

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 05

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 14 OCTOBER 2013

SUBJECT: EQUALITY AWARDS UPDATE

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update with regards to recent equality award nominations in respect of the Authority's equality and diversity practices.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Over the past 4 years the Authority has been successful in a number of awards and been selected as finalists in relation to their approach to equality and diversity, enabling it to showcase the excellent work being undertaken across the organisation.

2.2 The Authority was recently anonymously nominated for the National Diversity Awards 2013, and has also been shortlisted for entries submitted to the North East Equality Awards 2013. Further details relating to these nominations are provided for the information of Members.

3. NATIONAL DIVERSITY AWARDS

3.1 The high profile National Diversity Awards were launched in 2012 and have attracted significant support from a wide range of organisations such as Microsoft (headline sponsors), The Co-operative, Sky, MI5 amongst others. These prestigious awards are also endorsed by a number of stars such as Stephen Fry, Beverly Knight and Ade Adpeitan all of whom have been role models for equality. The awards were hosted by Brian Dowling TV presenter and Big Brother Winner, and Cerrie Burnell, TV presenter.

3.2 The National Diversity Awards are designed to showcase the efforts of those who have demonstrated an outstanding devotion to enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion within today's society; thus embracing excellence of all our citizens irrespective of race and religion/faith, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability and culture.

3.3 In 2013, the Authority was nominated for the Diverse Company Award demonstrating that others recognise the excellent work undertaken to enhance equality, diversity and inclusion both in the workplace and in society. This award identifies a company that employs a diverse workforce, is better able to understand the demographics of the marketplace it serves and whose goals are to reassure and encourage people from the most deprived areas to further their careers.

- 3.4 Due to the overall number of nominations received the Authority was selected to give evidence to the judges. A nominee questionnaire was completed and submitted this along with a range of information to support the nomination.
- 3.5 As a result the Authority was shortlisted from a staggering 4,500 nominations. Organisers confirmed that they had an unbelievable response this year with the number of nominations exceeding those received in 2012 by almost three times the amount. *“This is a tremendous achievement, and a testament to all your hard work and dedication.”*
- 3.6 National Diversity Award Judges said:

“A very long list of nominations have showcased that the Service invests massively in each and every individual member of its workforce, achieving equality and diversity in its purest form.

TWFRS continuously develop strategy, policies and procedures to enhance equality practice and guarantee the organisation is up to date in terms of legislation and best practice. Their evidence demonstrates their keen attitude to sharing progress with partner organisations, to develop diversification policies across the sector.

Fantastic employer and figure head in equal opportunities.”

- 3.7 The Authority was shortlisted alongside strong competitors including: ITV, Farnell element14, Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.
- 3.8 Unfortunately, the Authority did not win the award. However, the Authority, the only Fire and Rescue Authority to be shortlisted as part of the awards, can now proudly display their Certificate of Excellence which is being presented to all those who were shortlisted, as well as the shortlisted logo (below) on emails, the website or any other media outlets to promote its achievement and commitment to equality and diversity.



- 3.9 Paul Sesay, Chief Executive of The Diversity Group/National Diversity Awards said:

“I would like to congratulate all of our nominees for the pioneering work they do towards making a more inclusive society, their struggle to challenge and fight against prejudice has impacted the lives of thousands directly and indirectly. A celebration of unity has been formed through your values and hard work.”

4. NORTH EAST EQUALITY AWARDS

- 4.1 The Authority has a track record of being selected as finalists in the North East Equality Awards, including being nominated by the judges for the Outstanding Practice Award in 2012.
- 4.2 2013 is a particularly special year as the North East Equality Awards 10th Anniversary. The Awards celebrate the success of past and present equality champions and showcase the excellent practices in equality and diversity happening in the North East of England.
- 4.3 Having submitted two nominations for the 2013 North East Equality Awards, the Authority has been selected as finalists for both - Organisations Supporting Disabled People into Employment category and Groups Who Have Made a Difference category. Results will be announced on 4th October 2013 at the awards ceremony.

5. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- 5.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

6. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Participating in the above awards enables the Authority to gain recognition for the outstanding work being undertaken to ensure excellence in quality continues to be achieved. The Authority's involvement in the equality and diversity related awards also sends out a positive message to the public, partners, employees and other stakeholders of the Authority's on-going commitment to equality for all.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Authority is recommended to:
- a) Note the content of this report;
 - b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk
- <http://www.equality-ne.co.uk/projects/awards/>

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