

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY****HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 12 JULY 2010**

SUBJECT: NATIONAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE AUTHORITY**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an overview of the Communities and Local Government (CLG) Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Report published in March 2010 highlighting some of the key findings.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In May 2008 the National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018 was published setting out the vision/strategy for the fire authorities under five key priorities:
- Leadership and promoting inclusion
 - Accountability
 - Effective service delivery and community engagement
 - Employment and training
 - Evaluation and sharing good practice.
- 2.2 The National Strategy requires Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to provide information to CLG on their performance on equality and diversity annually. CLG utilise this information and produce an annual Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Report (the Report).
- 2.3 This year has seen the publication of the second annual report detailing progress towards the National Strategy and sharing key findings/notable good practice across the fire and rescue service.
- 2.4 Following publication of the first annual report in 2009, a baseline report which drew on the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) statistical returns as its main source of information, the National Equality and Diversity Delivery Partnership (NEDDP) recommended that future reports should include qualitative as well as quantitative data to further evidence progress.

3. REPORT QUESTIONNAIRE

- 3.1 In accordance with requirements, this Authority completed a questionnaire at the end of 2009 highlighting progress on equality and diversity issues (covering the period 1 January to 31 December 2009), for inclusion in the national report. This comprehensive

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questionnaire was also designed to meet the requirement to produce qualitative data, and included over 40 questions many of which required dialogue to evidence progress made. As a result, the national report itself is a far more detailed and comprehensive document in comparison to the 2009 report.

4. OVERVIEW

4.1 The Report 2010 is divided into six sections:

- **Section 1** - Sets the report in the context of both the Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018 and the Audit Commissions Comprehensive Area Assessments.
- **Section 2** – Details on some of the key national initiatives being developed including the 2009 equality and diversity award winning initiatives.
- **Section 3** - Provides the outcomes from the commitments made by national stakeholders in the 2009 National Action Plan.
- **Section 4** - The 2010 National Action Plan, one of the key elements of the report, is contained in this section. The Plan identifies initiatives which national stakeholders have committed to progress in 2010 (achievement against these commitments is monitored by the NEDDP.)
- **Section 5** - Includes information drawn from the questionnaires completed for CLG by each authority regarding their progress/initiatives on equality, diversity and fairness during 2009. The information is set out as a narrative section for each authority, at the end of each which is an initiative, policy or process, which that the authority has selected as a good practice example.
- **Section 6** - Provides an overview of the information taken from IRMP statistical returns for 2008-09 including data on recruitment, retention and progression at local level and considers these areas of performance in the context of the statutory strands of diversity.

5. KEY NATIONAL INITIATIVES

5.1 The Report includes updates and information regarding several national initiatives, national conferences and seminars. Some of these are outlined below:

- **FRS Equality and Diversity Awards** - This joint scheme developed and administered by CLG, the Chief Fire Officers Association and the Local Government Association focuses on creativity, innovation and good practice with three award categories: Leadership, Service Delivery and Partnership Working. Members will be aware that an employee from Tyne and Wear won one of these national awards earlier this year. There continues to be an increase in award applications from 40 in 2008 to 57 (made by 32 different authorities) in 2010.

- **FRS Equality Framework** - Detail is provided regarding the creation, development and launch of the above framework in 2009 (based on the Equality Framework for Local Government).
- **'Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career' National Awareness Raising Programme** - Developed during the course of 2009 this programme was officially launched on 14 January 2010. The aim of the campaign is to dispel myths and break down the barriers, which discourage many people from applying to the Service as well as informing people about the various roles available.
- Research carried out as part of the programme has led to the development of a further campaign focused on girls aged 14 to 16 to promote the fire and rescue service as a career of choice.
- **Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) Conference and National Launch 18th and 19th November 2009** - This conference, with a theme of 'Yes We Can', focused on sharing best practice; highlighting the benefits that AFSA brings in supporting both its individuals and corporate members. The conference, held in Birmingham, was addressed by a wide range of speakers including Shahid Malik MP, the then Minister for Fire and incorporated a panel discussion, presentations and a range of workshops. As a corporate member of AFSA this Authority was appropriately represented at this conference.

6. NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

- 6.1 The Report outlines the outcomes of the 2009 National Action Plan providing details of the activities, initiatives and commitments being made by the NEDDP with the aim of implementing an effective national approach to delivery against the requirements of the Equality and Diversity Strategy. These actions, set under the five key priority areas (see Para 2.1), were intended to provide effective leadership and to offer practical appropriate support to authorities.
- 6.2 The 2010 National Action Plan identifies the expected outcomes from each activity and specifies the lead body with responsibility for driving/supporting delivery against the actions. Details of progress made will be included in the 2011 Annual Report. It is a requirement that each Authority develops its own local Action Plan, and as Members will be aware, this Authority has had a regional and local plan in place for some time with regular monitoring on progress.

7. PROGRESS TOWARDS NATIONAL STRATEGY IN 2009

- 7.1 Section 5 of the Report concentrates on performance (qualitative information) for each authority providing detail on individual progress and initiatives as set out under the five key priority areas.
- 7.2 All 46 fire and rescue authorities completed the questionnaire and many Services provided a wider selection of examples of progress and initiatives than it has been possible to record in the Report.

7.3 An overview of the key findings from the analysis of IRMP statistical data collated is provided, as follows:

7.4 Workforce composition

Note that where applicable, the figures for this Authority are provided in () for comparison purposes.

- Women were 14.6% of the total workforce (20%) but only 3.6% of the operational sector (4.8%) – the Authority is performing to a higher standard.
- Of the 55,541 staff employed by the fire and rescue service in England less than 1.7%, i.e. 919 have declared a disability (2.6%). Once again, with 2.6% of staff this Authority is better performing (33).
- The proportion of all staff from minority ethnic communities (including 'Other White') has increased from 5.3% in 2006-07 to 5.6% (1.8%) of the total workforce in 2008-09. In comparison to the national average. Despite showing an increase in numbers in 2008/09 the Authority is still well below the national average and below the minority working population in this area. Further initiatives are being considered following the evaluation of the recent recruitment process.
- Data on ethnicity, religion and sexuality has been affected by a number of authorities not recording this information. Members are advised that this Authority collects the information covering all the strands of diversity although it is self-declared.

7.5 Recruitment

Note that where applicable, the figures for this Authority are provided in () for comparison purposes.

- The percentage of women joiners in the operational sector has gone up from 9.5% in 2007-2008 to 10.6 % in 2008-09 (17%). In 2008-09 there were ten authorities where women comprised 15% or more of all those joining the operational sector. However there were six who did not appoint any women to firefighter roles.
- Minority ethnic recruits comprised nearly 7% of all those who joined the Service in 2008-09 (6%). This compares to 7.9 per cent of joiners in 2007-08, although, it has to be noted that a larger proportion of 'Not Stated' data was recorded in 2008-09 than the previous year.
- In 2008-09, 7.2% (8.6%) of all recruits to the uniformed sector were from minority ethnic backgrounds, compared to nearly 7% for corporate staff.
- There were nine authorities where people from minority ethnic backgrounds comprised more than 7% of those joining the Service and ten who did not appoint anyone from a minority ethnic background.

- In 2008-09, 52 people with a disability, 67 people of a religion different from Christian or 'None' and 42 people who stated themselves to be gay, bisexual, lesbian or bisexual joined the national Service. However, the results for religion and sexual orientation have been affected by the high proportion of 'not stated' records.

7.6 Progression

Note that where applicable, the figures for this Authority are provided in () for comparison purposes.

- In 2008-09 82% of women in operational roles were employed at firefighter level compared to 66% of men, whilst 1.7% of women were at station manager level compared to 3.8% of men. Only five women were recorded as being Brigade Manager level including one from this Authority.
- In this Authority, out of the 44 women employed in operational roles 21 (48%) are employed in a role above that of firefighter.
- The percentage of women in the top five per cent of earners was 10.4% (13.9%) compared to 3.4% (5%) of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds.

7.7 Retention

- In 2008-09 women and staff from minority ethnic backgrounds have not left the operational sector at appreciably higher rates than white men.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 In respect of the conclusions drawn in the Report, the range of initiatives to support equality and diversity across authorities is varied both in its scope and sophistication; however, the overall picture from the statistics and questionnaire returns is generally positive.
- 8.2 The 2008-09 statistical information provided shows that performance on equality and diversity in employment remains fairly mixed across the service. While a number of authorities are doing well in some areas and less well in others, a few seem to be performing well across the broader range of equality and diversity issues.
- 8.3 The general direction indicated by the statistical data is towards greater diversity but this continues to be more evident at the junior levels than in middle or senior management levels.
- 8.4 Since the publication of the 2009 Report the number of authorities which have achieved Level Three or above of the Equality Standard for Local Government has risen from 12 to 35.

8.5 There is a wealth of information in this years Report and the Chief Fire Officer is considering the wealth of data to determine further good practice / exceptional performance that may be useful in this Authority in order to continue to improve performance in future years.

8.6 Members are advised that there was a limited publication in 'hard copy' of the Report to keep costs to a minimum however the report is available on the intranet of from the Chief Fire Officer.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 Equality and diversity initiatives and key work in relation to performance in this area is risk assessed as part of the performance management/planning process. Risk Plans are developed for actions within the Human Resources Level Three Plan as appropriate.

9.2 Progress against actions identified to minimise / eliminate risks is monitored on a regular basis and reported at HR L&D Functional Management Team.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific financial implications in relation to this report.

11. DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The national Report 2009 highlights progress authorities have made against the National Strategy supporting the Service in striving to become a fully inclusive organisation, championing equality and diversity in all aspects of its work.

11.2 The Authority continues in the proactive working towards stretch targets and developing initiatives to improve its performance against the National Strategy having a positive impact on equality and diversity across the Service.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Members are requested to:

- a) Note the contents of this report and comment as appropriate;
- b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The undermentioned Background Papers relate to the subject matter of the above report:

Creating the Safest Community

- Communities for Local Government FRS Equality and Diversity National Strategy 2008 – 2011.
- Communities for Local Government FRS Equality and Diversity Report 2009.
- Fire Service Circular 79/2009, Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Report 2010 – Questionnaire.
- Communities for Local Government FRS Equality and Diversity Report 2010.

