

Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

Equality Scheme

1st April 2009 – 31st March 2010



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EQUALITY SCHEME

FOREWORD

We are pleased to introduce our Single Equality Scheme (SES) which incorporates all the responsibilities that we must meet as both an employer and service provider. This single scheme reflects our obligations under Race, Disability and Gender Equality duties as well as the other strands of equality legislation – sexual orientation, religion or belief and age.

The Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) value diversity both within the organisation and across the communities that we serve. We want to deliver a committed, modern, effective service which is transparent, inclusive and respects and understands differences. Since individual equality schemes were introduced, significant progress has been made by this Authority towards meeting the needs of specific communities, demonstrating the dedication and actions of staff in making real progress. This is further reflected in the Authority achieving:

- Level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government
- The 'Two Ticks' Disability Symbol User
- Stonewall Workplace Champions

This document is intended to be a live document, responding to new legislation, reviewing our performance, responding to our ambitions and the changing needs of our developing communities. It is also our public commitment to ensuring that we actually fulfil all that is required from us, a commitment that is supported by Members of the Authority, Senior Management and endorsed by all staff.

INTRODUCTION

The SES has been developed in partnership with the four Fire and Rescue Authority's across the North East of England. Our organisations share the key objectives detailed in this Scheme.

The SES is a public commitment of how we plan to meet the duties placed upon us by the equality legislation and how we plan to meet the needs and wishes of local people and our staff. The legislation which places specific duties upon us is:

- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000,
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Sex Discrimination Act as amended by the Equality Act 2006

The Authority has made a strategic commitment to adopting a SES. The Scheme also includes actions on age, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

The reasons for this include:

- a recognition that inequalities are rarely experienced in isolation, but are often interdependent;
- a wish to focus on the 'whole picture' when planning and delivering services;
- a commitment to making the most of resources and investment.

This SES sets out how the Authority recognises the differences between people, and sets out how we aim to ensure that (as far as possible) any gaps and inequalities are identified and addressed.

Consideration of Human Rights is an important factor in the production of this Scheme. An appreciation of how the principles of Human Rights apply to Equality is vital to achieving the aims and objectives outlined in this Scheme. Human Rights are the umbrella over all of our aims, objectives and actions towards addressing inequality and promoting diversity.

The Authority is also a major employer within the North East. The needs and aspirations of our staff will vary according to individual circumstances and we recognise that choices relating to employment with us must not be affected by race, disability, gender, age, religion or belief or by sexual orientation. The diversity of our workforce has many benefits for us all, and allows us to deliver the very best services to the communities of Tyne & Wear.

The SES is a live document, which will be regularly reviewed and strengthened. Ongoing work is also taking place to explore how best to allow stakeholders to hold the Authority to account for the commitments made, and to increase involvement and ownership in the SES.

OUR VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

Our Vision for the community will be achieved by providing the people of Tyne and Wear with the services they need, to the highest possible standard;

“Creating the Safest Community”.

Our Mission will help us to secure this vision

“To save life, reduce risk, provide humanitarian services and protect the environment”.

To be successful in realising our Vision and Mission, we will focus on four corporate goals:

Goal One: To prevent loss of life and injury from fires and other emergencies and promote community wellbeing

Goal Two: To respond appropriately to the risk

Goal Three: To plan and prepare for exceptional events, and

Goal Four: To deliver a modern, effective service, ensuring value for money with staff who reflect the communities we serve

The Authority has also adopted the following **Core Values** that underpin the recognition of diversity and equality in the community, employment and service delivery.

We value SERVICE to the COMMUNITY by:

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve
- Striving for excellence in all we do

We value all our EMPLOYEES by practising and promoting:

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- Personal development
- Co-operative and inclusive working

We value DIVERSITY in the Service and Community by:

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Providing different solutions for differing needs and expectations
- Removing barriers to employment and progression within the Service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

We value IMPROVEMENT at all levels in the Service by:

- Accepting responsibility for our performance
- Being open-minded
- Considering criticism thoughtfully
- Learning from our experience
- Consulting others

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Equality and fairness forms a key part of the European and current Government's agenda. As such, there has been a significant increase in legislation relating to equality and fairness issues over recent years.

In 1999 the Home Office placed increased emphasis on equality and fairness issues in the Fire Service as a result of the publication of the McPherson report following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. This led to a Thematic Review by HM Fire Service Inspectorate into equality and fairness in the Fire Service, with the report published in September 1999.

Following on from the recommendations of the thematic review, the Home Office then published national Equal Opportunities Action Plans "Toward Diversity – Promoting Cultural Change 1 and 2". The action plans outlined the steps that the Fire Service had to take to achieve measurable and sustainable improvements in equality and fairness.

The Authority has worked hard to make significant progress in the area of equality and diversity. We have adopted a set of core values and are very aware of our equality and diversity commitments. We have also undertaken various initiatives, worked regionally and have achieved Level 4 of the Local Government Equality Standard, making good progress in improving service delivery to our local communities.

Notwithstanding the good work, it has been recognised nationally that equality and diversity has yet to be embedded fully within all policies, procedures and practices and across all functions. This brought about the development of a National Equality and Diversity Strategy. This ten year strategy, 2008-2018, aims to meet these challenges to bring real, radical and lasting change to the Fire and Rescue Service.

The national strategy was informed by extensive stakeholder involvement, taking account of previous documents such as the Thematic Review, Toward Diversity Action Plans 1 & 2 and the leadership scoping study 'Bridging the Gap'.

The Strategy sets out a vision and the goals in 5 priority areas, which Authorities must meet by 2018 as set out below. The four Fire and Rescue Authority's in the North East Region have worked together to produce a gap analysis of the 5 priorities and an action plan to ensure implementation and the opportunity for joint working and collaboration.

1. Leadership and promoting inclusion
2. Accountability
3. Effective service delivery and community engagement
4. Employment and training
5. Evaluation and sharing good practice

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, COMMITMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

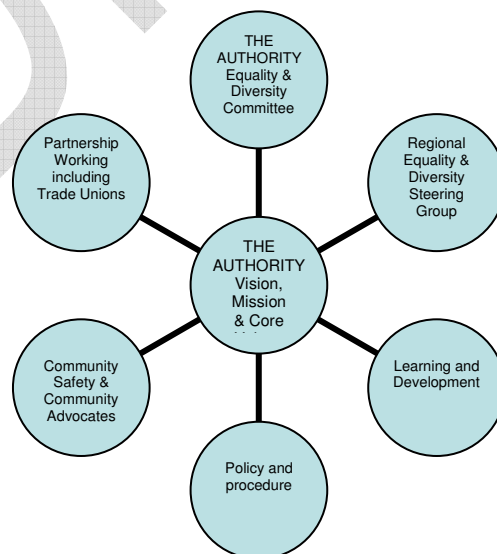
The Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law, within appropriate professional standards and ensuring that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, within a Best Value framework.

The governance framework primarily includes systems and processes by which the Authority directs and controls its activities and engages with the community. It also enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services. The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is based on an ongoing process designed to:

- Identify and prioritise risks to the achievement of the Authorities policies, aims and objectives
- Evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

On a day to day basis the Authority delegates responsibility to The Chief Fire Officer, supported by the Strategic Management Team, who are responsible for managing each function within the Service. The organisational structure of Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Authority and the members of the Strategic Management Team can be viewed at www.twfire.gov.uk

The structure and management of service delivery continues to evolve to reflect our priorities and the demands of the National Fire and Rescue Service agenda. This is reflected in the equality and diversity structure, illustrated below.



A NEW APPROACH

As a public authority, we have general duties to promote equal opportunities relating to race, disability and gender and to remove discrimination. The following three pieces of legislation are central to our SES:

- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and 2005
- Gender Equality Act 2006
- Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) 2000

The following additional legislation is relevant and has influenced our SES:

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

In addition, the proposed Equality Bill will contain a new streamlined Equality Duty to replace the race, disability and gender equality duties, which will also cover gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

Within the Authority we already carry out Equality Impact Assessments across the six equality strands and believe that this inclusive approach with the development of a SES is a practical and proactive way forward to assist in areas of service delivery and employment.

MONITORING & REPORTING OF PERFORMANCE

Within the National Fire & Rescue Service Equality & Diversity Strategy 2008-2018 Fire and Rescue Authorities will need to provide evidence of progress with regard to service delivery, employment practices and corporate provisions (procurement etc). This evidence will need to be submitted to Communities and Local Government (CLG) annually for inclusion in the published Equality & Diversity report, the first of which was published in April 2009.

Diversity monitoring is the collection of statistical data from a number of sources, including application forms, surveys and questionnaires in order to measure performance and improvements made over time in relation to diversity within the workforce and its' community.

By monitoring across all six strands of diversity the Authority will not only be able to meet its' statutory duties, but will also be better placed to deliver our services to the communities of Tyne & Wear, thorough increased understanding and focused use of resources. Additionally, monitoring will also enable us to better support our staff, identifying any significant differences across the organisation and assisting us in improving our policies and procedures.

It is recognised that monitoring is a challenging area and that some multiple sources of data may already exist, both internally and externally. We will work to streamline systems in order to achieve more accurate monitoring information.

Collection of data may be especially challenging in some areas of our work, for example at the scene of an incident, where it may be difficult to gather information, with some areas being both sensitive and personal.

Whilst it may be difficult to collect some aspects of data, the Authority are committed to making progress across all six strands and will, where appropriate, take a holistic approach with data from a range of different sources, including Local Strategic Partnerships, community census and demographic data provided both locally and nationally.

Reports will be made to the following groups accordingly:

Communities and Local Government	Annually as a minimum
Members of the Authority	Annually as a minimum
Regional Management Board	At each meeting
Senior Management Team	At each meeting
Functional Management Team	At each meeting
E&D Committee	At each meeting
Regional E&D Steering Group	At each meeting

PROCUREMENT

This is an essential element of building social and community cohesion as well as promoting equality of opportunity for service users and staff. We will use our position as a significant purchaser of goods and services to ensure that suppliers and agents we engage with do not compromise our approach to equality and diversity.

Our suppliers must themselves demonstrate a commitment to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. We must also monitor and check that all purchasing of equipment regularly used by the Authority has been Equality Impact Assessed to ensure we meet the needs of all staff. Equally where possible we should attempt to ensure that suppliers and contractors reflect all sectors of our local community especially BME businesses, the voluntary sectors or SMEs (Small Medium Enterprises). To this end the Authority works proactively with Sunderland City Council and are members of the Regional Centres of Excellence Procurement Programme (RCEPP).

YOUR INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At national level CLG have committed to involve community and voluntary groups in policy development including members of minority ethnic, religious, disabled, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, men and women and all age groups.

The Authority accepts that our community and employees are integral to all that we do and recognises the importance of engaging, consulting and involving them. The views of members of our community and partners are important to us. They inform our planning and give a clear indication of areas for improvement.

The Authority has a consultation policy under which employees, Authority Members, members of the public, partnership workers and other stakeholders have the opportunity to provide information to us and participate in questionnaires, focus groups and other consultation and involvement events.

Consultation exercises / surveys are co-coordinated by the Consultation Team within our Corporate Development department. In addition to the consultation carried out with the above groups, consultation with hard to reach groups is also undertaken. The team is also responsible for maintaining clear links to the Communication Strategy and the production and maintenance of the Authority's internal and external web sites.

It is recognised that many members of the community are not recipients of our service therefore securing successful engagement has historically been challenging. It is therefore important that engagement through other bodies e.g. community safety forums, local government and Trade Unions continue to be developed.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to comment on how the Authority should approach the SES or make suggestions as to its contents or plans please send them via e-mail to enquiries@twfire.gov.uk or alternatively write to:

Diversity and Equality Advisor
Service HQ
PO Box 1196
Nissan Way
Sunderland
SR5 9BL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been developed as a tool for ensuring that equality, social inclusion and community cohesion issues can be considered when drawing up policies or proposals which affect the delivery of services, the carrying out of our functions and in our employment practices.

EIAs are carried out across the six strands. The EIA are formulated from the point a policy is developed and assist the Authority to;

- Determine how the FRS's policies and practices, or new proposals, will impact or affect different communities, especially those groups or communities who experience inequality, discrimination, social exclusion or disadvantage;
- Measure whether policies or proposals will have a negative or positive effect on different communities;
- Make decisions about current and future services and practices and gain a fuller knowledge and understanding of the possible outcomes for different communities or customer groups; and
- Develop ways of monitoring and reviewing the effects of new or changing policies or proposals if they are introduced.

A comprehensive procedure is in place to EIA our services and further advice and guidance can be obtained from the Diversity & Equality Advisor or the Diversity and Resources Manager.

The Authority is committed to ensuring EIA's are undertaken and will maintain suitable systems to ensure all stakeholders can access and view the assessments. Audits of EIA's will be undertaken at least annually, to ensure that our policy is being adhered to.

WHERE TO FIND THE OUTCOMES OF OUR PERFORMANCE

The Authority aims to provide a co-ordinated, consistent and targeted approach to communications and to ensure a high standard of considered and well timed effective communications.

Information on all aspects of our Service, including this Scheme, is available in a number of formats:

1. On our website - Information available on our website can be downloaded or printed free of charge.
2. By post - Hard copies of the information contained in this guide may be requested and will be supplied free of charge for personal use. Requests for multiple copies may attract a charge to cover administrative costs.
3. In person - Information contained in this guide may be viewed, by appointment, at our Headquarters in Barmston Mere, Sunderland Arrangements to view or copy information may be made by negotiation with the Record Management Officer by emailing: susan.traynor@twfire.gov.uk or telephone 0191 444 1541.

We routinely publish as much information as possible, with a few exceptions, including where:

- we do not hold the information;
- the information is exempt under one of the FOI exemptions or Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) exceptions, or its release is prohibited under another statute;
- the information is archived, out of date or otherwise inaccessible; or,
- it would be impractical or resource-intensive to prepare the material for routine release.

If you require information in an alternative format or language please contact us, and we will endeavour to meet your needs.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Learning and Development Department support strategic goals "To Deliver a Modern, Effective Service, ensuring value for money with staff who reflect the communities we serve" and "Plan and Prepare for Exceptional Events". To achieve this, the skills base and potential of all employees is developed, to maximise their contribution to delivering high quality, efficient and effective service. The Authority has attracted the prestigious "Investors in People" in recognition of the commitment to Learning and Development.

The Workforce Development systems are inclusive and accessible by all staff within the organisation, enabling a fair and equal approach to learning and

development for all staff in line with our Core Values. Staff are also supported by a Personal Development Plan (PDP) to identify individual learning and development needs and encourage continuous professional development.

This ensures personnel, whatever their position within the organisation, are prepared for their roles and responsibilities and provided with knowledge, skills and understanding to perform their role efficiently, effectively and safely. It also ensures that all employees are encouraged and provided with an opportunity to maximise their potential and widen their skills base.

Our clear Equality and Diversity Training strategy is an integral element of our Workforce Development process, which also includes Equality and Diversity induction training for all new employees. As a key part of our Firefighter training course, all trainees receive one full day Equality & Diversity training. This development is also an integral element at all management levels. Our Supervisory Managers programme includes Managing Diversity as a compulsory element.

Our Strategic managers, Diversity & Equality Advisor and key managers proactively attend appropriate events in order to maintain and enhance their personal and professional continuous development.

Over 80% of our employees have currently completed a distance learning booklet, with the development of an interactive Diversity and Equality e-learning package nearing completion. In addition many of our employees have attended an Islam and Muslim Awareness day and Disability Equality Awareness training courses have also taken place. Stonewall master classes have been held at headquarters as has awareness raising around dyslexia. A recent initiative has been Shared Futures training which considers asylum seekers and refugees.

Within the North East Fire and Rescue Authority's a range of regional activities are being undertaken to ensure the exchange of best practice and utilisation of training resources to ensure high quality delivery and value for money.

OUR WORKFORCE PROFILE

The Authority is required to ensure that the Management Information System (MIS) stores only accurate and up to date personal information that is held in confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act. In addition the Authority is required to have a consistent and robust system of collecting data to meet its' statutory requirement for the provision of workforce data.

Diversity monitoring is the collection of statistical data from application and other forms, surveys or questionnaires in order to measure performance and improvements made over time in relation to diversity within the workforce.

During early 2009 the Authority has undertaken an 'employee census in order to ensure it has accurate and up to date personal information. In order to

support the equality and diversity strategy monitoring information has been requested across all six equality strands.

On an annual basis the Authority is required to submit monitoring reports on the following areas across all six strands, below are the results of the 2009 census;

- The number of staff in post - 1238
- Those involved in grievance - 1
- Those who benefit or suffer detriment as a result of appraisal - 0
- Those who are subject to disciplinary procedures - 6
- Those who cease employment - 67

COMPLAINTS

In line with stated objectives of the Citizen's Charter, The Authority has in place effective means of monitoring complaints to help us to ensure we are providing the best service we can to the public and identify any areas for development / improvement.

The Authority is pleased to report that it receives few complaints from members of the community however all complaints are treated as being genuine and consequently are taken seriously. Complaints received from whatever source will be investigated in a full and unbiased manner

A full written response will be made to all complainants where contact details have been provided. All complaints should be addressed to the Chief Fire Officer in the first instance either via the internet or in writing:

The Chief Fire Officer
Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Nissan Way
Barmston Mere
Sunderland
SR5 3QY

YOUR VIEWS ARE IMPORTANT TO US

To give your views on any of our services, policies or plans please contact:

Diversity and Resources Manager, Tel: 0191 444 1500
Text 0800 7311 888

Write to us at the address given above or

E-mail enquiries@twfire.gov.uk

ACTION PLANS FOR A POSITIVE FUTURE

This SES is not a stand alone document. It is integral to plans at all levels within the Authority and forms a part of our performance monitoring systems, for example the Equality Framework for Local Government and Comprehensive Area Assessment.

In general terms we will continue to;

- Involve members of the community in our decision making
- Encourage and welcome people to comment on our services
- Have effective communication systems with our community
- Have effective communication systems with our employees
- Hold open days at our Community Fire Stations
- Continue to educate and raise awareness of diversity with our employees
- Continue to carry out Equality Impact Assessments
- Publish and report on our activities and progress
- Reduce the impact of fire and other risks by prevention, protection and response
- Work in line with our Core Values
- Meet and exceed our legal obligations with regard to equality and diversity

OUR SIX DIVERSITY PLANS FOLLOW

It is recognised that the three Schemes currently in place for gender, race and disability have had differing reporting and review dates. In order to bring the six strands of equality into line under one Scheme the review timeline will be on an annual basis from 1st April to 31st March of each year. This will enable accurate and timely reporting to CLG, the Fire Authority, employees and members of our community.

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DISABILITY

The Authority is proud to use the Employment Service 'Two Ticks' Disability Symbol, which reflects our positive commitment to the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled people. This is further reflected in the wording of all relevant policies and procedures and in the practices of all managers and employees involved in the recruitment, selection, training and career development of employees.

Commitment 1

To ensure all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy are progressed to the assessment stage of the recruitment process.

Commitment 2

To ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what the Authority can do to make sure they can develop and use their abilities.

Commitment 3

When employees become disabled, we will make every effort to ensure that they can stay in employment.

Commitment 4

To take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make the organisational commitments work.

Commitment 5

Each year, to review the five commitments and the support provided to our disabled employees, to enable us to plan and improve our provision and communicate this to employees and Jobcentre Plus.

OUR WORKFORCE PROFILE

In our 2009 employee census information was requested across all six equality strands (further details can be found at page 14). The data collected in relation to disability was as follows:

- The Authority currently employs 32 people who have self declared a disability as defined under DDA.
- 19 are employed in corporate roles, and
- 13 are employed in operational roles.

WORKPLACE SUPPORT

Within the Authority our Occupational Health Unit (OHU) team, situated in purpose built accessible facilities within the grounds of the Headquarters, are on hand to provide occupational health care, support, guidance and advice.

The overall strategy of OHU is to achieve a fit and healthy workforce that delivers a quality and effective Fire and Rescue service. The unit supports this aim with its primary purpose of preventing occupational ill health within Tyne & Wear and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Authority's. In addition it aims to provide health promotion in the interests of early detection and prevention of ill health.

The OHU supports the Human Resources team, Diversity & Equality Advisor and managers by providing confidential appropriate and professional information with regard to sickness absence monitoring and reasonable work adjustments in order to maintain an experienced workforce and reduce ill health related retirements.

An integral part of the OHU support mechanism is the Welfare Officer whose role is to provide a comprehensive counselling and support service to all current employees and to co-ordinate the Trauma Support Team service.

The OHU team frequently contributes to surveys and information requests from other Fire and Rescue Authority's, the National Disabled Fire Association and organisations such as Diabetes UK. The team also assists in requests received under the Freedom of Information Act in relation to disability.

The unit will also assist individuals with Personal Emergency Egress Plans (PEEPS) as required.

SERVICE DELIVERY

The Authority is clearly a service provider as well as an employer and as such its buildings and service delivery must be accessible to everyone. Considerations of access issues are particularly important at the early design stages of any new buildings and British Standard 8300 covers building design.

Individuals have different access needs for example parents with pushchairs, people requiring wheelchair access or who may have sensory impairments.

A sustainable environment is one which is as accessible as possible to everyone and an 'access for all' approach results in a friendlier environment which helps to prevent people from being excluded from places and activities. We are pleased to reflect this sustainable improvement in the action we have taken this year.

HARASSMENT

Organisations may be held responsible for the actions of their staff as well as the staff being individually responsible for their own actions. If harassment takes place in the workplace or at a time and/or place associated with the workplace, for example a work related social gathering, the organisation may be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation unless it can show that it took reasonable steps to prevent harassment. Where it is found that an Individual has subjected another to harassment, they too may be ordered to pay compensation.

VICTIMISATION

Victimisation is when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment. They may become labeled “troublemaker”, denied promotion or training, or be “sent to Coventry” by their colleagues. If this happens or if organisations fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they will be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation. Individuals who victimise others may also be ordered to pay compensation.

APPEARANCE AT WORK

The Authority has a Standards of Dress Policy that encompasses the needs of disabled people.

Example of our Activities include;

- Delivered additional Equality Impact Assessment Training
- Ensured that disability equality is included in all of our Equality and Diversity Committee meetings.
- Our Neighbourhood Fire Team in Gateshead have worked with Vision Sense and other community stakeholders to actively prevent disability hate crime and provide smoke alarms and escape route information.
- Sponsored and hosted the Vision Sense annual conference over 2 days at our Headquarters.
- Worked with Vision Sense to deliver Confident service for Disabled Customers training days.
- Following public consultation we have added a band of yellow paint to the external steps at our Community Fire Station located in Swalwell.
- Introduced a roving microphone to the conference area at our Headquarters in Barmston Mere
- Fixed a handrail to the stair area at our Community Fire Station in Fulwell.
- Welcomed members of the Better Days group as an integral part of the Confident Service for Disabled Customers training days.

- Arranged visits to Headquarters for the Tyne & Wear Autistic Society. Providing information on personal safety in independent living.
- Displayed Registered Assistance Dogs Only logo stickers to our external doors to show we welcome assistance dogs in our workplace.
- Purchased drinking bowls and identified a disposal area for use by assistance dogs.
- Following Station User feedback we have introduced door retainers at South Shields Community Fire Station to facilitate improved access for users of wheelchairs.
- Following Station User feedback we have identified an appropriate parking place for mobility scooters at South Shields Community Fire Station.
- Worked with vulnerable adults to assist with personal safety, smoke alarms and evacuation plans.
- Provided a portable hearing loop within our Safetyworks!
- Provided a portable hearing loop on board our Community Outreach vehicle.
- Encouraged our employees to self declare disability on the Employee Census form.
- Continued to provide statistical information on applications for employment to the Diversity & Equality Committee and Regional Recruitment Committee, including disability.
- Checked that all of our hearing loops are working correctly.

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2009 -2010

Action	Responsibility	Timeline
Evaluate the Confident service for Disabled Customers training days	D&E Advisor	June 2009
Ensure that disability is included in proposed E-learning packages	D&E Advisor	June 09
Undertake further access audits to ensure our buildings meet a minimum of BS8300	D&E Advisor Estates Department	December 2009
Review the signage in our buildings especially our Headquarters	D&E Advisor Estates Department	December 2009
Maintain and improve our community contacts with organisations such as Vision Sense, Better Days and T&W Autistic Society	D&E Advisor	December 2009
Attend relevant training, conferences and seminars in relation to disability	D&E Advisor OHU	December 2009
Continue to challenge prejudice and discrimination	All employees	December 09
Continue to undertake Equality Impact Assessments that consider potential impact around disability	All employees	December 09



RACE EQUALITY

This document contains the review of the Race Equality Scheme for the Authority. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires public authorities to produce a Race Equality Scheme which indicates how a public authority will meet the general and specific duties as laid down by the Act. The duty also requires the Authority to annually:-

- Review its Action Plan;
- Produce employment statistics in relation to ethnicity; and
- Review its Policies and Procedures

The specific duty falls into two main headings:-

POLICY AND SERVICE DELIVERY

- To assess and decide whether a function or policy is relevant to the general duty.
- To assess and consult on the likely impact of proposed policies and changes to existing policies.
- To establish processes for monitoring any adverse impact.
- To publish results of assessments consultation and monitoring carried out.
- To ensure that the public has access to information and public services.
- To train staff to carry out their duties.

HARASSMENT

Organisations may be held responsible for the actions of their staff as well as the staff being individually responsible for their own actions. If harassment takes place in the workplace or at a time and/or place associated with the workplace, for example a work related social gathering, the organisation may be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation unless it can show that it took reasonable steps to prevent harassment. Where it is found that an Individual has subjected another to harassment, they too may be ordered to pay compensation.

VICTIMISATION

Victimisation is when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment. They may become labeled “troublemaker”, denied promotion or training, or be “sent to Coventry” by their colleagues. If this happens or if organisations fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they will be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation. Individuals who victimise others may also be ordered to pay compensation.

OUR WORKFORCE PROFILE

In our 2009 employee census information was requested across all six equality strands (further details can be found at page 14). The data collected in relation to race was as follows:

The Authority currently employs:

Corporate

- Asian or Asian British/Bangladeshi – 1
- Asian or Asian British/Pakistani – 1
- Asian or Asian British/Indian – 1
- Black or Black British/Other Black – 1
- Chinese or Other Ethnic Group/Chinese – 1
- White British – 298
- White Irish – 1
- White Other – 2

Control Staff

- White British – 47
- White Other – 1

Retained

- White British – 22

Operational

- Black or Black British/Caribbean – 1
- Black or Black British/Other Black – 2
- Mixed White/Asian – 6
- Other Mixed – 2
- White British – 890
- White Irish – 1
- White Other – 3
- Not stated – 2

Leavers

Between 1st April 2008 and 31 March 2009:

- 67 people left the organisation
- All were White British.

Those Involved in Discipline or Grievance

Between 1st April 2008 and 31 March 2009:

- 6 people were involved in discipline cases of which 1 was 'Other Mixed' and 5 were 'White British'.

RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

The Authority have held a number of events in order to inform our diverse communities about career opportunities with the Fire and Rescue Authority.

These events are a part of our 'positive action' strategy which can be taken legally to encourage disadvantaged groups who have been under-represented in work areas to consider applying for or receive specific training for a particular vocation.

Action can be taken to encourage people from particular groups to take advantage of opportunities for work and training. This can be done when under representation of particular groups has been identified in the previous year. This is clearly the case within the Fire and Rescue Service both nationally and locally.

Positive action is often confused with positive discrimination. Positive discrimination, which generally means employing someone because they come from an under-represented group in spite of whether they have the relevant skills and qualifications, is unlawful.

Positive action or any similar recruitment initiative does not guarantee that anyone of a specific sex or race will gain employment.

Detailed information about career opportunities can be found on our web site, www.twfire.gov.uk

FESTIVAL RECOGNITION

The communities of Tyne & Wear are diverse in many ways. In order to gain a better understanding of the communities we serve we have launched a Festival Recognition Programme, to promote understanding of the major festivals that are celebrated by our communities.

The celebrations are an opportunity for staff to join in. Many are based upon an open door policy, and some are by invitation. The events include information on the festival and encourage music, dance, and culinary delights which are traditionally associated with each celebration. If you would like to participate in the programme or would like further information please contact enquiries@twfire.gov.uk

Our Key Activities:

- Ensured that race equality is included in all of our Equality and Diversity Committee meetings.
- Delivered Equality Impact Assessment training
- Continued to ensure the availability of Introduction to Islam and the Muslim Culture training is available to all employees via their Personal Development Plans
- Continued to monitor and take action on attacks on Fire Crews including racist incidents
- Continued to monitor and take action where Fire Crews have attended incidents that may have racist intent
- Encouraged our employees to accurately self declare their race on the Employee Census form
- Continued to provide statistical information on applications for employment to the Diversity & Equality Committee and Regional Recruitment Committee, including Ethnicity
- Continued to promote the Fire & Rescue Service Core Values to underpin our Vision and Mission
- Ensured that our Emergency Response Control staff continue to receive initial and routine training in the use of LanguageLine, the telephone translation provider
- Increased the number of Community Safety Advocates we employ
- Hosted Shared Futures training in relation to asylum seekers and refugees
- Introduced a Festival Recognition Programme
- Attended a BECON event as part of International Women's Week
- Distributed Myth Buster leaflets produced by the North East Strategic Migration Partnership
- Distributed Report Racism leaflets produced by the Sunderland ARCH team
- Distributed Report Racism leaflets produced by the Newcastle ARCH team
- Hosted numerous events on our community stations organised by our Community Advocates
- Published articles in the internal Regional Harmony magazine
- Published articles on the intranet

TRANSLATIONS INTO OTHER LANGUAGES

We are pleased to work with individuals or groups of people who require our information in different formats or languages. An example of this included a request received last year to provide one translation into Farsi.

MONITORING OF RACIST INCIDENTS

A monitoring system is in place for Firefighters who have attended incidents that may have a racist element.

During the past year the number of incidents recorded was 10, of which 9 had involvement by Northumbria police.

Racism in any form involving or in the vicinity of any employee will not be tolerated and will be reported to the police accordingly. This equally applies to every resident and visitor within our Service response area who is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect.

RACE ACTION PLAN 2009-2010

Action	Responsibility	Timeline
Host an employment conference specifically to engage with the BME community and those who provide careers advice	Recruitment Team Regional Team	17 June 2009
Work with the North East Refugee Services to provide training and information to our Service Delivery Team	Diversity Advisor	30 June 09
Introduce a Community Engagement Team in line with the Integrated Risk Management Plan	Strategic Management Team	September 2009
Continue with positive recruitment initiatives	Recruitment Team Regional Team	October 2009
Work with our colleagues within the Region to identify any potential barriers which may prevent applications for employment	Regional Recruitment Team D&E Advisor Recruitment Manager HR Manager FBU/UNISON Advocates Regional E&D Policy Advisor	November 09
Challenge prejudice and discrimination	All employees	Continuous
Continue to monitor and report racist incidents	D&E Advisor All employees	31 st March 2010
Continue to undertake EIA giving due regard to race	All policy writers	31 st March 2010

Continue to provide EIA training giving appropriate information on race	D&E Advisor Learning & Development	31 st March 2010
Actively engage with the community and learn and take action from their feedback	Prevention & Education Advocates D&E Advisor Service Delivery team	31 st March 2010
Review the type of information we provide and how we provide it	Prevention & Education Advocates D&E Advisor Service Delivery team	31 st March 2010
Actively promote our Community Fire Stations as an accessible place for meetings	Station Managers Advocates D&E Advisor All employees	31 st March 2010



GENDER EQUALITY – INCLUDING TRANSGENDER

The Gender Equality Duty [GED] requires the Authority, when carrying out its functions, to promote equality between men and women and eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment. This Authority will continue to develop policies, design services and have employment practices that consider the different needs of women and men, including transsexual employees and transsexual job applicants. It also applies to any services that have been contracted out.

OUR WORKFORCE PROFILE

In our 2009 employee census information was requested across all six equality strands (further details can be found at page 14). The data collected in relation to gender was as follows:

- Male employees – 1031
- Female employees – 255

Operational

- Male – 854
- Female – 44

Corporate

- Male – 133
- Female – 176

Control

- Male – 23
- Female – 35

Retained

- Male – 21

Top 5% Earners

- We employ 11 females in the top 5% of earners.

Those Leaving

Between 1st April 2008 and 31st March 2009

- 67 people left the organisation
- 14 female
- 53 male.

Those Involved in Discipline or Grievance

Between 1st April 2008 and 31 March 2009:

- 6 people were involved in discipline cases of which all were male.
- 1 female was involved in a grievance case.

RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

The Authority has held a number of events in order to inform the diverse community about career opportunities with the Fire and Rescue Service.

These events are a part of our 'positive action' strategy which can be taken legally to encourage groups who have been under-represented in work areas to consider applying for or receive special training for a particular vocation.

Section 47 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 allows for the use of 'positive action' in a number of specific circumstances. A number of methods may be designed to counteract the effects of past discrimination and to help abolish stereotyping.

Action can be taken to encourage people from particular groups to take advantage of opportunities for work and training. This can be done when under representation of particular groups has been identified in the previous year. This is clearly the case within the Fire and Rescue Service both nationally and locally.

Positive action is often confused with positive discrimination. Positive discrimination, which generally means employing someone because they come from an under-represented group in spite of whether they have the relevant skills and qualifications, is unlawful.

Positive action or any similar recruitment initiative does not guarantee that anyone of a specific sex or race will gain employment.

Detailed information about career opportunities can be found on our web site, www.twfire.gov.uk

HARASSMENT

Organisations may be held responsible for the actions of their staff as well as the staff being individually responsible for their own actions. If harassment takes place in the workplace or at a time and/or place associated with the workplace, for example a work related social gathering, the organisation may be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation unless it can show that it took reasonable steps to prevent harassment. Where it is found that an Individual has subjected another to harassment, they too may be ordered to pay compensation.

VICTIMISATION

Victimisation is when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment. They may become labeled “troublemaker”, denied promotion or training, or be “sent to Coventry” by their colleagues. If this happens or if organisations fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they will be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation. Individuals who victimise others may also be ordered to pay compensation.

APPEARANCE AT WORK

The Authority has Standards of Dress Policy that encompasses gender difference including transgender and the needs of people who may be undergoing gender reassignment.

Our Key Activities

- Promoted International Women’s Day
- Supported International Women’s Week
- Ensured that gender equality, including transgender, is discussed at the Equality & Diversity Committee
- Held recruitment initiatives aimed specifically at females in line with current legislation
- Reviewed the style and provision of uniform in order to meet the needs of both males and females
- Introduced the provision of a Portaloo to the incident ground at prolonged activities to afford dignity and respect for all
- Significantly increased the number of female applicants to the Firefighter recruitment process

- Introduced a Childcare Benefit Scheme using salary sacrifice to all employees of the Authority, including same sex partners
- Appointed our first female Assistant Chief Officer
- Continued to encourage our Corporate Staff, who are predominantly female, to undertake the Assessment Development Centres.
- Continued to support 'Networking Women in the Fire Service' events.

GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2009 -2010

Action	Responsibility	Timeline
Be cognisant of the recommendations arising from initiatives and research undertaken by CLG nationally	D&E Advisor E&D Committee	August 2009
Continue with positive recruitment initiatives	Recruitment Team Regional Team	October 2009
Work with the Recruitment Team to develop strategies to increase female representation within the workforce	D&E Advisor E&D Committee	November 2009
Work in accordance with the National E&D Strategy document 2008 - 2018	D&E Advisor E&D Committee Recruitment team L&D team	November 2009
We will be cognisant of the FBU Women's Section report on workplace facilities	D&E Advisor E&D Committee Estates	December 2009
Continue to undertake EIA giving due regard to gender and transgender	All policy writers	31 st March 2010
Continue to provide EIA training giving appropriate information on gender related issues	D&E Advisor Learning & Development	31 st March 2010



RELIGION OR BELIEF

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations came into force in 2003.

These Regulations apply to vocational training and all areas of employment; including recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals and training. They make it unlawful on the grounds of religion or belief to:

- Discriminate directly against anyone. That is, to treat them less favorably than others because of their religion or belief;
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone. That is, to apply a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular religion or belief unless it can be objectively justified;
- Subject someone to harassment. Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment having regard to all the circumstances and the perception of the victim;
- Victimise someone because they have made or intend to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief;
- Discriminate or harass someone in certain circumstances after the working relationship has ended.

Exceptions may be made in very limited circumstances if there is a genuine occupational requirement for the worker to be of a particular religion or belief in order to do a job or to comply with the religious or belief ethos of the organisation.

Religion or belief is defined as being any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief. This does not include any philosophical or political belief unless it is similar to religious belief. It will be for the Employment Tribunals and other Courts to decide whether particular circumstances are covered by the Regulations.

Direct discrimination means that workers or job applicants must not be treated less favorably than others because they follow, are perceived to follow, or do not follow a particular (or any) religion or belief.

For example it is unlawful to:

- decide not to employ someone
- dismiss them
- refuse to provide them with training
- deny them promotion
- give them adverse terms and conditions

because they follow, or do not follow, a particular religion or belief.

Indirect discrimination means that an organisation must not have selection criteria, policies, employment rules or any other practices which although they are applied to all employees, have the effect of disadvantaging people of a particular religion or belief unless the practice can be justified. Indirect discrimination is unlawful whether it is intentional or not.

In contrast to direct discrimination, indirect discrimination will not be unlawful if it can be justified. To justify it, an employer must show that there is a legitimate aim, (i.e. a real business need) and that the practice is proportionate to that aim (i.e. necessary and there is no alternative means available).

HARASSMENT

Organisations may be held responsible for the actions of their staff as well as the staff being individually responsible for their own actions. If harassment takes place in the workplace or at a time and/or place associated with the workplace, for example a work related social gathering, the organisation may be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation unless it can show that it took reasonable steps to prevent harassment. Where it is found that an Individual has subjected another to harassment, they too may be ordered to pay compensation.

VICTIMISATION

Victimisation is when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment. They may become labeled “troublemaker”, denied promotion or training, or be “sent to Coventry” by their colleagues. If this happens or if organisations fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they will be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation. Individuals who victimise others may also be ordered to pay compensation.

RECRUITMENT

The Authority has a robust Recruitment Policy which takes into account all of the Equality and Diversity legislation and current best practice recommendations.

All members of the recruitment panel must undergo interview and selection training which includes Equality and Diversity.

OUR WORKFORCE PROFILE

In our 2009 employee census information was requested across all six equality strands (further details can be found at page 14). The data collected in relation to religion or belief was as follows:

- Agnostic – 1
- Atheist – 3
- Baptist – 1
- Buddhist – 5
- Catholic – 15
- Christadelphian – 1
- Christian – 479
- Humanist – 1
- Jewish – 1
- Methodist – 1
- Muslim – 6
- Pagan – 1
- None – 266
- Not declared – 330

Those Involved in Discipline or Grievance

Between 1st April 2008 and 31 March 2009:

- 1 Muslim and 1 Christian were involved in discipline/grievance.

Those Leaving

Between 1st April 2008 and 31 March 2009 – 67 people left the organisation as detailed below.

- 15 Christian – remainder did not state

APPEARANCE AT WORK

The Authority has an Appearance at Work Policy that encompasses gender difference and the needs of people who wish to dress in accordance with religion or belief.

DIGNITY AND RESPECT FOR EVERYONE

Within our Core Values we recognise that treating everyone with fairness, dignity and respect is key to our success.

For those in the role of an operational firefighter working a shift system overnight working is required. The role of a firefighter also requires high levels of personal hygiene for reasons of Health and Safety especially after attendance at incidents where there has been contact with contaminating substances such as smoke or oil.

To ensure modesty, dignity and respect for everyone our Community Fire Stations have individual rest areas, shower and toilet facilities.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE IN THE WORKPLACE

The Regulations do not say that employers must provide time and facilities for religious or belief observance in the workplace. However, the Authority will work with individuals who request time for observance in the workplace and will provide suitable facilities whenever possible. The provision of suitable facilities also applies to our visitors from the community and those we train.

Employees may request holiday in order to celebrate festivals or attend ceremonies or adjust their working hours by liaising with their line manager.

For those in the role of an operational firefighter Health and Safety is paramount at all times and maintaining hydration levels by drinking water and eating healthily is important. The Authority appreciates that during some religious observance, such as Ramadan, this is not appropriate. The Authority has actively worked with and listened to both our own employees and those we train on these occasions and will where possible provide appropriate support / adjustments.

CHAPLAINS

There are a number of Chaplains from a variety of denominations who are available for personal support, advice and guidance. The Chaplains have a well established network of community contacts across the area and are available to meet with individuals or provide information over the telephone.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

We understand that some religions or beliefs have specific dietary requirements and our Catering Team welcome information from individuals or groups with regard to their needs. The Catering Team has introduced Halal chicken to the menu at Service Headquarters and vegetarian options are always available. If you wish to see the certification please contact information@twfire.gov.uk

FESTIVAL RECOGNITION

The population of Tyne and Wear is quite diverse. Therefore under our community engagement strategy in order to gain a better understanding of the communities we serve, we have launched a Festival Recognition Programme which provides details of all the major festivals that are celebrated by our diverse communities.

The celebrations are an opportunity for staff and visitors to join in and can include music, dance, information and culinary delights. If you would like to participate in the programme or would like further information please contact information@twfire.gov.uk

RELIGION AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN THE WORKPLACE

All of our employees are required and expected to adhere to the Core Values previously outlined in this Scheme.

We understand that some religions do have strong views concerning sexual orientation but most do not advocate persecution of people because of their sexual orientation. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace whatever their sex, race, colour, disability, age, religion or sexual orientation.

Fire and accidents do not discriminate in the community we serve and therefore as responders to emergency situations we provide an equal and suitable service to everyone by cooperative and inclusive working.



AGE

From 1st October 2006 the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations have made it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees, job seekers and trainees because of their age.

The Authority believe that fairness at work and good job performance go hand in hand and that by tackling discrimination, including that of age, helps to attract, motivate and retain staff.

The regulations make it unlawful on the grounds of age to:

- discriminate directly against anyone – that is to treat them less favourably than others because of their age – unless objectively justified
- discriminate indirectly against anyone – that is to apply a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular age unless it can be objectively justified
- subject someone to harassment – that is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them having regard to all the circumstances including the perception of the victim
- victimise someone because they have made or intend to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on grounds of age
- discriminate against someone, in certain circumstances, after the working relationship has ended.

Direct discrimination is less favourable treatment because of someone's age, for example it is unlawful to:

- decide not to employ someone
- dismiss them
- refuse to provide them with training
- deny them promotion
- give them adverse terms and conditions
- retire an employee before the employees usual retirement age (if there is one) or retire an employee before their default retirement age of 65 without an objective justification.

Indirect discrimination means selection criteria, policies, employment rules or any other practices which although they are applied to all employees, have the effect of disadvantaging people of a particular age unless the practice can be justified. Indirect discrimination is unlawful whether it is intentional or not.

HARASSMENT

Organisations may be held responsible for the actions of their staff as well as the staff being individually responsible for their own actions. If harassment takes place in the workplace or at a time and/or place associated with the workplace, for example a work related social gathering, the organisation may be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation unless it can show that it took reasonable steps to prevent harassment. Where it is found that an Individual has subjected another to harassment, they too may be ordered to pay compensation.

VICTIMISATION

Victimisation is when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment. They may become labeled “troublemaker”, denied promotion or training, or be “sent to Coventry” by their colleagues. If this happens or if organisations fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they will be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation. Individuals who victimise others may also be ordered to pay compensation.

DIGNITY AND RESPECT FOR EVERYONE

Within our Core Values we recognise that treating everyone with fairness, dignity and respect is key to our success.

Both our Equality and Diversity policy and the Bullying and Harassment policy include reference to age.

OUR WORKFORCE PROFILE

In our 2009 employee census information was requested across all six equality strands (further details can be found at page 14). The data collected in relation to age was as follows:

Those Leaving

Between 1st April 2008 and 31 March 2009 – 67 people left the organisation; their age profile is detailed below.

➤ 18 - 24	4
➤ 25 - 29	9
➤ 30 - 34	1

➤ 35 - 39	2
➤ 40 - 44	1
➤ 45 - 49	4
➤ 50 - 54	32
➤ 55 - 59	11
➤ Over 60	3

Those Involved in Discipline or Grievance

Between 1st April 2008 and 31 March 2009:

- 5 were aged 25 – 44
- 2 were aged 45 – 64

AGE PROFILE

- Our youngest employee is a male aged 17 years
- Our oldest employee is a female aged 64
- The average age of our employees is 40.95 years

APPEARANCE AT WORK

The Authority has a Standards of Dress Policy that considers the needs of all of our employees.

Our Key Activities

- Worked with older peoples groups at Safetyworks!
- Undertaken an innovative safety campaign, including 'Nag your Gran'.
- Removed potentially discriminatory information requests from our application forms
- Removed potentially discriminatory requirements from job descriptions and person specifications
- Reviewed our Human Resources policies and procedures in line with the legislative requirements
- Established and maintained links with the Gateshead Older Persons Assembly
- Included age within our Equality & Diversity Policy
- Included age within our Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Included age within our Equality & Diversity training
- Included age equality on our Equality & Diversity Committee agenda
- Undertaken Equality Impact Assessments to give due regard to age
- Established and maintained links with the Sure Start project
- Established and maintained links with the Youth Offending Team in Sunderland
- Established and maintained links with Sungate Barnardos
- Worked with the Newcastle Wardens team

- Actively participated in the Fire Team educational project for young people
- Worked on a Community Safety Education programme
- An older persons advocate working in the North Tyneside area

AGE ACTION PLAN 2009 -2010

Action	Responsibility	Timeline
Continue to undertake EIA giving due regard to age	All policy writers	31 st March 2010
Continue to provide EIA training giving appropriate information on age related issues	D&E Advisor Learning & Development	31 st March 2010
Continue to monitor the age of our workforce and job applicants	D&E Advisor E&D Committee Recruitment team	March 2010
Continue to work with the Princes Trust	Princes Trust team	31 st March 2010
Review and evaluate the Fire Team educational programme	Prevention and Education team	31 st March 2010



SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The Authority is proud to be a member of the Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme. This is the employers' forum on sexual orientation issues in the workplace. Organisations which are members of this programme commit to improve their workplace for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.

We are actively working with Stonewall to ensure that our workplace culture, policies, procedures and practices are fully inclusive to our lesbian, gay and bisexual staff and potential employees. To this end we have submitted to the Work Place Equality Index (WEI) for the second year running.

It is recognised that lesbian, gay and bisexual people both at work and in the community may face multiple discrimination and we aim to share good practice which applies across all six of the equality strands.

Our Key Activities

- We have submitted to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and improved our place considerably.
- We have used internal communications about the Stonewall Workplace Equality.
- We use the Stonewall logo on our communications both internally and externally.
- We include lesbian, gay and bi-sexual discussion in our equality and diversity training.
- We include lesbian, gay and bi-sexual discussion on our equality and diversity committee agenda.
- We have invited our staff to apply for a Stonewall leadership programme.
- We have hosted a community breakfast prior to Northern Pride event
- We participated in the Northern Pride parade and picnic in the park.
- We have used internal communications to raise awareness of the Northern Pride event.
- We have used Northern Pride as an opportunity to raise awareness on our Community Fire Stations.
- We have supported and attended London Pride.
- We have included Sexual Orientation in our employee diversity monitoring census.
- We have included Sexual Orientation in our employment application forms for diversity monitoring purposes.
- We have commenced work to form an employee support network.

- We have appointed a Diversity Champion who promotes and supports LGBT issues.
- We have attended a National FRS event on LGBT issues 'The Last Taboo – one year on.' This included a master class.
- We have used displays to raise awareness of Holocaust Memorial Day, including actions taken against LGBT people.
- Discussed International Day Against Homophobia at the E&D Committee
- Delivered additional Equality Impact Assessment training
- We have worked with young people from MESMAC to increase their awareness of fire safety.
- We have worked with young people from MESMAC on a leadership course.
- Introduced a Childcare Benefit Scheme using salary sacrifice to all employees of the Authority, including same sex partners.

APPEARANCE AT WORK

The Authority has an Appearance at Work Policy that encompasses the diversity of our employees.

HARASSMENT

Organisations may be held responsible for the actions of their staff as well as the staff being individually responsible for their own actions. If harassment takes place in the workplace or at a time and/or place associated with the workplace, for example a work related social gathering, the organisation may be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation unless it can show that it took reasonable steps to prevent harassment. Where it is found that an Individual has subjected another to harassment, they too may be ordered to pay compensation.

VICTIMISATION

Victimisation is when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment. They may become labeled "troublemaker", denied promotion or training, or be "sent to Coventry" by their colleagues. If this happens or if organisations fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they will be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation. Individuals who victimise others may also be ordered to pay compensation.

OUR WORKFORCE PROFILE

In accordance with Stonewall best practice the number of employees who have declared, in confidence, to the organisation that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender will not be published by department or role. By taking this responsible action no employee will be 'outed' against their own free will.

In our 2009 employee census information was requested across all six equality strands (further details can be found at page 14). The data collected in relation to sexual orientation was as follows:

Sexual Orientation

- Bisexual - 4
- Gay - 4
- Heterosexual - 741
- Lesbian - 1
- Not declared - 361

Those Involved in Discipline or Grievance

Of those involved in discipline or grievance no-one declared themselves to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION ACTION PLAN 2009 -2010

The action plan will be monitored by the LGBT Champion, the D&E Advisor and the E&D Committee.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline
Submit WEI to Stonewall	D&E Advisor	As prescribed by Stonewall for 2009
Review the Stonewall feedback and report to the E&D Committee	D&E Advisor	June 2009
Actively investigate drama based E&D training, including LGBT scenarios	D&E Advisor	June 2009
Have a high profile presence at Northern Pride	D&E Advisor	18 July 2009
Proactively work towards the formation of a LGBT network	D&E Advisor	December 2009
Work Regionally towards best practice on all LGBT areas	D&E Advisor FBU / UNISON	December 2009
Maintain and improve our community contacts with organisations such as MESMAC	D&E Advisor	December 2009
Attend relevant training, conferences and seminars in relation to LGBT topics	D&E Advisor	December 2009
Challenge prejudice and discrimination	All employees	Continuous

APPENDIX 1

Legislation relevant to Equality and Diversity

Below is a list of the legislation and a brief description of its purpose:

Civil Partnerships Act 2004

Provides legal recognition and parity of treatment for same-sex couples and married couples, including employment benefits and pension rights.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Outlaws the discrimination of disabled people in employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services or the administration or management of premises.

Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005

Introduces a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality for disabled people.

Protects against discrimination on grounds of age in employment and vocational training. Prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment and instructions to discriminate.

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulation 2003

The directive protects against discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions.

The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005

Introduces new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, explicitly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave, sets out the extent to which it is discriminatory to pay a woman less than she would otherwise have been paid due to pregnancy or maternity issues.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003

The directive protects against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in employment, vocational training, promotion, and working conditions.

Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amended)

This gives an individual a right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment, where the man and the woman are doing: like work; work rated as equivalent under an analytical job evaluation study; or work that is proved to be of equal value.

Equality Act 2006

Establishes a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights by 2007 that replaces the three existing commissions. Introduces a positive duty on public sector bodies to promote equality of opportunity between women and men and eliminate sex discrimination. Protects against discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in terms of access to good facilities and services.

Gender Recognition Act 2004

The purpose of the Act is to provide transsexual people with legal recognition in their acquired gender. Legal recognition follows from the issue of a full gender recognition certificate by a gender recognition panel.

Race Relations Act 1976

The Act prohibits discrimination on racial grounds in the areas of employment, education and the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises.

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

Places a statutory duty on all public bodies to promote equal opportunity, eliminate racial discrimination and promote good relations between different racial groups.

Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulation 2003

Introduced new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, new burden of proof requirements, continuing protection after employment ceases, new exemption for a determinate job requirement and the removal of certain other exemptions.

Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

The Act seeks to stop people from intentionally using threatening words or behaviour to stir up hatred against somebody because of what they believe.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex. Sex discrimination is unlawful in employment, education, advertising or when providing housing, goods, services or facilities. It is unlawful to discriminate because someone is married, in employment or advertisements for jobs.

Sexual Orientation (Provision of Goods and Services) Regulations.

These regulations extend the prohibition of discrimination from employment to education, goods, services, facilities and public sector duties.