

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 5

MEETING: 16 DECEMBER 2019

SUBJECT: ABILITY NOT DISABILITY CONFERENCE

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY) THE STRATEGIC FINANCE OFFICER AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE AUTHORITY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the National Emergency Services Disability Conference, organised and hosted here at Tyne and Wear Fire & Rescue Service (TWFRS) Headquarters on 3 December 2019.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Equality, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to the Service's culture and values. The Service staff network groups, BME, Disability, LGBT+, and Gender, support our employees with advice and guidance, development of policies, and continuous improvement.
- 2.2 The Disability network group work tirelessly across a range of areas, including; improving accessibility to our premises, encouraging disclosure, and raising disability awareness across the Organisation. The Department for Work and Pensions recently awarded the Service the 'Disability Confident Leader' award in recognition of our ongoing good practice.
- 2.3 The Disability conference follows on from successfully hosted National Conferences with TWFRS for Gender, and LGBT+, hosted by the respective networks.

3 ABILITY NOT DISABILITY CONFERENCE

- 3.1 The Disability Conference entitled 'Ability Not Disability' has been aligned with 'International Day of Persons with Disabilities' on 3 December 2019, with over 90 delegates spanning over 30 organisations, including Fire, Police, Office of Police and Crime of the Commissioner, Ambulance, Local Authority, Airport, together with third sector organisations.
- 3.2 The event promoted good practice and shared learning, including inspiring employee reflections from personal experiences, and organisational approaches to disability support and awareness. Disability Organisations also provided conference stands.

3.3 Sessions included:

- Disability Network Group Overview (TWFRS)
- Conference Welcome (Lee Ridley 'Lost Voice Guy')
- Neurodiversity & Me (Greater Manchester FRS)
- Video TED Talk: 'I'm Not Your Inspiration' (Stella Young)
- Working in Partnership with TWFRS to raise awareness around Mental Health Issues (MIND)
- Sign and Sing Performance (Percy Hedley Foundation Northern Counties School Deaf Signing Choir, and Blue Light Choir)
- Who Cares (South Tyneside Carers)
- Great Minds Don't Always Think Alike (Cambridgeshire FRS)
- Disability Hate Crime (Northumbria Police)
- Supporting Colleagues with Disabilities (TWFRS)

4 RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 There are no risk management issues resulting from this report.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial implications have been met from within existing revenue budgets.

6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The event supports the Authority's drive for continuous improvement in equality, diversity and inclusion; specifically in approaches to disability awareness within the workplace. Individual requirements were captured during enrolment with reasonable adjustments made as required.

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 contents of this report
- b) Continue to support the Service's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers