

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 24 AUGUST 2016
REPORT OF: POLICY AND INCLUSION MANAGER
AUTHOR: MELANIE HOCKENHULL

SUBJECT: ANNUAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY
REPORT

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with a summary of key issues identified from the Service's Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2015-16 (Appendix 1).

Recommended: That

- [1] the new format of the Equality Monitoring Report 2015 – 2016 is received, subject to any exceptions set out below.

Background

2. The Performance and Overview Committee has previously received update reports highlighting the progress the Service has made in relation to equality and diversity. Reports have included achievement of the Excellent Standard in the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework, progress against the Service's Equalities Action Plan and the Annual Equality Monitoring Reports.
3. Production and analysis of the Monitoring Report provides reassurance that there are no barriers or adverse impacts in how we deliver our services to communities and how we employ and work with our staff, as well as satisfying statutory requirements under national equality legislation.
4. The Service has been monitoring its employment practices for a number of years, while monitoring of key areas of service began in 2010-11. Annual equality monitoring reports have been presented to the Performance and Overview Committee since that time.
5. As Members have been previously informed, the former Equality Task Group has, from March 2016, evolved into the Equality Steering Group (ESG). The ESG is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and Councillor Dirir and Councillor Mercer are the Member Equality Champions.

6. Relevant monitoring information is collated on a quarterly basis and presented to the ESG. Representatives on the ESG then scrutinise the information to identify any positive or adverse trends. Where trends are identified, appropriate action is discussed and taken. This can range from further analysis to get a better understanding of the issues, to direct action to mitigate the impact.
7. The format of the Monitoring Report has evolved in recent years but the latest version represents the most fundamental change to date. This is the second year that the Monitoring Report has been presented in this format. Particular attention has once again been paid to making the information more accessible and user friendly.
8. The Monitoring Report was endorsed at the June meeting of the ESG. Additional information to last year has been presented in this year's monitoring report in relation to: staff training; disciplinary and grievance procedures; volunteers; and on-call recruitment. Please note, areas of the report may be subject to minor change based on further data cleansing and validation.

Summary

9. The Equality Monitoring report is divided into two sections: Employment; and Service Delivery. This reflects internal and external monitoring. In relation to the 2015-16 Monitoring Report key areas of interest in these two sections include;

Employment

- This is the second year all equality information has been collated for all characteristics in relation to staff in post. Comparisons are therefore made against 2014/2015 only.
- The majority of employees are white British males, aged between 35-44. This is similar to numbers reported in 2014/2015.
- Volunteer data reflects those in post as at 31 March 2016. There are currently 197 volunteers, the majority of who are aged 17-24, male and white British.
- Five percent of operational staff are female, a slight increase from the 4% reported in 2014/2015.
- As concerns on-call recruitment, applicants were in the majority male, white British and between 25 and 35 years of age, again reflecting earlier trends.
- Of the 29 female applicants for on-call roles, 8 (28%) were successful. Seventeen percent of male applicants were successful.

Community Engagement

- Twenty-six percent of residents receiving an HSA recorded a disability, 19% of who were hearing impaired, representing a slight increase from 2014/2015. This is in line with the Service's targeted re-visits to the homes of people with hearing impairment alarms fitted.
 - As concerns Youth Engagement Activities, most young people taking part are between 12 and 14 and the majority are White British males.
 - After previous reports highlighted increased outcomes following business premises audits against people of Chinese origin, focused engagement work in this area now means this is not the case.
 - Most commonly, people involved in injuries and fatalities were aged between 36 and 45, partly as a result of the serious incident at Bosley and other injuries occurring as a result of fires outside the home. This trend for younger people than predicted to be at risk will continue to be monitored.
 - The majority of victims of injuries and fatalities occurring as a result of accidental fires in the home, however, were aged over 65, in line with targeted risk methodology.
10. Work is already underway to try to ensure that any issues highlighted within the report are being addressed appropriately. In particular, having noted the low levels of female, BME and LGBT operational staff, positive action campaigns are currently underway to encourage individuals from these under-represented groups to apply in the upcoming recruitment campaign for wholetime firefighters.

Financial Implications

11. 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 training. Such costs will be captured either from the day to day budgets of the relevant department or via the Equalities Budget.

Legal Implications

12. Production of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report helps the Authority to ensure that it complies with its statutory responsibilities.

Equality and Diversity

13. The Annual Equality Monitoring Report is produced to ensure that there are no barriers or adverse impacts to our employment policies/practices and service delivery.

BACKGROUND PAPERS :

Appendix 1 – Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2015-16