the objective to achieve the “Excellent” level against the FRSEF, cannot be met. Therefore, the equality scheme will need to be revised and updated to reflect the changes.

- 4.3. In responding to the impact of the changes, LFRS Senior Officers agreed to set up a Strategic Equality, Diversity and Inclusion board (SEDIB) to oversee the implementation of the Service’s equality objectives and also provide strategic leadership in order to embed equality practices across all functions.
- 4.4. It has always been the CFA’s ambition to diversify the workforce by recruiting more women and people from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. The wide range of activities to promote LFRS to members of the public, including those underrepresented in the workforce, delivered the most diverse intake of the Wholetime firefighter since monitoring was put in place.
- 4.5. However, the On-Call duty system accounts for the majority of recruitment activities at LFRS. The recruitment profile for the On-Call duty system is largely White British male and, therefore, this has a significant impact on the ability to achieve the set targets. The proportion of leavers who are either women or from a BAME background have also contributed to the challenge. Women accounted for 16.7% across the service while those leaving operational roles accounted for 6.7%. BAME leavers accounted for 6.7% across the Service and 3.3% for operational roles.
- 4.6. The ambition to diversify the workforce remains positive in some areas, compared to 2015, when LFRS published its previous Equality Scheme. Key highlights are:
 - i. The disability profile across the Service is up from 3.4% (in 2015) to 4.7% in 2018 and in operational roles it is up from 1.8% to 3% over the same period;
 - ii. The number of staff from a Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB) background has increased by over 100% since 2015. This is through recruitment activity and improved declaration rates;
 - iii. Over 81% of staff now declare their sexual orientation and 73.9% declare their disability status. In 2015 only 57.8% declared their sexual orientation and 3.4% declared their disability status; and
 - iv. The workforce profile for women and BAME staff has seen a reduction from 5.3% to 4.2% for operational women and 6.3% to 5.4% for operational BAME.
- 4.7. All (3) reported cases of Bullying and Harassment involved males from a BAME background. All cases were investigated thoroughly and dealt with in line with policy.
- 4.8. The report also provides a detailed analysis together with the narrative provided to meet the Gender Pay Gap reporting requirement. The analysis indicates that the Gender Pay Gap at LFRS, for March 2018, shows that the average female is paid 20% (mean) or 14% (median) less than the average male. Across the

UK, men earned 18.4% (mean) more than women in April 2017 (Office for National Statistics).

- 4.9. This report also presents the first set of reports for monitoring satisfaction levels, in line with the protected characteristics, in Fire Protection as well as the Service's complaints and concerns procedure. These areas were implemented as part of the objective to achieve the "Excellent" level against the FRSEF and at this stage it demonstrates that there are no concerns for equality purposes in the satisfaction levels.
- 4.10. The equality scheme also outlined the CFA's intentions to improve equality practices in how the Service monitors its community engagement activities. This report provides the first detailed breakdown of the information captured through general engagement activities undertaken by the Service.

5. Report Implications / Impact

5.1 Legal (including crime and disorder)

The draft Equalities Annual Progress Report 2017-18 will assist Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service in fully complying with its legal responsibilities. Non-Compliance may result in the Equality and Human Rights Commission issuing a notice of non-compliance.

5.2 Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

None arising.

5.3 Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

Failure to produce and publish progress against equality objectives may lead to a significant risk of legal action against the service for failure to comply with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011.

5.4 Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

The positive outcomes of the progress outlined in this report are intended to positively impact on staff, service users and all stakeholders including those with protected characteristics. Good equality and inclusive practices contribute to the achievement of all our Service aims.

5.5 Environmental

None arising.

5.6 Impact upon Our Plan Objectives

Equality and diversity is central to good service provision and in promoting a positive working environment. Good equality and inclusive practices contribute to the achievement of all our Service aims. The Service will not only be complying with its legal obligations but will also be ensuring that “Staff are skilled, equipped and motivated to deliver its purpose” of “safer people, safer places”.

6. **Background Papers**

LFRS Equality Scheme 2018 – 20.

<http://www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk/your-fire-service/who-we-are/equality-and-diversity/>

7. **Appendices**

Draft Equalities Annual Progress Report 2017-18.

8. **Officers to Contact**

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