

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

---

**SUBJECT: STONEWALL WORKPLACE EQUALITY INDEX****JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY,  
THE FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

---

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the results of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) Top 100 Employers 2010.
- 1.2 The report includes this Authority's score in comparison to previous submissions, along with identified areas for improvement.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Authority is committed to achieving equality of opportunity and removing discrimination or prejudice on any grounds including sexual orientation. To support these aims the Authority has been a member of Stonewall for some four years.
- 2.2 Stonewall is an organisation which works to achieve equality and justice for lesbians, gay men and bisexual (LGB) people. This aim incorporates having a national WEI which is a benchmarking exercise showcasing Britain's top employers for the 1.7 million LGB people in Britain.
- 2.3 Taking part in the WEI shows a public commitment to our LGB colleagues, service users and future employees. It demonstrates that LGB people can feel safe and valued as a member of the organisation and as a member of the community the Authority serves.
- 2.4 This year was Stonewall's sixth WEI, and the second year of their revised and updated Index criteria. Participation in the Index has more than doubled since 2006 with 352 entrants and it has been more challenging than ever before as entrants must clearly demonstrate how their efforts to support LGB staff have a lasting impact on their workforce.

**3 WEI ENTRY**

- 3.1 Taking part in the WEI involved the Authority completing and submitting a questionnaire with supporting evidence demonstrating how the Service supports LGB people.
- 3.2 The WEI questionnaire is divided into nine parts:
  - Part 1 - Policy and practice
  - Part 2 - Staff engagement
  - Part 3 - Staff development and support

***Creating the Safest Community***

Part 4 - Monitoring

Part 5 - Supplier policies

Part 6 - Community engagement

Part 7 - Pink Plateau (details requested re out LGB personnel / level in organisation)

Part 8 - Additional information (any further innovative work)

Part 9 - Staff feedback (from LGB personnel within the organisation)

- 3.3 In addition to the WEI, LGB staff were encouraged to complete the separate feedback questionnaire, which asks about their experiences working within the organisation.
- 3.4 A unique code is provided for the organisation and supplied to LGB staff to ensure complete confidentiality and anonymity. Responses are completed on line and submitted directly to Stonewall however, individuals were able to request hardcopies. It is expected that around 20 questionnaires should be completed for an organisation with over 1000 staff.

#### **4 WEI POSITION**

- 4.1 In 2009 the Authority was ranked 126<sup>th</sup> which was only a slight improvement in terms of performance in comparison to 2008 with a number of outstanding actions that needed addressing. However, in the 2010 WEI the Authority achieved a vast improvement scoring 132 out of 200, ranking us at 101<sup>st</sup>, receiving a result of 51%, just 5% short of being in the Top 100 list.
- 4.2 It is worth noting that this was a particularly good result given that this year the Authority was judged against a revised set of criteria and more entries to the Index than ever before making the Index the most competitive to date.
- 4.3 The complete top 100 can be viewed at [www.stonewall.org/workplace](http://www.stonewall.org/workplace).

#### **5 PERFORMANCE TO DATE**

- 5.1 Following the results of the 2010 Index, each fire and rescue service had a benchmarking meeting with their Stonewall representative. Diversity and Equality personnel met with a Stonewall representative in January 2010 to discuss performance, highlight areas of good practice as well as key development areas.
- 5.2 In terms of strengths, the areas where full marks were scored include effective written / audited policies, an established diversity team, and training and monitoring.
- 5.3 The Chief Fire Officer has produced a detailed Stonewall WEI Action Plan (see Appendix A) for consideration by Members, which details all of the areas for improvement where 68 points were lost in the 2010 submission.
- 5.4 The Action Plan was presented for comment to the Employee Advisory Group (Sexual Orientation) in April 2010. The current priority for the group is to establish a network for LGB employees (an outstanding action since our first submission).

5.5 It is important to note that Stonewall reported receipt of only three feedback questionnaires from LGB employees, clearly an area for improvement for future WEIs.

### **6 NEXT STEPS**

6.1 If the Action Plan is approved, the next steps to improving performance will be:

- Progress the Stonewall Action Plan through the Employee Advisory Group (Sexual Orientation) including a review of the commitment to the 2010 Pride; Review the content of the Stonewall Employers Guide and guidance as to how the Authority can encourage more LGB employees to complete the staff feedback questionnaire for the 2011 WEI;
- The Diversity and Equality Advisor to review and explore the good practice provided by our Stonewall representative to identify any aspects that may be adopted by the Authority;
- Continue to support Stonewall through the Diversity Champion and by ensuring employees attend key conferences to ascertain good practice and help towards valuable research.

### **7 RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 Research shows that people work best when they can be themselves at work. Inclusive work environments, which encourage loyalty, teamwork and maximise personal contributions are key to top performing organisations.

7.2 Organisations that achieve inclusivity for all become employers of choice in competitive markets, attracting and retaining the best talent.

7.3 The organisation may risk its ability to achieve a diverse workforce, which reflects the community it serves should it discontinue supporting Stonewall. It is therefore essential that this work continues and performance is improved, participating in future WEIs to demonstrate the Authority's on-going commitment to LGB people.

### **8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are financial implications in relation to this report and therefore provision has been made within the existing Equality and Diversity budget in order to ensure the actions contained within the Stonewall Action Plan can be achieved.

### **9 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Participating in the WEI demonstrates the Authority's commitment to LGB employees and shows its aim to be an employer of choice to all of our diverse communities.

9.2 Working towards the improvements outlined in the WEI Action Plan may lead to policy development / changes to practices and processes and therefore Equality Impact Assessments will need to be carried out.

**10 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

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

**11 RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1 Members are recommended to:

- a) Endorse the content of this report;
- b) Approve the WEI Action Plan;
- c) Continue to support the Service in working towards becoming a Top 100 employer;
- d) Receive further reports as appropriate.

---

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 – 2018.
- Stonewall Top 100 Employers 2010, The Workplace Equality Index.

## Stonewall Workplace Equality Index Action Plan 2010

*[Lost 68 points in total:]*

Action	09 WEI Q	Key Development Area	Action Required	Lead	Deadline
1/10	3	Lead Champion (-1)	Improve community engagement and set up employee network.	As per outcomes of action 4/10 & 5/10	
2/10	5	Equal benefits (-3)	<p>Review line manager training re the application of benefits for LGB staff eg lesbian rights to maternity.</p> <p>Review communication methods and content to ensure LGB staff know policies are inclusive to them.</p> <p>Include links to policies and benefits via intranet (to be developed as action 5/10)</p>	Diversity and Equalities Advisor	31/03/2011
3/10	7	Bullying prevention (-2)	<p>Review policies and procedures.</p> <p>Review training for staff who deal with complaints re LGB issues.</p>	Diversity and Equalities Advisor	31/03/2011
4/10	8	Network group (-4)	Establish a network for LGB employees / future employees.	Diversity and Resources Manager	31/12/2010
5/10	9	Network functions (-7)	<p>Ensure network group carries out the following functions:</p> <p>(a) Advises the organisation on the LGB specific implications of internal policies and procedures</p> <p>(b) Social and other networking events for LGB staff</p> <p>(c) Awareness raising/education of non-LGB staff</p> <p>(d) Collaboration with other LGB employee network groups (eg cross sector or regional)</p> <p>(e) Maintains its own intranet site</p> <p>(f) Point of contact for LGB staff with issues at work</p> <p>(g) Advises the organisation on business development/service delivery</p>	Diversity and Resources Manager	31/12/2010

6/10	10	Staff engagement (-5)	Develop LGB related intranet pages (e) above Hold LGB events at TWFRS. Look at ways of bridging service user gap between LGB service users and TWFRS.	Diversity and Equalities Advisor	31/03/2011
7/10	13	Training - level (-1)	Review overall training for all staff re LGB issues.	Diversity and Equalities Advisor	30/09/2010

Action	09 WEI Q	Key Development Area	Action Required	Lead	Deadline
8/10	14	Line manager (-7)	Review line manager specific LGB training including delivery methods.	Diversity and Equalities Advisor	30/09/2010
9/10	15	Career development (-6)	Assess methods of targeting existing programmes eg promotion / training for LGB staff.  Create specific question for Employee Survey around LGB career development.  Review use of mentoring for LGB staff within the service by senior openly gay staff members.	Diversity and Resources Manager	31/03/2011
10/10	18	Monitoring declared (-2)	Assess effectiveness of current monitoring process to encourage more LGB staff to feel comfortable to provide personal information.	Diversity and Resources Manager	31/03/2011
11/10	21	Supplier policies (-4)	Investigate LGB inclusive criteria in contract management procedures.	Diversity and Resources Manager	31/03/2011
12/10	22	Community engagement (-8)	Review engagement strategies to ensure successful engagement with LGB communities and feedback methods for service delivery.  Assess / advise on ways to effectively publicise TWFRS involvement in LGB engagement activities.  Volunteer required to lead on Pride 2010 event.	Communities Relations Manager	31/03/2011
13/10	23	Pink plateau (-6)	Most senior openly gay person in organisation is at third tier therefore unable to claim max points. Addressed in future by the development in actions 9/10 and 10/10.		
14/10	24	LGB role models (-2)	Identify opportunities where out LGB members of staff can be involved in networking and communication activities as a role model/mentor.	Diversity and Resources Manager	31/03/2011
15/10	25	Additional evidence (-10)	Explore opportunities for innovation and sharing best practice in relation to service improvement for LGB people and employees.	Diversity and Resources Manager	31/03/2011

