

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 4TH SEPTEMBER 2019
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION
AUTHOR: MELANIE HOCKENHULL

SUBJECT: ANNUAL EQUALITY MONITORING
REPORT 2018-19

Purpose of this Report

1. As part of the Service's commitment and compliance with the Equality Act 2010, an Equality Monitoring Report is published on an annual basis which contains comprehensive equality monitoring information – see *Appendix A* to the report for 2018-19. In addition to the information found within the Report, this covering report seeks to provide Members with a summary of progress and the key achievements during the year relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

Recommended: That Members

- [1] note the content of this summary report; and
- [2] review the content of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2018-2019 and approve for publication.

Background

2. The Service has a strong reputation, both within the fire and rescue sector and externally in general, for championing EDI initiatives and being an inclusive employer. The EDI portfolio has a high profile within the Service and is one of the key work streams within the Transformation Department.
3. The body responsible for oversight of EDI is the Equality Steering Group (ESG) which is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive. This group also comprises of members of Service Management Team, champions for protected characteristics, representative bodies, and shift system representatives. The newly appointed member champion for EDI, Cllr Daniels, also attends the ESG to ensure there is member oversight of work and initiatives.
4. In addition to the production of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report, equality monitoring information is gathered on a quarterly basis both internally in respect of employment practices and externally in relation to

community engagement initiatives. This information once analysed is presented to the ESG for scrutiny and discussion.

5. Where trends are identified, whether positive or adverse, appropriate interventions are discussed. These can range from further analysis to get a better understanding of the issues, direct action to mitigate any negative impact, or the development of initiatives to capitalise on areas of success and/or strength.
6. The Annual Equality Monitoring Report attached at *Appendix A* was reviewed and discussed at the July meeting of the ESG. The key findings, achievements from 2018-19, and the priorities for the year ahead are summarised below.

Key achievements during 2018-19

- Moving from 4th place in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index in 2018 to 3rd place in 2019. This showcased the Service as the most inclusive UK emergency service in respect of LGBT inclusion, and also as the top public sector employer.
- Station Manager Jon Woolley was named Stonewall's North West Ally of the Year, for the work he has carried out to further LGBT inclusion in the Service.
- Organising and hosting 'Proud to Provide', a national conference analysing how public sector organisations can tailor their services to the needs of LGBT communities. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and consideration is being given to hosting another conference during 2020.
- Launched the 'Who Do I Turn To?' campaign which was designed to raise awareness and reinforce the support available to staff in the event that they experience concerns or worries at work in respect of inappropriate conduct, health and wellbeing and/or personal safety. The campaign was accompanied by specific Dignity at Work training for managers to ensure that they were sufficiently equipped to recognise, manage and resolve dignity at work issues quickly and sensitively.
- In January 2019, the Service became a White Ribbon accredited organisation, showing its commitment to tackling domestic abuse. An action plan is in place which focuses on a range of potential issues relating to domestic abuse which the Service as an employer can address, and to ensure as a compassionate employer, policies are in place to address any issues that arise. The Service celebrated White Ribbon Day on 25 November 2018 by flying a 60 foot white ribbon from the ALP in the centre of Chester.

- Renewed emphasis on the ongoing development of “*Limitless*”, the Service’s women’s network, led by Watch Manager Hannah Caulfield. Highlights include: hosting a development conference to celebrate International Women’s Day; establishing a working group to review the Service’s approach to supporting staff through the menopause; and the provision of training for female staff engaged on the Service’s buddying scheme for prospective and new recruits.
- Broadening the scope of positive action in order to attract a diverse workforce with particular emphasis on increasing the number of female operational staff. This included sponsoring two prominent female rugby teams - Warrington Wolves and Widnes Vikings, to amplify the Service’s commitment to showcasing career opportunities to females. The Service has embarked upon the development of a bold and innovative recruitment campaign to attract members of under-represented groups to join the Service.

Progress and Analysis – Key Headlines

7. The Annual Equality Monitoring Report is divided into two sections: Internal Employment (including recruitment monitoring) and Community Engagement, which covers the monitoring and analysis of external service users who either interact with the service in respect of prevention and protection activities or have been affected by community risks and incidents.
8. In relation to the 2018-2019 Annual Equality Monitoring Report, key areas of interest in the two sections include the following.

Employment

Area	Commentary
Staff Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Service employs 847 staff, the majority of whom are white British males, and most commonly aged between 35 and 44. • This trend is similar to that reported in previous years.
Gender Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net increase of 5 female staff in operational roles during 2018-19. • This increased the percentage of female operational staff from 6% to 7%. • By contrast, the percentage of total population of female staff reduced by 2%. This is due to Blue Light Collaboration, which completed on 1 April 2018.
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently 176 volunteers, most commonly aged either between 17 and 24 or 56-65, male and white British • This represents 19 less volunteer than in the previous year, with a decrease in volunteers from younger age groups.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of female volunteers increased by 3%.
Leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 46 fewer leavers in 2018-19 than in 2017-18, due to completion of transfers pursuant to Blue Light Collaboration.

Recruitment

Area	Commentary
Fire staff recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 58% of fire staff applicants were women, most commonly aged 25-35 and 93% white British Comparable to trends seen in the previous year. Increase in the number of LGBT candidates, who represented 6% of applicants.
Grey book recruitment (excluding on-call and wholetime recruitment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3% of grey book applicants were women, most commonly aged between 36 and 45. This is lower than the 7% female representation in the operational workforce. 91% white British, similar to the percentage of white British employees in the operational workforce. 2% of applicants identified as LGBT, the same percentage as in the operational workforce.
Wholetime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 candidates began the wholetime recruits course in January 2019. Of these, 33% were female, 80% were white British and 20% identified as LGBT. This shows encouraging trends compared to previous years, in particular the percentage of female recruits represented a 19% increase from the previous year, showing strong reinforcement for positive action initiatives.
On call recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 34 new on-call firefighters were recruited during 2017-18, with 15% being female (a small increase from the previous year).

Community Engagement

Area	Commentary
Safe and well delivery	Research shows that personal fire-risk increases with age, thus the majority of Safe and Well Assessments are delivered to residents aged over 65. The makeup of residents receiving a safe and well visit was in line with this targeted risk methodology. A higher than estimated proportion of respondents identified as LGBT, again reinforcing the Service's focus on LGBT inclusion and ensuring this is built into prevention work.
Safe and well resident	The breakdown of those completing surveys was similar to previous years, although 11% of respondents

satisfaction surveys	identified as Hindu. The Service anticipates this is an error due to the format of the report. Currently the census figures for Cheshire identify less than 1% of the population as Hindu. The format of the report is being addressed to prevent further mistaken entries.
Youth Engagement Activities	There is encouraging diversity within the young people taking part in youth engagement activities. Most commonly aged between 12 and 14 (a younger age group than last year), females represent 36% of all attendees, an increase of 3% from the previous year.
Business premises audits	There was a slightly higher number of deficiencies found in BAME owned businesses (+3) compared to 2017/18 (although numbers are small and inspections are predicated on risk, not ethnicity). This is replicated nationally and protection teams continually carry out work to engage and protect BAME business owners.
Injuries and fatalities as a result of fire	The age of those who have suffered injuries and fatalities as a result of fire was younger than in previous years. Most injuries (including serious injuries) were suffered by those aged between 35 and 44. However, numbers are relatively small to make definite conclusions and prevention work will have impacted on the number of injuries to those aged over 65. This trend will continue to be fed into performance reporting. There was also a slight increase in injuries to those aged 65 than in the previous year, showing that those aged over 65 continue to be at risk from fire as predicted by the Service's targeted risk methodology.
Injuries and fatalities occurring as a result of accidental fires in the home	Those aged over 65 suffered the most number of serious injuries and most injuries in general. This is as predicted by the Service's risk methodology.

Ongoing priorities for 2019/2020

9. **Positive Action in Recruitment** – The Service has seen encouraging progress in terms of attracting recruits from under-represented groups, particularly as concerns women and members of the LGBT community. This will continue to be built on throughout 2019-20, with investment in more campaigns and initiatives, and in the communications campaign referred to above. Specifically, the Service intends to look at new and innovative ways of encouraging members of BAME communities to join. Initial ideas include: carrying out research as to why members of BAME communities may or may not choose to join the fire and rescue service; carrying out engagement work with BAME communities outside of the

Service area; and working closely with sector BAME staff network groups.

10. **Staff profile** – The Service is similarly committed to ensuring that it retains a diverse workforce once staff are in post, and that staff from under-represented groups have access to development and promotion opportunities. Following the introduction of ‘best in class’ maternity and adoption policies, the Service will be looking to improve the offering in respect of paternity leave and supporting staff through the menopause.
11. **Stonewall Workplace Equality Index** – Work will continue in respect of the Service’s commitment and reputation for LGBT inclusion. Building on learning from ‘*Proud to Provide*’, we will seek to strengthen links with local LGBT groups, particularly those supporting older people, so that the Service is in the best possible position to support vulnerable communities. The Service has been visible at six Prides throughout 2019, the majority of which have been organised locally by stations, culminating in the Service’s tenth annual appearance at Manchester Pride. This signals the value placed on LGBT inclusion both externally to communities, and internally to staff. The intention is that this work will support and strengthen the Service’s submission to the 2020 Workplace Equality Index.
12. **Staff Network Groups** – The Service currently has in place staff network groups, specifically FirePride and FirePride Allies, for LGBT staff and supporters, and Limitless. The Service also works with Women in the Fire Service and the Asian Fire Service Association nationally. To ensure that these networks are open and accessible to all members of staff, the Service plans to run a campaign highlighting the value of them and encouraging staff and volunteers to be actively involved.
13. **EDI Awareness raising** – The Service already has in place a number of routes for ensuring that its staff are educated on and understand the EDI agenda. However, the Service is committed to reviewing this offering in 2019-20 to make sure that the awareness provided is as comprehensive and accessible as possible.

Financial Implications

14. There may be limited costs associated with some of the actions needed to ensure that the Service is addressing the trends identified within the report, mainly associated with holding events and courses. These costs will be factored into budgets of the relevant department or met from within the Equalities Budget.

Legal Implications

15. Production of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report helps the Authority to comply with its statutory responsibilities.

Equality and Diversity

16. The Annual Equality Monitoring Report is produced to reinforce the Service's commitment to the EDI agenda and to remove any barriers or adverse impacts to our employment policies/practices and service delivery.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS :

Appendix A - Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2017-18