



Awards Nomination Form

Your name	Clare McCluskey
Your job title	Equality and Resources Manager
Organisation	Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS)
Contact telephone number	0191 444 1621
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Category <i>(your nomination relates to)</i>	Building Inclusive Workplaces Award (nomination 1 of 3)
<p>Outline reasons why you should win award <i>(Maximum 500 words).</i></p> <p>28th in the Stonewall Top 100 Workplace Equality Index (WEI), TWFRS is the number one FRS, leading in their sector for LGBT equality.</p> <p>We have LGBT equality champions at all levels and highly committed senior leaders. Stonewall Diversity Champion, Assistant Chief Fire Officer John Baines, opens all LGBT related events giving strong leadership messages, and participates in Pride marches to show a visible commitment.</p> <p>We strive to ensure LGBT remains firmly on the equality agenda, undertaking a significant amount of work every year to promote LGBT equality/inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organising/hosting free awareness raising/networking conferences/events eg LGBT Emergency Services and multi-agency LGBT NE Conferences, Stonewall WEI Seminars. - Main event sponsors for Newcastle/Sunderland Pride (running free satellite events) and supporting IDAHO Day events with keynote speakers. - Ensuring learning re LGBT features in all levels of training from induction to advanced eg recently introduced Unconscious Bias course (with specific LGBT focus). - Promoting networking/development opportunities for LGBT staff, providing additional funding to encourage 2 LGBT staff members to attend 2013 Stonewall development programmes, supporting staff to attend Liverpool/London Pride. - Introducing community volunteers, representative of LGBT, to enhance links and engagement with our diverse communities. - Significantly increasing articles in the media raising our profile as an LGBT 	

friendly organisation, featuring in three recent editions of Out! North East, the official 2013 Newcastle Pride Guide, national magazines eg In Attendance/The Burning Issue, local newspapers eg Evening Chronicle/The Journal.

- Encouraging applications from LGBT candidates by displaying our Stonewall Top 100 logo on our intranet recruitment pages/forms, advertising posts in LGBT media. (In 2012/13, 4% of new employees identified as LGBT.)
- Developing specific equality objectives aimed at increasing the number of LGBT staff undertaking management development, including extending coaching/leadership programmes to LGBT staff who would not ordinarily have access to this due to their role, leading to LGBT staff being successful in our recent internal promotion process.
- Introducing an innovative poster campaign to raise the profile of LGBT equality - latest posters featuring sexual orientation/gender reassignment/marriage and civil partnership.
- Funding independent research to establish where we are now and how we can improve further, consulting with LGBT employees/local community members via focus groups, 15 one to one interviews and an online questionnaire (achieving 83 responses.)

TWFRS has improved in all areas having a significant impact on LGBT staff and community members. The work of our LGBT Network Group is viewed as innovative and outstanding practice by leaders in the field of HR, such as the CIPD, and was identified as excellent practice in our Equality Peer Challenge earlier this year.

In the last year the Service engaged with 1,500 members of the LGBT community, evaluation reports tell us that referrals for Home Safety Checks from the LGBT community increase year on year.

At a time when all Fire and Rescue Services face financial challenges following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, LGBT equality continues to be supported and championed by our strategic managers, ensuring it remains a priority for our Service.

Please see attached Appendix A for further evidence which demonstrates the significant impact of TWFRS work in relation to LGBT equality. Additional evidence can be provided upon request.

Please continue on a separate sheet

Appendix A – Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

What are people saying about us?

“Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service is one of the best performing services in the country in relation to supporting gay staff and engaging with the wider community”. Ben Summerskill

“This consultation is great because you are directly asking the people involved and we can talk to you back. We really appreciate having the opportunity to take part”. Susan Musgrove, Company Secretary, Northern Pride.

“It was a really enjoyable day; both Kellie and I came away with lots of ideas from your well established network and enthusiastic team!” Neil Whitemore, Watch Manager Devon and Somerset FRS.

“Just wanted to extend my congratulations to you and the rest of the team at TWFRS at your achievement at the Stonewall WEI... Your participation in the index and as a Stonewall Champion... sends a strong and powerful message to staff and the public on the Service commitment to equality.” Pete Wilcox, Regional Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, North East Region

“Very proud that TWFRS is in the Top 100 employers – at number 28 – a credit to all the staff and their public service.” Nick Forbes, Leader of Newcastle City Council.

“T&WFRS is setting the standard to which other organisations should aspire.” Ken Mortimer, LGBT NE.

Our LGBT staff say how they feel about working for the Service which shows how the culture has changed significantly, having a huge impact for them personally.

“...these days thanks to the great support of my peers, colleagues, and the organisation, I feel passionate about standing up and championing LGBT issues”.

“...I felt unable to divulge my sexuality and kept it hidden from my work colleagues and managers... The Service has taken massive strides... I am now an openly gay woman at work and feel totally confident at all times.”

“During coming out as Trans TWFRS has been completely supportive and have done everything possible to make my transition in the workplace as smooth as possible. All staff within the Service have also had a good knowledge about my situation due to the Service educating staff about LGBT issues”.

“I think they are serious about eliminating discrimination. I see leaders being passionate about it. This is setting the tone and influencing behaviour across the Service”.

“I feel proud we are working with communities and encouraging positive attitudes”.

“Equality and diversity is important to our workplace and our relationship with the public.”

“... I have personally gone from feeling pressured to deny my sexuality to feeling fully confident now. I am very committed to my job.”

Results from respondents to our LGBT research were very positive:

- 73% felt that TWFRS is working to eliminate discrimination towards LGB&T staff and customers
- 70% agreed that TWFRS is equally supportive to the LGB&T community across all our activities (as an employer and a service provider)
- 82% felt they could contact us if they have an issue they need support with
- 100% believe that they have been treated fairly by TWFRS and that their human rights have been respected
- 100% said that overall we are a responsible organisation.

Members of the LGBT community who responded to our recent research praised our approach:

“We are two women bringing up two kids. When they fitted alarms in our house they were great – professional and friendly. They didn’t make judgements and did a good job.” Lesbian/Bisexual resident.

“The subject is raised regularly, in a constructive way. The events and conferences connected with LGBT issues are sending out a good message.”
Gay man, Trade Union Official.

“I have actually seen women fire-fighters – when a Lesbian sees a woman Fire-fighter in the fire service it’s a huge tick!” Lesbian, University Lecturer.

The peer team who undertook our Equality Peer Challenge at ‘excellent’ level of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework in March 2013 recognised our significant contribution to LGBT equality, stating:

“Disability and LGBT groups praised the work the Service... Over 1,500 LGBT people were engaged with in 2012 and numerous links were established with voluntary groups at LGBT events. The Services annual conferences on disability and LGBT issues were widely praised... “I have nothing but admiration for the range of work which Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service are involved with.”

In terms of access to training and development, the peer team commented that our ‘equality data report shows a positive involvement with training and development access. The report demonstrated good disaggregation and proportionality of access for BME, women, disabled people and LGBT.’

In addition, the peer team highlight our Stonewall WEI position as one of many *'impressive examples'* of external recognition in terms of our achievements for our workforce practices.

Our LGBT Network Group won the 2013 North East CIPD Diversity and Inclusion Award for their excellent work around LGBT equality and inclusion. Through this achievement, the group has enabled TWFRS to share positive messages about LGBT equality and the benefits good practice can bring to employers from all sectors across the North East as we appeared in the HR&D Focus June 2013 edition of the CIPD North East newsletter which is distributed to members across the region.

We were also delighted to receive external nominations for The National Diversity Awards 2013, sponsored by Microsoft. In early August we were informed that we had been shortlisted from 4,500 nominations, correspondence stated ***'a tremendous achievement, and a testament to all your hard work and dedication'***. Winners will be announced at the award ceremony on 20th September 2013.

