

# Delivering Equality for All

## Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority Equality Scheme 2010 – 2013

Race, Gender, Disability, Sexual  
Orientation, Religion or Belief and Age

This scheme has been subject to a Business Impact Analysis and Equality Impact Assessment.

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## Foreword

Since the introduction of our unified Equality Scheme in 2007 the Authority and the staff of the Service have continued to move from strength to strength in this crucial area. We have always believed in key tangible outcomes, and this Scheme is clearly designed to unite the various areas of equalities. In doing so we have been able to focus our activities on reducing the impact of inequality by ensuring that the Service is both self aware and the services we provide are focused and meet the needs of all our communities, with a particular focus on the vulnerable in society.

In the three years of the previous scheme there have been some significant national developments which have helped to improve and unify the approach of the all UK Fire Services towards equalities. Most notably amongst these are the National Fire Service Equality and Diversity Strategy and the new FRS Equality Framework, both of which are very much welcomed by this Authority.

We believe we are active and highly focused in the equalities arena but we don't rest on our laurels and seek external challenge to assist both our learning and improvement. To demonstrate our openness to external scrutiny we were one of the first Fire Services to seek external validation of its equalities work by the IDeA, and achieved the Equality Mark for our progress against the Equality Standard for Local Government.

There are of course many challenges ahead; most notably throughout the lifetime of this scheme the public sector will see cuts in its finances that may have a profound effect. This will be our greatest challenges to date – to retain our ambition and progress in achieving equality whilst absorbing the impact of changes that will significantly alter the face of public services. We are nevertheless determined to forge ahead with improvements in the equalities arena for no other reason than we individually, and as an organisation, believe it to be the right thing to do.

Chair of Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority

Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

## Introduction

Our first equality scheme Delivering Equality for All 2007 – 2010 enabled the Service to highlight in one document its commitment to delivering equality and diversity for all of our employees and the communities we serve. The development and implementation of this equality scheme enabled us to deliver the right services, at the right time, to the right places more efficiently, effectively and robustly.

During the development and implementation of our first Equality Scheme, legislation has continued to change and develop with the introduction of the Equality Act which builds upon and simplifies the existing legislation and enquiry reports into equalities practice such as The MacPherson Report.

This Equality scheme will build upon our existing equality work and will:

- Continue to provide a systematic framework for the mainstreaming of equalities. Equality and diversity is the responsibility of everyone within the organisation and each functional unit, each station and section, will have their own objectives to work towards which will feed into the organisational strategy.
- Continue to ensure that the Authority is meeting its obligations under law. The strategy will provide the opportunity to not only respond to these, adopt them but also measure progress against them.
- Maintain the integration of equalities policies and objectives with all areas of the Authority's work. As a cross-cutting approach, the strategy examines all functions of the organisation and assesses their impact on equality and diversity and designates objectives based on this assessment. All functions and policies are covered at some level, from Health and Safety to Procurement.
- Actively promote anti-discriminatory behaviour and increase the awareness of good practice throughout the organisation.
- Provide a basis for tackling any forms of institutional discrimination should it exist. Along with anti-discriminatory behaviour we will examine our policies and procedures for any inadvertent disadvantage and a systematic assurance that institutionalisation is examined and acted upon.
- Continue to maintain a framework for improving performance, over time. The strategy provides another baseline of where we are now against which performance will be measured. It also outlines our aspirations and objectives in the coming years.
- Continue to develop the culture and values of the organisation and seek to ensure that behaviour and processes reflect our commitment to equality and diversity.

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- Enable the Authority to continue to integrate equality of opportunity and respect for diversity into all aspects of its activity.

To achieve our aims of the Equality Scheme we will continue to:

- Positively promote equality of opportunity and the benefits of diversity within the Service and the communities we serve.
- Challenge all forms of unfair discrimination, whether intentional, unintentional, institutional or otherwise.
- Profile the make up of the community in order to inform our priorities.
- Develop and maintain an Equality Action Plan to implement this Scheme.
- Undertake Equality Impact Assessments on Service provision and employment and take appropriate action.
- Establish clear local targets for improvement within Service areas and employment.
- Engage with and listen to the views of our communities and Service users, to assist in the development of our equality agenda.
- Incorporate equality of opportunity into all policies, plans and strategies from the start.
- Develop services that are appropriate and accessible to all members of the community.
- Seek to create a workforce profile that reflects our diverse community at all levels.
- Provide appropriate training and development in equality and diversity issues for our Members and employees.
- Review, self-assess, audit and report progress periodically on our equalities work.
- Work to develop and maintain procedures to respond to and address all forms of harassment and victimisation.

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The main objectives of our Equality Scheme are:

- To promote and progress equalities in relation to service delivery, including community engagement, procurement, employment and training.
- To develop partnerships to promote equality.
- To devise and progress equality action plans.
- To communicate equalities issues and policies to all staff and raise awareness of equalities issues.

Our approach is one of rights and responsibilities. We all have rights, which need not only to be defended, but to be exercised and as members of a public authority we have a responsibility to ensure that our actions reflect this commitment. We have an individual as well as a collective duty to ensure the needs of individuals are met within the exigencies of the organisation and the delivery of its services.

## What is Equality and Diversity?

### Equality

Equality is a natural successor to equal opportunities and earlier approaches at dealing with the issues of disadvantage and discrimination. It is in considering terminology like discrimination that we can best grasp what equality is today.

Discrimination exists at a variety of levels. People have prejudices and they act on these prejudices as a daily function of human life. We learn to discriminate based on the stimuli presented to us. We know what we like and dislike based on our past experience. However, the law provides protection against some types of discrimination and its exercise. Discrimination based on race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age clearly is unlawful and as members of a public authority, each employee and Authority Member has a duty to uphold these legal principles.

The legal framework though is much more complex than that, and it is in making sense of the complex legislation, such as the Sex Discrimination Act and the Employment Equality Regulations on Religion and Belief, Age and Sexual Orientation. It includes aspects of such diverse legislation as that for Employment Relations, Protection from Harassment and the Public Order. (See section on The Legal Framework).

It is this broad framework that encompasses and defines equalities work today.

### Diversity

Diversity, however, is much more about good management practice and is based on the principle that a diverse workforce is a workforce that is better able to deliver organisational objectives. Capturing and valuing the diversity of our workforce is a positive outcome, which is based on firm business goals.

We have two other strong cases for following this route and ensuring we are effective in our approach to both equality and diversity. Clearly there is a moral case for doing this. We are committed to addressing the disadvantage suffered by many groups, as well as ensuring that unlawful discrimination is tackled effectively by the organisation.

There is also a legal case to ensure that we meet all of our statutory obligations and ensure that we follow good practice and are mindful of legislation, both current and in development and have a clear understanding of how it affects our functions and policies.

## The Legal Framework

The Authority acknowledges its legal responsibilities in relation to equalities, including the requirements of the following legislation and any other legislation impacting on equality and diversity and subsequent regulations and case law:

- Equal Pay Act 1970, 1975, Amendment 1984
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975, 1979 and Amendment 1986
- Race Relations Act 1976, Amendment 2000, Amendment Regulations 2003
- Employment Act 1989
- Children Act 1989
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Amendment 2005
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Working Time Regulations 1998
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Sex Discrimination (Gender reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999
- Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2000
- Part-Time Workers 2000
- Regulations on Fixed Term Workers 2001
- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Gender Recognition Act 2004
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- The Equality Act 2006, 2010

We will ensure that our policies and procedures are compliant with the above legislation, as well as Codes of Practice and guidance published by national equalities bodies and Commissions.

### Types of Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person or group of people are treated on certain grounds less favourably than another. For example, this might occur on the basis of a person's age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, marital or civil partnership status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, culture, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity or other differences or a combination of the above.

There are instances when the law allows for people to be treated differently. This is when a particular requirement or condition is objectively justifiable e.g. where the holder of the job provides individuals with personal services and those services can only be provided by a particular sex or the same racial group.

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Discrimination can be direct, indirect, intentional or unintentional, and can be caused by individuals, groups or institutions.

At an Institutional level, prejudices become embedded in policies, practices, procedures and criteria for decision making. These discriminate with the effect of excluding some people in favour of others. This could lead to unequal treatment, inequitable distribution of opportunities, power and resources, which in turn could deprive some people of a better quality of life.

This collective failure of an organisation to provide appropriate and professional service or employment conditions can also be because of a person's age, race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief.

At an individual level, a person may hold negative attitudes and use language that could result in inappropriate discriminatory behaviour or outcomes, which are unacceptable.

### **The Equalities Legislation and Human Rights**

The Authority intends to discharge all its statutory Equality and Human Rights duties through its Equality Scheme and ensure that Equality, Diversity and Human Rights are continued to be mainstreamed throughout our service delivery, into all systems and structures, into all policies, processes and procedures, into the organisation and the culture, into everything we do.

The Authority recognises that people may suffer unfair treatment, discrimination and be disadvantaged for many reasons, including:

- Race
- Gender
- Gender Re-assignment
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or Belief
- Age
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

The Authority's position in protecting these characteristics in relation to the Equalities and Human Rights legislation is detailed below:

### **THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998**

In October 2000, the Human Rights Act came into effect in the UK. Human Rights are fundamentally important in maintaining a fair and civilised society. Human Rights are rights and freedoms that belong to all individuals regardless of their nationality and citizenship.

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The Human Rights Act has the following implications for the work of public authorities:-

- It makes it unlawful for public authorities to act in a way that is incompatible with a Convention right.
- It should mean that people across society are treated with respect for their human rights, promoting values such as dignity, fairness, equality and respect.

There are 16 basic rights in the Human Rights Act. They concern matters of life and death, like freedom from torture and being killed, but they also cover rights in everyday life, such as what a person can say and do, their beliefs, their right to a fair trial and other basic entitlements.

It is essential for the Service to understand these rights and take them into account in our day-to-day activities and policies.

The Service is committed to ensuring that Human Rights legislation is adhered to and embedded in all policies. We firmly believe that all people we serve and employ should be treated with dignity and respect with regards to employment and the services they receive. Service provision incorporates human rights' considerations which meets the needs of individual users wherever practicable, contributing to improving opportunities and quality of life.

### **THE EQUALITY ACT 2006**

The Act's main provisions were to:

- establish the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) and define its purpose and functions;
- make unlawful discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises, and the exercise of public functions;
- enable provision to be made for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises and the exercise of public functions; and
- create a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between women and men ('the gender duty'), and prohibit sex discrimination and harassment in the exercise of public functions.

The CEHR took on the work of the existing equality Commissions (the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), and the Disability Rights Commission (DRC)) and will additionally assume responsibility for promoting equality and combating unlawful discrimination in

three new strands, namely sexual orientation, religion or belief, and age. The CEHR also has responsibility for the promotion of human rights.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE EQUALITY ACT**

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (c. 65) (SDA), Race Relations Act 1976 (c. 74) (RRA) and the Disability Rights Commission Act 1999 (c. 17) (DRCA) created the EOC, CRE, and DRC respectively. The founding legislation confers responsibility on the Commissions for combating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity as regards gender, race or disability. The EOC has responsibilities for the SDA and Equal Pay Act 1970, the CRE has responsibility for the RRA and the DRC enforces the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/1661) and Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/1660) made unlawful discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and religion or belief in employment and vocational training. These Regulations implement the UK's obligations under the EC Employment Directive (Directive 2000/78/EC).

Following this legislation towards the end of 2006, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 (S.I. 2006/1031) were introduced to prohibit age discrimination.

### **Equality and diversity**

The provisions require the CEHR to promote understanding of, and encourage good practice in relation to, equality and diversity, promote equality of opportunity, promote awareness and understanding of rights under the equality enactments and to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment, including through using its enforcement powers.

### **Human rights**

The provisions require the CEHR to promote understanding of the importance of human rights, encourage good practice in relation to human rights, and promote awareness, understanding and protection of human rights. In addition, the CEHR will be required to encourage public authorities to comply with section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (c.42) (HRA) (which prohibits them from acting in a way which is incompatible with the Convention rights as defined in section 1 of the HRA).

## THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is a single legal framework, providing clearer, streamlined law that is more effective at tackling disadvantage and discrimination and helping employers to comply more easily with the law.

The Act has a staggered introduction, beginning in April 2010, and will introduce a single public sector equality duty. This duty will continue to cover race, gender, and disability but will be extended to cover age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity explicitly, and gender reassignment in full.

The new Equality Duty will require a range of public bodies to consider the needs of diverse groups in the community when designing and delivering public services so that people can get fairer opportunities and better public services.

The new duty includes a requirement to strengthen the provisions for a socio-economic duty, ensuring public authorities work to reduce the socio-economic inequalities people face. It also recognises that the public sector has an important opportunity to use its purchasing power to promote equality. As a public sector organisation we already have a legal obligation to consider the needs of women, disabled people and ethnic minorities and the new Equality Duty will extend this.

The Act will continue to outlaw and strengthen age discrimination, and will tackle the gender pay gap and contain a power to require reporting on the gender pay gap.

The Act also expands the way positive action can be used so that employers can pick someone for a job from an underrepresented group when they have the choice between two or more candidates who are equally suitable, provided they do not have a general policy of doing so in every case.

The Act will not allow positive discrimination, which will remain unlawful.

Positive discrimination means employing or promoting people just because they are from an under-represented group, even if they are less suitable. The Equality Act does not allow this to happen and does not allow employment quotas.

Positive action is not about banning certain groups from certain jobs. It is about allowing employers to increase diversity if they want their workforce to better reflect the local community or customer base, and they are under-represented currently.

## **Race Equality**

Our commitment is to ensure that irrespective of racial, ethnic or national origins, all people have the same rights of access to services and employment. All people will be treated with equality, dignity and respect when having any contact with the Service. The Service acknowledges that its services must be tailored to meet the needs of all groups to ensure that the services are fair and responsive to their needs.

As a public authority we have a statutory duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity; and
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

We strive to fulfil this duty through the implementation of our action plan, however in addition to our statutory duties we understand our responsibility to the local community and our workforce to ensure racism is tackled and eliminated both in service delivery and employment.

Black and minority ethnic people are currently under-represented in the Service, and our approach is to strategically target positive action initiatives, via a recruitment strategy, to encourage applications from such groups. We emphasise our commitment, wherever possible, to reflecting the composition of the local community in our workforce and have set and published targets for the employment of underrepresented groups. We strive to achieve these targets through the systematic use of our Equality Scheme along with monitoring of both our recruitment and service delivery. We continue to introduce appropriate positive action measures to try to achieve this goal by making full use of the perspectives, knowledge, skills and experience of people from underrepresented groups to ensure their personal and professional development and retention within the organisation.

We engage in community events and support initiatives that will raise the profile of the Service amongst under-represented groups, and ensure our community engagement strategy is sustained. This is coupled with our approach to integrated risk management, which seeks to target services to those at highest risk in society, and sustain engagement with them.

## **Gender Equality**

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority acknowledges that, historically, women more than men may experience unfair discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace and society generally. We are committed to promoting equality for all female employees and members of the public in our role as an employer and as a Service.

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The Equality Act of 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to place a statutory duty on all public authorities, including HWFRA, known as the Gender Equality Duty. This duty includes discrimination in pay, and everything that a public authority does including its employment functions, its services and public functions, such as its regulatory and enforcement work to the extent they are relevant to gender equality. This duty requires us to:

- Eliminate unlawful sex discrimination; and
- Promote equality of opportunity between women and men.

The Sex Discrimination Act (1976) outlaws sex discrimination in the workplace and in the provision of goods and services and if a man or woman experiences gender discrimination they can challenge it through the legal system.

The Equality Act (2006) introduces the above duties on public authorities to promote gender equality, similar to the existing duties to promote race equality and disability equality. These duties place clear responsibility for taking action on equality with public authorities themselves, rather than relying on individuals to take action. The Gender equality duty requires public bodies to ensure that their policies on services and employment address the different needs of women and men including those that identify as transgender or transsexual. This requires public authorities to set gender equality goals in the design and delivery of services, and the way staff are employed showing the action that will be taken to implement them.

Public authorities are expected to provide evidence that due regard has been paid to the duty in relation to core functions of policy development, service design and delivery, and employment.

Public Authorities have to listen to what women and men say about their needs, choose priority goals for change, and take action conducting and publishing gender impact assessments.

The Authority recognises that women are under-represented in the uniformed Service, and in response has targets for the employment of women. The Service is determined to increase the profile of the Service amongst women, and increase awareness of the employment opportunities, with a view to increasing the number of applications from women.

We acknowledge that there is potential for prejudice and discrimination against transgender people. Breach of the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999, is unlawful. We will provide support to prevent discrimination against transgender people who may have undergone, or about to undergo, gender reassignment. Like any other employee, we will not discriminate on the grounds of sex in pay and treatment in employment and vocational training.

## Disability Equality

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to equality of opportunity, both in the provision of services and in our role as an employer. We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to, and will work towards, the elimination of unfair and unlawful discrimination against disabled people to ensure equal treatment in all our policies, procedures, practices and access to services.

The Disability Rights Commission advocate the Social Model of Disability as an ideal, to which HWFRS will continue to adopt the Social Model of Disability and ensure that our staff understands that it is not their impairments which disabled people but society's response to those impairments. We will continue to seek ways of dismantling barriers which may prevent disabled people from participating in public life.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 provides disabled people with protection from discrimination in a range of areas, including employment. This means that employers:

- Must not directly discriminate against a disabled person.
- Must not treat a disabled person less favourably for a reason related to his or her disability, unless that treatment can be justified.
- Must make reasonable adjustments in the recruitment and employment of disabled people. This can include, for example, adjustments to recruitment and selection procedures, to terms and conditions of employment, to working arrangements and physical changes to the premises or equipment

The Disability Equality Duty which is similar to the Race and Gender Equality Duties came into force on 4 December 2006 and moves equality forward by requiring public authorities such as Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority to tackle disability discrimination in a practical way by introducing policies that actively promote opportunities and so prevent discrimination taking place.

The Duty requires public authorities to adopt a proactive approach, therefore preventing discrimination. They must mainstream disability equality into all decisions, policies and actions rather than just reacting to individual cases.

The basic requirements for a public authority under the Disability Equality Duty when carrying out its functions is to have due regard to the following:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act.

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- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

A direct difference between this Act and the other Acts is the requirement of public authorities within the Specific Duties of the Act to formally involve disabled people in the development of the scheme. HWFRS have involved people with disabilities in key aspects of the scheme including:

- The identification of barriers faced by people with a disability.
- Advice and guidance during access audits of stations.
- Identifying priority areas for progress within our action plan.

### Sexual Orientation Equality

From 1 December 2003, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations made it unlawful to discriminate against workers because of sexual orientation.

These Regulations apply to all employment and vocational training and include recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals and training.

It is unlawful on the grounds of sexual orientation to:

1. Discriminate **directly** against anyone – that is, to treat them less favourably than others because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

For example it is unlawful to:

- decide not to employ someone
- dismiss them
- refuse to provide them with training
- deny them promotion
- give them adverse terms and conditions

2. Discriminate **indirectly** against anyone – that is, to apply a criterion, rule, provision or practice, although not aimed at a person directly, which disadvantages that person because of their particular sexual orientation unless it can be objectively justified.
3. Subject someone to harassment.
4. Victimise someone because they have made or intend to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in

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relation to a complaint of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

5. Discriminate against someone, in certain circumstances, after the working relationship has ended, (e.g. in the provision of references).

Within the Regulations, sexual orientation is defined as:

- Orientation towards persons of the same sex (lesbians and gay men).
- Orientation towards persons of the opposite sex (heterosexual).
- Orientation towards persons of the same sex and the opposite sex (bisexual).

### **Religion or Belief Equality**

From 2 December 2003, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations made it unlawful to discriminate against workers because of religion or similar belief.

These Regulations apply to vocational training and all facets of employment – including recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals and training. (The Equality Act extends the unlawful discrimination to cover buying services, renting a house or flat, schooling and public authority plans which affect people).

It is unlawful on the grounds of religion or belief to:

1. Discriminate directly against anyone. That is, to treat them less favourably than others because of their religion or belief.

For example it is unlawful to:

- decide not to employ someone
- dismiss them
- refuse to provide them with training
- deny them promotion
- give them adverse terms and conditions

because they follow, or do not follow, a particular religion or belief.

2. Discriminate indirectly against anyone. That is, to apply a criterion, rule, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular religion or belief unless it can be objectively justified.
3. Subject someone to harassment.
4. Victimise someone because they have made or intend to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief.

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5. Discriminate or harass someone in certain circumstances after the working relationship has ended, (e.g. the provision of a reference).

Exceptions may be made in very limited circumstances if there is a genuine occupational requirement for the worker to be of a particular religion or belief in order to do the job or to comply with the religious or belief ethos of the organisation.

Religion or belief is defined as being any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief. This does not include any philosophical or political belief unless it is similar to religious belief. It will be for the Employment Tribunals and other Courts to decide whether particular circumstances are covered by the Regulations.

### **Age Equality**

From 1 October 2006 the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 made it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees, job seekers and trainees because of their age.

The regulations cover employment and vocational training including access to help and guidance, recruitment, promotion, training and development, termination, terms and conditions of employment.

The Regulations make it unlawful on the grounds of age to:

1. Discriminate directly against anyone. That is, to treat them less favourably than others because of their age.

For example it is unlawful to:

- decide not to employ someone
- dismiss them
- refuse to provide them with training
- deny them promotion
- give them adverse terms and conditions

2. Discriminate indirectly against anyone. That is, to apply a criterion, rule, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular age unless it can be objectively justified.
3. Subject someone to harassment.
4. Victimise someone because they have made or intend to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of age.
5. Discriminate or harass someone in certain circumstances after the working relationship has ended, (e.g. the provision of a reference).

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Employers could be responsible for the acts of employees who discriminate on the grounds of age.

There will be a national default retirement age of 65, making compulsory retirement below 65 unlawful unless objectively justified. Employees will have the right to request to work beyond 65 or any other age set by an organisation and the employer has a duty to consider such requests. These regulations do not affect State Pensions.

There are limited circumstances when discrimination may be lawful (e.g. objective justifications, exceptions, exemptions, and genuine occupational requirement).

## Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority Profile

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service are located in the Heart of England and extend from the metropolitan borders of the West Midlands to the rural southern borderland between England and Wales. The geographical area amounts to some 390,000 hectares and has a total population of around 730,000. It covers two counties, Worcestershire in the east with a population of 549,300 and Herefordshire to the west with 176,000. Both counties are largely rural, however, Worcestershire's population mainly reside in the towns of Worcester, Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Evesham, Kidderminster, Malvern and Redditch.

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority is constituted under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The Fire and Rescue Authority comprises of Elected Members from Herefordshire and Worcestershire, reflecting the populations of each County.

The Authority Members are people who have been elected as Fire Authority Members with the purpose of:

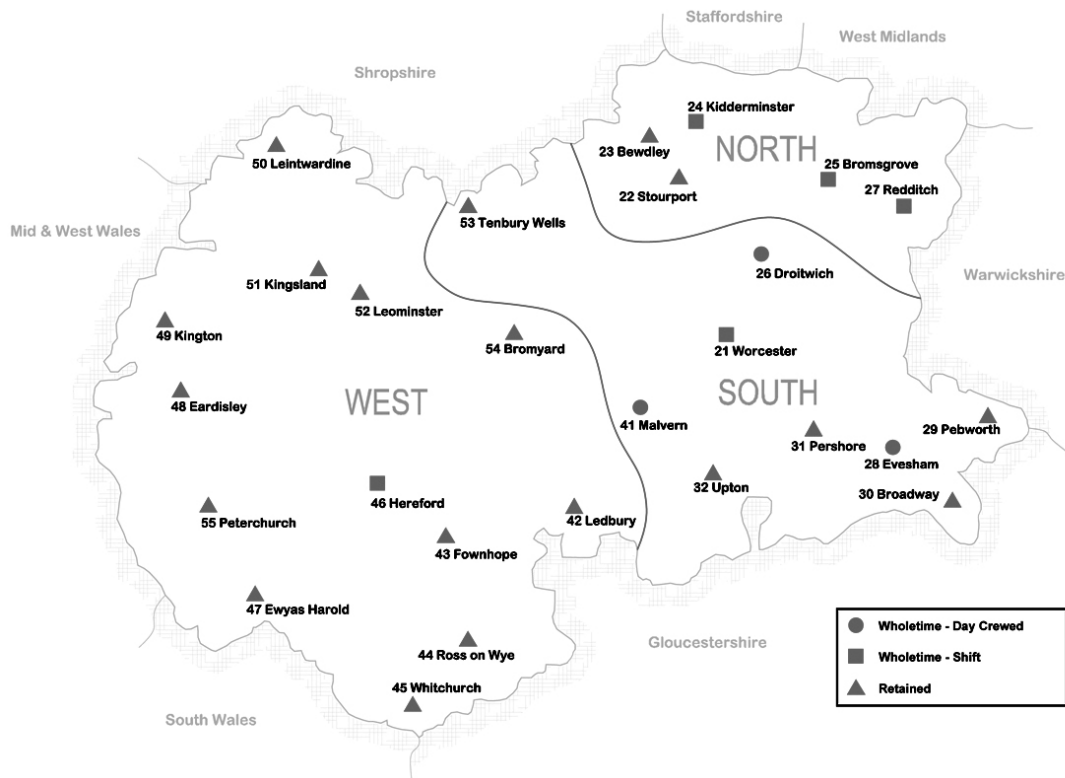
- Setting the strategic direction of the Authority and monitor service delivery.
- Developing and maintaining a scheme of delegated or reserved powers.
- Putting in place clearly documented and understood management processes for policy development, implementation and review and for decision making, monitoring and control and reporting, and formal procedural and financial regulations to govern the conduct of the Authority's business.
- Ensuring that the role of the executive Members is properly defined in writing to include the responsibility for providing effective strategic leadership to the Authority and for ensuring that the Authority successfully discharges its overall responsibilities for the activities of the organisation as a whole.
- Ensuring that a senior officer is made responsible to the Authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given to it on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control.
- Ensuring that a senior officer is made responsible to the Authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes, regulations and other relevant statements of good practice are complied with.
- Adopting clear protocols and codes of conduct to ensure that the implications for supporting community political leadership for the whole Authority are acknowledged and resolved.

## Station Locations/District Boundaries

The Fire Service is structured into 3 districts, North, South and West and contains:

- 5 Whole-time Stations (24 hour crewing)
- 3 Day-crewed Stations, with a retained response at other times
- 18 Retained Stations

Crewing patterns reflect the relative incidence of fire and other related emergency responses made by the Service.



### Fire Service Profile

Area in Hectares	390,859
Population	729804
Fire Stations	27
Wholetime Uniformed Posts	332
Retained Uniformed Posts	369
Control Staff Posts	21
Non-Uniformed Posts	117
Operational Vehicles	61

## Our Vision

*Our vision is to make Herefordshire and Worcestershire safer from fire and other hazards and to improve community well-being*

We are committed to the values of the National Fire and Rescue Service, building upon these values locally to reflect the profile and make up of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. These values are a way of recognising the standard at which we operate, the ethos behind the Service and can act as a template for every employee, in every situation.

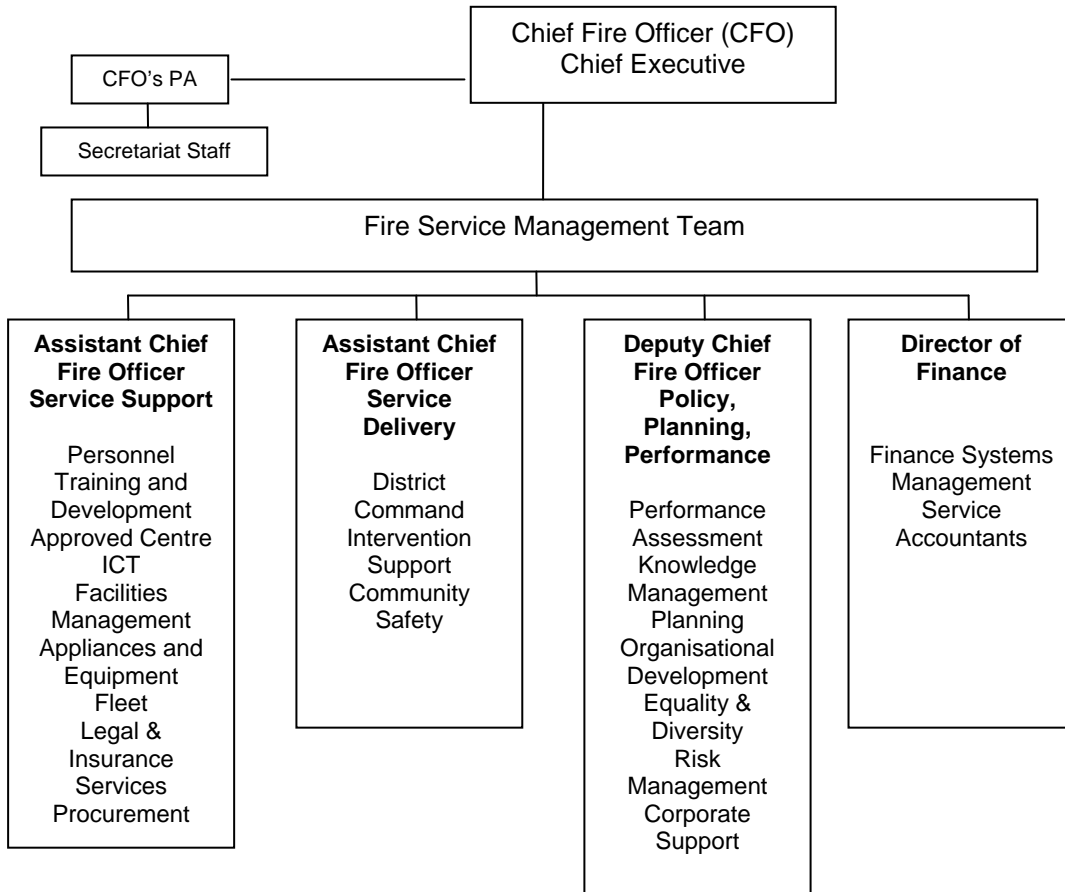
The values display the spirit in which all personnel pursue our organisational aims and objectives, to ensure that the service we provide is effective, equitable and positively supports the communities we serve.

## Our Commitment, Our Values, Our Future

<p><u>We Value Innovation, Change and Learning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We encourage critical and lateral thinking and manage constructive challenge;</li> <li>▪ We take responsibility for improving our performance;</li> <li>▪ We develop ourselves and others to achieve our full potential;</li> <li>▪ We take responsibility for our actions;</li> <li>▪ We encourage problem solving at all levels;</li> <li>▪ We capture good ideas from wherever they originate; and</li> <li>▪ We learn from our experiences.</li> </ul>	<p><u>We Value our People</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We are committed to developing our people;</li> <li>▪ We build relationships that are based upon mutual trust and respect;</li> <li>▪ We work in an inclusive way;</li> <li>▪ We recognise that everyone has a contribution to make;</li> <li>▪ We respect and see difference as a strength;</li> <li>▪ We behave in an ethical way;</li> <li>▪ We promote well-being of others;</li> <li>▪ We allow empathy to flourish;</li> <li>▪ We are active and participative listeners;</li> <li>▪ We communicate with honesty and integrity; and</li> <li>▪ We say 'thank-you'.</li> </ul>
<p><u>We Value Diverse Communities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We are committed to serving all parts of our communities;</li> <li>▪ We recognise that diverse needs, expectations and risks need diverse solutions;</li> <li>▪ We always fulfil our responsibilities to people, communities and the environment;</li> <li>▪ We remove barriers to entry and seek true diversity to reflect the communities we serve;</li> <li>▪ We will challenge inappropriate behaviour; and</li> <li>▪ We actively seek feedback.</li> </ul>	<p><u>We Value our Fire and Rescue Service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We are passionate about maintaining/improving our great reputation;</li> <li>▪ We make work rewarding and motivating;</li> <li>▪ We all pull together in the right direction;</li> <li>▪ We are a team and not a family;</li> <li>▪ We enjoy and celebrate our work;</li> <li>▪ We focus on priorities by setting clear objectives and accountabilities; and</li> <li>▪ We provide the right service at the right time and in the right place.</li> </ul>

## Organisational Structure

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services' organisational structure is detailed below.



## **Involvement and Commitment to Equality and Diversity Nationally and Regionally**

### **National**

#### **Chief Fire Officers Association**

The Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) provides independent professional advice to government on fire prevention, protection and intervention issues as well as on a wide range of community safety and rescue matters.

CFOA supports equality and diversity through:

- Equality and diversity champions – these are individual members of the association who have a strong personal commitment to improving fire and rescue service performance in equality and diversity and have volunteered to undertake a specific champion role with regard to the various equality strands.
- The equality and diversity professionals group – membership consists of senior equality and diversity representatives from each CFOA region, additional members with particular interest or expertise and representatives from the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG)
- The equality and diversity stakeholder group is comprised of representatives from a range of fire and rescue professional organisation, equality and diversity groups and trade unions. Members contribute to the development of good practice guidance documents and the overall progress of equality and diversity.

#### **The Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA)**

The Asian Fire Service Association works with the National Fire and Rescue Service and supporting agencies to enhance equality and diversity, and associated values.

The objectives of AFSA are to promote good race relations and equality of opportunity, improve community safety, and support community cohesion activity, within the Fire Services of the UK and associated agencies. Along with:

1. Providing support and informal mentoring of members of AFSA.

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2. Working in partnership with the Fire Services of the UK and associated agencies to improve community safety, especially within socially excluded communities.
3. Supporting and facilitating inter-faith working and improve community interaction and cohesion.
4. Influencing the direction of policies and procedures nationally, regionally and locally, in line with equality principles and anti-discriminatory practices.
5. Providing a forum for networking and act as a social group that celebrates the diversity of our members.

### **National Disabled Fire Association**

The National Disabled Fire Association was set up in 2007 with a vision to support, inform and connect people living with and affected by disabilities, to raise awareness of the issues surrounding disability, and assist the UK Fire and Rescue Services to support employees and potential employees with disabilities appropriately and deliver its services to disabled people in the community appropriate and effectively.

The Service works with the association to ensure that the duties associated with the Disability Discrimination Act are met and implemented effectively and efficiently to meet our staff and Service users' needs. Advice where necessary can be obtained to support the internal work of our Disability Focus Group.

### **Networking Women in the Fire Service**

Networking Women in the Fire Service is a voluntary organisation established in 1993. The organisation is made up of individual members from all roles within the UK Fire Service.

The main objective of the organisation is to make the Fire and Rescue Service a place where men and women can work together professionally and harmoniously. The organisation provides support, challenge, advice and research.

As a Service we have NWFS representatives who promote the objectives of the National group internally and who can provide advice and guidance and who support our Women's Action Committee group.

### **Stonewall**

In January 2009 we made the commitment to join Stonewall, the leading charity for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people. We became part of their Diversity Champions Programme enabling us to ensure that best practice in employment and service delivery is progressed and real difference is made in this area. Ongoing advice and guidance has been received enabling the Service to conduct a gap analysis against the Workplace Equality Index providing an overview of the improvements that are required; which have been fed into the Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2010 – 2013.

## **Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRSEF)**

Since the time of the Commission for Race Equality's, Race Equality Means Quality standard, HWFRS have engaged in assessing its practices, procedures and policies against an equality framework with a view to achieve improved performance and to ensure we are working in an environment of self-awareness, allowing us to judge how well we are succeeding in the organisation.

The Equality Standard for Local Government enabled us to continue this improvement process, this was superseded by the Equality Framework for Local Government in 2007. This framework is one of the main drivers for ensuring the delivery of this Scheme by providing a means for determining actions required, targets to be achieved and the means of reviewing and auditing achievement.

In 2008 we successfully self assessed ourselves at level 4 against the Equality Standard for Local Government. Since this achievement the Fire and Rescue Service specific Equality Framework (FRSEF) was launched in 2009. The FRSEF recognises and addresses equality and diversity objectives that are a priority for the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Framework has 3 levels of achievement, of which HWFRS are working towards 'Excellent':

- Developing Understanding the importance of equality
- Achieving Developing better outcomes
- Excellent Making a difference

The framework arranges activities into 5 priority areas of performance:

- Leadership and promoting inclusion
- Accountability
- Effective service delivery and community engagement
- Employment and training
- Evaluation and sharing good practice

Appendix one details the characteristics required for the achievement Framework of an 'Excellent' Authority to achieve each of the 3 levels of the Framework.

## **Regional**

### **Regional Equality and Diversity Practitioners Group**

HWFRS is part of a strong Regional group of Fire and Rescue Services, each Service has a dedicated equality and diversity practitioner or department. The regional practitioners group meets bi-monthly with the purpose of progressing

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equality and diversity initiatives; supporting each other through sharing information and benchmarking.

Over the past few years the regional practitioners have been working on a variety of initiatives to improve and progress equality and diversity within the workplace.

The main priority has been improving leadership through the development of a framework for the region's equality and diversity policies, strategies and schemes (action plans) to enable Fire and Rescue Authorities to work towards the achievement of the 'Excellent' level within the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework. This project has focused upon creating an Equality Management system and Auditing process which provides a clear framework which measures performance against equality. This management system has seen key personnel within each of the regional fire services become fully trained in the auditing process against the equality framework with further training for the practitioners to train other staff, adding resilience within the region.

Currently there is no recognised Management/Auditing System, which is accredited by ISO to ensure the management, development and progression of Equality and Diversity to ensure good practice and legislative compliance.

Other areas of work have involved sharing good practice through a communications toolkit; improving community engagement and outreach work; along with benchmarking of function areas and information to support equality progress for example, equality training initiatives, procurement practices, equality monitoring and community safety.

### **HWFRS LGBT Working Group and Birmingham Pride**

HWFRS have a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Working group which was established in 2008 along with an LGBT Chief Officer Lead. The original purpose of the group was to be advocates for sexual orientation equality and help to promote positive images and messages, along with organising our attendance at Birmingham Pride 2008, 2009. It is hoped that this group becomes a support network.

2010 will see HWFRS attending Birmingham Pride for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row, helping Birmingham city celebrate LGBT culture.

Our internal LGBT Working group has specific terms of reference for its functioning working to:

- Improve the working environment for LGBT employees, and service provision for the LGBT community.
- Take forward the actions in our Equality and Diversity Scheme – Delivering Equality for All 2007 – 2010.
- Raise awareness of LGBT issues amongst the workforce.
- Seek to identify and eradicate discrimination.

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- Share knowledge, information and good practice.
- Support the scrutiny and review of our Scheme.
- Establish a group of “critical friends” to provide direction, scrutiny and guidance.

### **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Support Network**

The Regional Fire Service has established an LGBT network group. LGBT members from all of our Services in our region are invited to attend with the purpose of being a support to each other and the opportunity to share information and experiences.

### **Gay Worcester**

In support of our National work with Stonewall and our Regional work with the LGBT Support Network; HWFRS are working with Gay Worcester who are the independent organisation for LGBT initiatives locally within Worcestershire. Gay Worcester support HWFRS with specialist knowledge and guidance, helping us to protect our LGBT communities we serve proactively, efficiently and effectively.

## The Service's Departments

### *How we deliver our Services*

The Service is structured into three main business units and a Finance department:

#### **Service Support**

##### Equality and Diversity in Employment

The Authority is committed to all aspects of equality of opportunity in employment. In particular, the Authority will ensure that there are adequate policies, strategies and procedures in place to enable the Authority to promote equal opportunities effectively.

Systems are further being developed to ensure that employment data is recorded and published in accordance with the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, Disability Discrimination Act and the Equality Act.

Service Support is a broad directorate, incorporating several key functions:

#### **Human Resources**

This department includes Personnel Services, who have broad responsibility for all recruitment based monitoring procedures, as well as driving the positive action plan within the people strategy. Also within HR is the Training and Development function. This includes monitoring and development of an appraisal process, as well as delivering internal training and development opportunities, and includes an Approved Centre for NVQs. This section has clear evidence for supporting individual training needs, and ensuring opportunities are delivered equitably and fairly.

##### The People Strategy:

The People Strategy is a medium term plan that sets out a strategy aimed at achieving the right number of skilled people in the right place and at the right time. This will deliver more customer focused front-line services helping to drive down risk to life and improve community sustainability. Recognising the importance of people as a key resource, the strategy places an emphasis on people management, workforce planning and workforce development.

Skills and knowledge are essential to our ability to provide efficient and effective services, preventing fires and saving lives. We will continue to develop our staff to make sure they understand value and respect difference.

This aims to support the creation and maintenance of a dignified, stimulating working environment where staff are valued and encouraged to maximise

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their contribution to the effectiveness of the Service in achieving its aims and objectives.

Equality and diversity will be a mandatory element of the competence framework within all roles across the Service, and generic and specific Equality and Diversity training will be provided in order to ensure that a detailed understanding is developed for all our employees and refresher training is available when required.

- Training specifically in relations to the duties within the acts.
- Four levels of training – Induction, Foundation, Management and Strategic levels of training will be developed and delivered.
- More formal system of training needs analysis through the appraisal process will highlight any gaps in knowledge or understanding, and subsequent training will be provided.

To supplement training, every member of the Service will be issued with a copy of the following documents to clarify the expected behaviour required of our staff:

- Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Harassment and Bullying Policy

All personnel in the Service will have an appraisal twice a year. During this time both organisational and personal objectives will be discussed on an individual basis and a personal development plan developed.

### Recruitment and Selection:

Continuous reviews are undertaken within the Personnel function and specifically with regards to the recruitment and selection process. This enables us to establish whether any improvements can be made to the process to encourage a wider pool of applicants also ensuring that all processes are non-discriminatory and do not pose an adverse impact upon any minority groups.

Positive Action is used as a tool to target and encourage interest and applications from under-represented groups such as women and Black and Minority Ethnic people. This will be part of the Service's continued work towards achieving targets for the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities into the uniformed Service and will be conducted in line with our recruitment and selection policy and our People Strategy.

HWFRS will ensure that vacancies are accessible to people from all sections of the community, where necessary information will be provided in other formats and alternative languages. We will also make available to all applicants for posts that the recruitment and selection strategy exists and their right to be treated with dignity and respect through the process.

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Potential or current employees who have or develop a disability, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act, research will be conducted into making reasonable adjustments to accommodate the individual's specific circumstances. This research will be carried out in consultation with the individual and specialist agencies. People becoming disabled whilst in employment will be given positive help to retain them in the Service.

### Guaranteed Interview Scheme:

HWFRS operates a guaranteed interview scheme. We will ensure all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for a job vacancy will be guaranteed with an interview and will be considered on their abilities and skills for the role they have applied for.

### Discipline and Grievance Procedures:

The discipline and grievance procedures are issued to everyone as part of our induction process, in line with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) Code of Practice. We monitor all disciplines or grievances based upon any of the Equalities Legislation.

### Equal Pay:

All support staff posts have been through a job evaluation process to ensure equity between roles. All operational posts are aligned to the national Fire Service pay award, and as such equivalent roles attract equivalent remuneration.

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:

In order to meet the needs of the community and staff employed at HWFRS, it is important to monitor and analyse employment data which will enable us to progress and improve our performance and service delivery. Employment monitoring data is also a specific duty under the Equality Acts. This data will be monitored quarterly at Strategic Performance Review meetings. Should any discrepancies arise in relation to the monitoring undertaken, this is raised with the Equality and Diversity Officer, who will investigate the reasons and identify any actions which may need to be undertaken to overcome any unfairness, disadvantage or possible discrimination. Where necessary, actions will be added to the Equality Action plan to ensure recommendations are progressed.

Outcomes from Monitoring will also aide the work we intend to undertake in relation to Positive Action initiatives, enabling us to identify where research and initiatives can be targeted in order to identify and remove any barriers that may exist.

Monitoring of the following areas is essential to establish trends and information which can help us measure adverse impact upon particular minority groups:

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- The number of staff in post.
- The number of applicants for employment, training and promotion.
- The number of staff in receipt of training.
- The number of staff who benefit or suffer detriment as a result of performance assessment procedures.
- Staff who are involved in grievance procedures.
- Staff subject to disciplinary procedures.
- The number of leavers.

### **Training and Development**

The Training and Development department provide training to operational firefighters, and develop staff to a point where they are able to operate safely carrying out the requirements within the Integrated Risk Management Plan and the Fire and Rescue Services Act.

Support is provided to staff making reasonable adjustments where required in order to ensure that people are operating to their maximum competency. Support is also provided to members of the public through awareness days providing people with an overview of the requirements of the job i.e strength and fitness programmes.

### **Approved Centre**

The Approved Centre focuses upon the development and assessment of competence of staff, ensuring that all firefighters remain competent in their roles throughout their career. This department manages the NVQ process which assesses competence as well as the assessment centre and promotions process.

### **Asset Management**

This includes responsibility for all property, vehicle, ICT and operational logistics. There is clear evidence here of equality procedures being delivered through the procurement processes, as well as assets developed with equality aims in mind. Information Communication Technology (ICT) is also a key area of this function operating proactively and reactively if IT based reasonable adjustments for staff become necessary.

### Access Audits

HWFRS has carried out Access Audits and prepared written reports on 27 fire stations throughout Herefordshire and Worcestershire, to identify any physical barriers that exist which may prevent or hinder access, by people with disabilities. Pertemps Mouzer was engaged to review the Access Audit reports and to highlight recommendations for improvements.

Pertemps Mouzer's review of the Access Audit reports did not consider HWFRS's responsibilities as an employer solely as a 'Service Provider'. The duties and responsibilities placed on service providers by the Disability Discrimination Act are not related to 'making buildings accessible', rather than to ensure that the 'service' provided is given 'without discrimination'. After the identification of the service provision provided by HWFRS properties and the way in which the buildings are managed, it became apparent that many physical barriers to service provision could be avoided by management policy and procedures. The management of any process of change is progressed through the Property department and Property Strategy Group.

### **Operational Logistics**

Operational logistics houses the Equipment Support, Stores and Fleet sections. Upon request the Equipment Support and Fleet Management section is able to research, source, evaluate, provide and procure new or replacement equipment or vehicles for our operational personnel. The sections also ensure the repair or replacement of defective equipment and vehicles with the minimum of operational downtime. The servicing and licensing of vehicles is also undertaken within the department.

#### Equality and Diversity in Procurement/Contracting:

Under some Equality legislation, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is required to take all reasonable steps to make sure where goods and services are being delivered through an external provider on our behalf, that they meet the same equality standards that we would expect to meet if we were providing the service directly ourselves.

The Head of Asset Management has the responsibility of ensuring that the Service's policies and processes have the provisions of the Equalities Acts along with the best practice requirements of the Commission for Racial Equality Code of Practice for Procurement, in order to ensure that the service provided does not unlawfully discriminate, and ensures service providers comply with our expectations regarding equality.

In addition to complying with national and European Union Public Procurement legislation, HWFRS aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Ensure that contractors, suppliers, volunteers and partners are aware of our position on equality and are clear about their obligation to provide services that are free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Recognise and promote the application of national guidelines and advice, in line with our own contracting procedures.
- Make sure that our selection and tendering processes positively address and include equality considerations that are in line with the procedures mentioned above.
- Provide training for relevant staff in equalities issues for procurement.

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- To ensure that all contracts are delivered in a way which is non-discriminatory, and promotes equality of opportunity for our staff and the general public.
- The goods, works and services provided by contractors cater for all users needs.
- There is no difference in the satisfaction rates of users, or staff from different minority groups.
- Contractors are representative of the local population, or of the area from which the businesses are drawn, with respect to ethnic diversity.

### **Information, Communication and Technology:**

Information is a vital and valuable product of the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) activities and its community fire safety awareness strategies. Information systems are a critical resource in enabling these core activities and communicating work with our staff, citizens and business partners.

The Information, Communication and Technology department are responsible for the provision and management of all information technology and communication equipment used within the Service. The team provides a helpdesk function which supports personnel through the use and maintenance of their equipment.

Special equipment can be obtained for staff who require reasonable adjustments helping them to work more effectively and productively, for example ergonomic mice and keyboards, large monitors, and specific software for people with Dyslexia (e.g. Mind map, Dragon speech software, text to speech, speech to text or specialised spell checkers).

## Service Delivery

### Equality and diversity in Service Delivery

The Authority commits to ensuring that equality considerations are integrated into all relevant areas of service planning, management and delivery. The Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) has had a fundamental impact on reducing risk amongst communities in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

We achieve this through delivering targeted community safety activities and regulatory enforcement in commercial premises, and by ensuring that our emergency interventions to a wide range of hazards, from fire and road accident, to major floods, are safe and efficient.

In general, we will:

- Continue to ensure that the Authority's services are accessible, and are delivered appropriately in order to facilitate equality of treatment.
- Continue to ensure that information about services is offered in appropriate formats and languages to meet the needs of all members of the community.
- Continue to ensure that the Authority's resources are targeted to promote equality of access.
- Improve the monitoring of service provision in relation to age, disability, gender and race, religion and sexual orientation and the similar monitoring of complaints.
- Continue to assess the equality impact of proposed and amended functions and policies.
- Continue to improve the Authority's awareness and understanding of the needs of different groups through effective community profiling, consultation and involvement.
- Continue to train staff to ensure that they are aware of the Equality Scheme and are able to apply it to their own area of work.

Service Delivery is the front end of the organisation's work, and includes all fire stations and community safety work. It can be broadly divided into three main areas of work: Intervention; Prevention; and Protection.

**Intervention:** The rescue element, responding to emergency calls, and provision of an 'all hazards' service, i.e. fire, water, road and home safety. HWFRS also house one of the national Urban Search and Rescue teams.

**Prevention:** This element focuses on the reduction of risk, across all the areas mentioned above. This is also the area where the most work can be carried out with regards to equality, most notably the development and delivery of specifically tailored programmes for at-risk communities. Much of this work uses the data gleaned from the intervention calls and subsequent events, as well as local data and partnership information. Working with partners can be particularly useful when attempting to access socially excluded groups. The Service is able to ascertain risk geographically and

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thematically, identify which communities are at greatest risk, and develop risk mitigation or community safety programmes.

Current programmes that support this drive include:

- 1 A sign posting service;
- 2 Juvenile fire setting counselling;
- 3 Young Firefighters Association;
- 4 Migrant workers programme;
- 5 Arson reduction and the LAA.

Protection: This element focuses on the legal enforcement duties of the Service for businesses and public buildings. Its focus is also supportive and again there may be specific needs the Service will respond to on an equality basis.

### **Community Risk**

This department's main focus is to ensure the safety of the public and the safety of our firefighters responding to an incident.

The main areas of responsibility are to review and create all operational policies and instructions that keep members of the public and firefighters safe during the management of incidents.

The section ensures that the appropriate level of crewing is in place along with the maintenance and management of the command room function at SHQ.

The section's responsibility also includes the review and updating of the Vehicle Mounted Data System Handbook Files. These files contain operational information for crews at incidents to use. This information is risk specific and scientific about sites which may have chemicals or radiation, irreplaceable information or heritage sites. This knowledge helps to assist our crews in protecting the sites and to inform their plan of action. There is a mapping function available on the system, along with local water supplies, flood layer information or places at risk in the event of serious levels of rainfall which enables crews to respond to incidents with as much information as possible to safeguard their response and also the community.

### **Community Safety**

The 2004 Fire and Rescue Services Act introduced the statutory requirement for Fire and Rescue Services to promote Fire Prevention. Thus Community Safety at HWFRS was borne out of a desire to make our communities safer in their own homes. Initially we concentrated on Fire Safety alone, however Road and Water Safety have now been added to our remit in line with the intervention work the FRS carries out.

HWFRS collates information to ensure that we are targeting our most 'at risk' groups in the community with information such as:

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- Local demographic data
- HWFRS incident data
- Partnership data
- Local knowledge
- Community consultation information.

We then identify our priority groups in our Community Safety Strategy 'How to' Guide. This ensures that we are targeting our resources to those most vulnerable in our communities, to help address the disadvantage suffered by these groups in our society. We work closely with our partners and local communities to promote equality of opportunity and respect for diversity.

Activities we engage in with our local communities include:

- Home Fire Safety Checks for the over 55's who are more 'at risk' of fire but less likely to be aware of the importance of smoke alarms, escape plans etc. We also offer specialist smoke alarms for those with disabilities.
- Working with juvenile fire setters to help them understand the consequences of their actions which encourages them away from anti-social behaviour and adds to Safer and Stronger Communities overall
- Promoting the Signposting of vulnerable adults to other support agencies to further develop their safety and security in their own homes. The Community Action Team in Herefordshire is a new initiative lead by HWFRS. The Team identify the most vulnerable in their communities to Signpost; the rural nature of their County making some very 'hard to reach'.

To ensure that Community Safety stays abreast of the needs of our communities we are also committed to the training and development of our staff in all aspects of Equality and Diversity. Recent courses have included Social Marketing, Dyslexia Awareness and Working with Vulnerable Adults.

### Priorities from the Community Safety Strategy:

With regard to fires, the groups who are most 'at risk' are:

- Lone pensioners
- Those with a limiting long term illness
- Single parent families
- Those living in rented accommodation

With regard to road safety, the groups who are most 'at risk' are:

- Higher in males than females aged 10 to 19 years
- Serious injury for males and females aged over 85 years
- Fatality rate greater for those aged over 85 years

With regard to water safety, the groups who are most 'at risk' are:

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- Those aged over 75 years - more frequent falls and decreasing ability to save themselves
- Males aged 15 to 30 years - alcohol plays a part in many drownings

### **Technical Fire Safety**

This section is responsible under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 for enforcing fire safety provision in all premises, with the exception of single private dwellings. The Order also places a duty on us to educate and inform businesses of the risk of fire and the Building Regulations 1995 require us to be consulted on all plans, other than single private dwellings.

Different business premises present different levels of risk and to reflect this we have devised and implemented a risk-based inspection programme. Premises are inspected initially on the outcome of our sliding scale of risk.

In addition to our enforcement activities, we will continue to promote a greater knowledge and understanding of risk amongst businesses and the wider community, reaffirming our belief that prevention, and not emergency intervention, is the most effective means of reducing harm to the people we serve.

### **Policy, Planning and Performance**

This is a central team, led by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) (the organisational lead for equalities), and has two main strands:

The DCFO is chair of the Equality & Diversity Steering Group. This group supports and guides the service's core equalities activity and is the group through which policies and procedures are developed. It also has a number of subgroups that work to develop particular lines of activity on key areas. This currently includes a Women's Action subgroup; a Disability Focus subgroup; an Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Working subgroup; and a Positive Action Committee subgroup. All groups contain members with a specific interest or responsibility regarding delivery. The programme is monitored and fed back into the steering group, and subsequently forms part of the overall equality and diversity strategy.

Initially the Equality and Diversity Steering Group was set-up as FAWAG (Fairness at Work Advisory Group). It has been developed further into the steering group, to ensure it is at the forefront of developments within the service, and is best placed support continuing performance and development.

#### Policy, Planning and Performance:

This section is responsible for all aspects of performance management, planning and risk management. It uses the intelligence gathered from all sources to deliver a broad planning agenda, and includes the development of the IRMP, as well as detailing the annual Corporate Plan.

### Business Planning:

Planning is an essential component of every well-run organisation. A good planning process will provide Service users, partners, managers and individual employees with:

- A clear vision and strategic sense of direction for the organisation.
- Defined aims and objectives to enable the organisation to achieve its strategic priorities.
- **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Agreed upon, Realistic and Time-based) targets against which achievement and progress can be measured.

The FRS's planning process is a golden thread running through the whole organisation. It links strategic direction and objectives with Service policies and priorities to the responsibilities of individual staff.

The Departmental Planning Process for 2010-11 identifies the impact of local Business Objectives upon the strands of Equality and embeds equality objectives and targets at a local level where appropriate.

### Programme and Project Management:

The Programme Management Support Office (PMSO) has been designed to assist Project Managers with support and guidance. This enables the Project Manager to monitor progress and highlight any issues or risks as early as possible.

The Project Management Framework has been designed to ensure that all projects are linked to either Corporate or Department Objectives. This ensures that resources are focused on the appropriate projects. The section has ensured that all corporate projects consider equalities as part of the initial project planning and more formally through the equality impact assessment process during the production of the Business Case. Equality and diversity is also considered as a standard agenda item at Project Assurance Group meetings.

### Performance Monitoring:

Performance monitoring enables:

- Regular monitoring and analysis of the Service's Equality measures through the electronic CorVu Performance Management System and reports provided to Senior Managers.
- Equality and Diversity is a standing Agenda item for Quarterly PMM Performance Review Meetings. This group reviews progress on a whole range of performance indicators, including those for equalities.
- This information and progress on employment targets and service delivery measures is also reported regularly to the Authority.
- This is enhanced with analysis and research on national best practice/top quartile performance to support the achievement of the targets.

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- In depth trend analysis conducted for equality measures and census/demographic information for setting future long term targets.

### Partnership Working:

Partnerships are essential aspects of the Service's way of working. Effective partnerships can help to improve and strengthen service delivery, they can achieve more efficient and effective use of resources, and they can improve our overall performance. The Service is committed to Partnership Working that enhances our service delivery and maximises the opportunities for addressing our vision, our objectives and our priorities.

A partnership is a joint working arrangement between two or more independent partners, which aims to achieve something that they could not do alone. There is usually an agreed common goal, an agreed programme of action and a separate organisational structure or process to achieve this goal. By working together the partners are able to pool their skills, resources and relevant information as well as sharing any risks and rewards.

## External Assessments

The team are also responsible for providing equalities evidence for external assessments. Recent audits and inspections have reported the following in equalities practice:

### **Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2007/08 – Audit Commission - March 2009**

“Commitment to diversity, equality and community engagement is strong and has improved. The FRA's robust approach to diversity and equality is evident in its extensive IRMP research and consultation, retaining level 4 of the equality standard, and in the profile of staff, who closely reflect the BME proportion of local communities and 5 per cent of operational staff are women which is amongst the best nationally.”

“Access to services is effective and improving strongly. The FRA can demonstrate a firm commitment to the diversity and equality agenda, supported by a robust framework of policies and practices around employment and service delivery. Positive outcomes are demonstrated by the attainment of level 4 on the local government equality standard and a score of 95 per cent for the duty to promote race equality.”

### **Charter Mark – February 2009**

Consistent Chartermark accreditation, with strong equalities practices:

“Customer service, engagement and care continue to be strong. This is demonstrated by the successful retention of the Charter Mark with twelve elements assessed as national best practice.”

“Level 4 accreditation of the Equality Standard and Equality Mark supports the commitment to fairness and accessibility.”

“You have good systems and initiatives in place to ensure that users with special needs are consulted.”

Best Practice/Compliance Plus:

3.3.3: You make reasonable changes to your facilities, policies, practices and procedures to help disadvantaged people, those with learning difficulties and members of minority groups who use or access your service.

“Continuing responsiveness to users with special needs. Progressively improving achievements on key diversity BVPIs. The first amputee Wholetime firefighter in Europe. Now therefore considered to be Best Practice.

A great deal of effort has been put into migrant workers, the disadvantaged, vulnerable and hard to reach groups. There is a new Equality and Diversity Officer (2007) and Signposting Officer. The extension of signposting into Worcestershire is particularly noteworthy.

No change to the compliance plus rating with refreshed evidence confirming the many recent examples to support this element.”

#### **Operational Assessment Peer Review – IDeA – June 2009**

“Strengths

- Positive attitudes of staff within HQ
- Equality and diversity is part of the culture”

“HWFRS appears to be very aware of Equality and Diversity (E&D) issues and is 3 years into a 10-12 year programme. E&D appears to be part of the culture at HWFRS and there is a desire to improve. The FRS has achieved level 4 of the Equality Standard and is working towards level 5. There are examples of the use of Equalities Impact Assessments.”

#### **Managing Performance Assessment 2009 – Audit Commission – April 2009**

“Access to services is effective and is reinforcing a more equitable and fair approach to service delivery. The FRA can demonstrate a firm commitment to the diversity and equality agenda, supported by a robust framework of policies and practices around employment and service delivery. Positive outcomes are demonstrated by the attainment of level 4 on the local government equality standard and a score of 95% for the duty to promote race equality. Customer service, engagement and care continue to be a strength. This is demonstrated by the successful retention of the Charter Mark with twelve elements assessed as national best practice.”

“There is a clear commitment to diversity and equality which is evident from the achievement of level 4 on the LGES and through the profile of staff. This closely reflects the BME proportion of local communities and at 5 percent of operational staff the proportion of women firefighters has been historically high nationally. There are plans and positive action initiatives in place to increase performance, but there is still some way to go to achieve the FRA’s diversity targets.”

#### **Organisational Assessment 2009 – Audit Commission – April 2009**

“The FRA delivers a fair and equitable service to meet the diverse and changing needs of local communities. It is successful because it has a clear understanding of its communities through assessing risk, working with community partners and talking and listening to community groups. This helps it to target its work at the most vulnerable homes and those people most at risk.

It is easy for everyone to use services provided by the FRA. This is helping to provide a more equitable and fair approach to service delivery. It provides guidance, training and good employment conditions for staff to develop and improve the way they provide services to communities.

The FRA is among the best services in the country for promoting equality and diversity. It has gained a high standard – level 4 - on the national local government equality standard and a high score of 95% for promoting race

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equality. Customer service, engagement and care is also very good. It has gained a nationally recognised award – the Charter Mark – with twelve important aspects which are national best practice.

The FRA's staff are becoming more representative of the local community. Staff closely reflect the BME proportion of local communities and 5 per cent of staff are women which is fairly high nationally. The FRA works hard to recruit staff from these groups, but there is still some way to go to achieve the FRA's diversity targets."

### Equality and Diversity Peer Assessment

"Members of the team have demonstrated commitment to Equalities by playing a full role in supporting our Equality Assessment and the development of Equalities Peer Assessment across the West Midlands Region. This has resulted in a member of the team becoming a fully qualified Equality and Diversity Peer Auditor through TMS Insight".

### **Organisational Development:**

This section is where Equality and Diversity sits as a function, although it can clearly be seen that those people with responsibility in other areas lead on their individual aspects of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework (formerly the Equality Standard for Local Government). This section is led by the Head of Organisational Development with overall responsibility for strategic development of equalities, with an additional E&D Officer, who has more of a focus on tactical and operational delivery. This section also includes Media and Communications, and Corporate Support. The alignment of tactical equality and diversity support with communications and cultural change is critical to the Authority's strategy of embracing equality and diversity in all its forms.

The Organisational Development strategy incorporates equality objectives, which is one of its five key theme areas for development.

Corporate Support: This section comprises of Committee Services, Reception and Registry and is based at Headquarters.

Committee Services: co-ordinates and supports the work of the Fire and Rescue Authority and provides information about the Authority and its Members, agendas, reports and decisions. The team is the key point of contact for Authority Members and provides Members' Services such as the Member Training and Members' Visits Programmes. In addition, we support the Corporate Risk department in ensuring that the Authority maintains high ethical standards and good corporate governance, for example monitoring Members' Registers of Interest and the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

FRA Members: Each year, two FRA Members are nominated to sit on the Service's Equality and Diversity Steering Group to provide input on behalf of the Authority. One of these two Authority Members is the Member Champion

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for Equality and Diversity who acts as an advocate and provides leadership on Equality & Diversity issues.

All Authority Members receive training annually in relation to equality, which covers the legislative framework and the E&D Strategy. Members also receive annual training on Standards and Ethics which includes the Service's Ethical Framework and Code of Conduct. In addition, Members have been encouraged by the Authority Chair to sign up individually to the Local Government Association Equality and Diversity Charter.

Reception & Registry: provides a front-line reception and switchboard service for HQ, as well as dealing with incoming and outgoing post.

HQ Reception staff participated in the Supporting Customers course, delivered by the Chamber of Commerce, which focused on the equality and diversity aspects of excellent customer service. The customer service delivered by HWFRS staff has contributed to the successful retention of Charter Mark with 12 elements assessed as national best practice.

Personal alerters are available from HQ Reception staff on request for those visitors who are unable to hear the alarm in the event of a fire. There are also induction loops in the HQ Reception area.

Media and Communications: ensures all communications in whatever media are accessible, follow principles of clear English usage and are fit for purpose. The Authority's website was developed incorporating accessibility guidelines, and supports W3C allowing people with visual impairments to listen to content.

### **Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct**

Employees and members of HWFRS have certain rights, which we value and seek to support. However, being a member of a public authority also means that certain responsibilities are required of our staff, which are reflected at a strategic and operational level. Every individual has a role to play, and the Ethical Framework and Code of Conduct helps to define that.

The purpose of the document is to provide Fire Service personnel with an aide to addressing issues regarding equality and diversity in the workplace by recognising the values of the Service and promoting a positive code of conduct, and to ensure that everyone's rights and responsibilities are supported and most importantly exercised.

### **Harassment and Bullying**

The Authority has a comprehensive Harassment and Bullying policy. The Service aims to provide a working environment which is free from harassment and bullying, victimisation and intimidation and one in which employees are

treated with respect, dignity and shown common courtesy. This policy extends to the communities we serve.

### **Consultation and Involvement**

HWFRS know that a crucial aspect of service delivery and improvement is through the consultation and involvement of different groups of service users. The Service regularly consults with employees and service users about a range of issues, and has a clear record of using consultation feedback to change and improve services and working practices.

Our consultation systems have been developed to fully meet our legal obligations towards Equalities legislation. Every effort will be made to ensure all groups have an equal opportunity to be part of the consultation process. Wherever possible, special arrangements will be to support individuals and groups with specific needs to be a part of the process.

We also aim to engage with the communities we serve to increase their capacity to be involved in the consultation process. As well as generic consultation, HWFRS also engages with voluntary and statutory sector agencies, to work in partnership to improve service delivery and access to socially excluded groups.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

Equality impact assessments have an important role to play in making sure that equality for people underpins the Fire Service's policies, practices and procedures, whether it is written or unwritten, formal or informal and irrespective of the scope of that policy, practice or procedure.

The impact assessment process is a tool to assess the effect or likely impact these policies, practices and procedures have on people, ensuring that they do not disadvantage or discriminate through their operation.

The assessments also identify where we can do more to promote equality of opportunity and improve the service we provide. Our impact assessment process will cover all strands of equality and diversity, identifying possible direct or indirect discrimination or disadvantage, with the purpose of tackling its elimination.

Initially a policy or process is screened for its relevance to equality legislation. This screening process enables HWFRS to establish whether a policy or process will have an impact upon Race, Gender, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief and Age.

During an assessment a number of questions are asked to find out how this adverse impact upon a particular group can be addressed and reduced, to ensure that discrimination and disadvantage is no longer present when the policy is approved.

Dependant upon the outcome of the answers to the questions the policy, practice or procedure is assessed as high, medium or low impact equating to the potential effect it may have on equality.

### **High Impact**

- The policy, practice or procedure is relevant to all or most parts of the general duty of the Equality Acts.
- There is substantial concern or evidence of adverse impact.
- There is substantial public concern that discrimination might happen.

### **Medium Impact**

- The policy, practice or procedure is relevant to most parts of the general duty of the Equality Acts.
- There is some concern or evidence of adverse impact.
- There is some public concern of discrimination.

### **Low Impact**

- The policy, practice or procedure has little relevance to the general duty of the Equality Acts.
- There are no concerns or evidence of adverse impact.
- There are no public concerns of discrimination.

Each policy has a review date attached to it, which will be every three years at the latest, or in accordance with required changes.

### Managing Adverse Impact

If our Equality Impact Assessment process highlights a policy or function as having an adverse impact on some groups we will use one of the following options:

- *Change the proposed policy* – satisfying the concerns raised by staff or stakeholders, where possible.
- *Consider ways of putting the proposed policy into place* – that will remove or reduce its potential for adversely affecting some groups.
- *Find alternative means for achieving the aims of the policy* – which do not cause the same level of adverse impact.
- *Justify the policy as originally proposed* – even when it could affect some groups adversely, because of the policy's importance to service delivery or there are no alternatives.

### Equality Impact Assessment Training

The Service continues to provide advice, guidance and training to all policy owners and authors with regards to carrying out equality impact assessments. This will allow more policies and processes to be impact assessed to address any adverse impact.

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All equality impact assessments are quality assured by the Equality and Diversity Officer and the Head of Corporate Risk who raises any concerns or suggested amendments for alteration prior to approval by the Principal Management Board. This process ensures that policies are not approved without equality and diversity implications and the appropriate risk management systems in place.

## The Integrated Scheme

### Summary

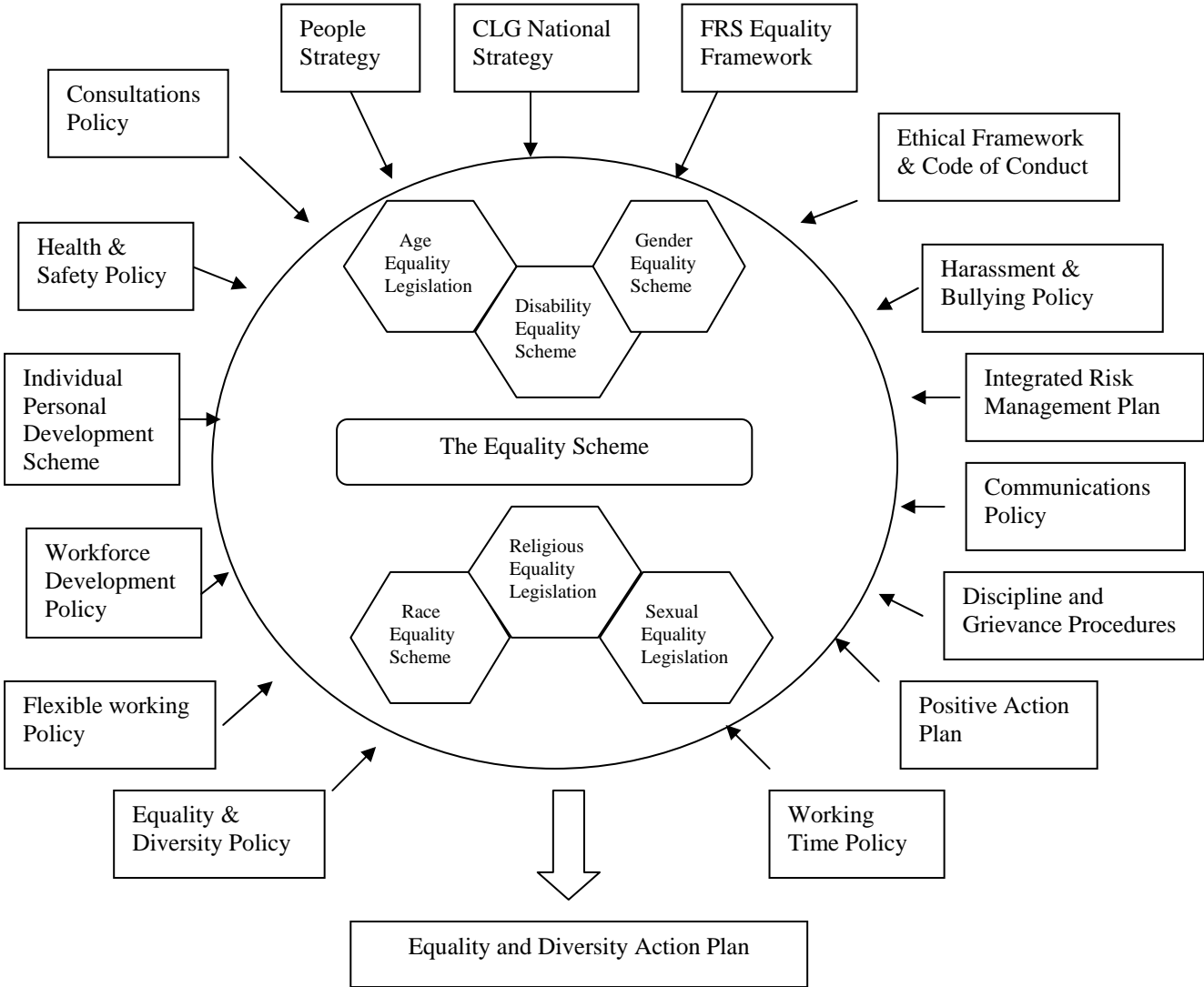
The Equality Scheme is an all encompassing framework to address equality and diversity issues. It incorporates an equalities action plan in order to communicate our intentions and to drive change.

In the light of existing and planned UK legislation, we have produced an equality scheme that clearly addresses our duties and responsibilities in relation to:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Religion & belief
- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

This reflects our commitment to the wider equality agenda and to equalising rights as far as we are able, without losing any of the strict duties that are placed upon us under the provisions of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act and the Sex Discrimination Act amended by the Equality Act. Consequently our actions in respect of each area of equality are clearly set out throughout the scheme, and this scheme is drafted to the high specification required under each of the Acts.

# The Formulation of the Equality Scheme



## **Governing Principles**

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to the principles that underpin equality and diversity.

Our vision is threefold:

1. To ensure equitable service provision, based on need and risk.
2. To ensure equality of opportunity for all staff.
3. To create a diverse and multi-skilled workforce.

The bottom line of this strategy is that it will improve the organisation's ability to deliver its services to all parts of the community, that all stakeholders of the Authority are confident that they will be treated equitably, based on their needs within the exigencies of the Authority, and that ultimately we reduce the occurrence and the risk in the community from fire and associated hazards.

This strategy will build the capacity of the organisation to effectively grasp the issues of equality and diversity and this will lead to a considerable shift in culture and the awareness of culture.

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service will seek to achieve its objectives with an integrated, multi-skilled workforce that best represents the community it serves and with a modern management structure that values diversity.

## **The Equality and Diversity Action Plan**

The action plan details the objectives required to ensure the continuation of good practice around equality. It houses the target dates, those responsible for actions and progress comments.

The action plan is organised according to the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework 'Excellent' level and further subdivided into 5 priority areas. The action plan begins with the generic objectives that will be undertaken that cover all 7 equality areas. The action plan is then broken into 7 areas housing the objectives that only relate to these areas.

The action plan is intended as a live document whereby activities will be marked as completed, ongoing and high priority to enable easy identification of current status.

The Service's progression in relation to equality and diversity will be monitored by the Strategic Performance Review group every quarter. This group, consisting of principal officers and senior managers, will measure performance against objectives detailed within the Equality and Diversity Action Plan, and identify any outstanding actions.

Progress will also be reported quarterly to the Authority's Equality and Diversity Steering Group, which also consists of elected members, for qualitative and quantitative scrutiny and evaluation.

## **Internal Capacity and Delivery**

### **The Future**

We have put safeguards in place to ensure that we comply with the relevant duties and to take account of the full range of Equality legislation.

Our Approach is to:

- Building on from our first Equality Scheme 2007 – 2010 and continue to make this Equality Scheme part of our working culture.
- Make impact assessments a core part of our policies ensuring that any adverse impact is eliminated as far as possible.
- Continue to gather and analyse evidence in order to improve service delivery to our stakeholders.
- Prioritise remedial actions to drive equality forward.
- Continue to involve people whose specialist knowledge will benefit individuals and the organisation.
- Report our findings and progress publicly ensuring that our processes and procedures are transparent.

### **Gathering Information**

Customer and employee information is captured and held on a number of systems, both computerised and manual. This includes the results of customer satisfaction surveys, telephone surveys and monitoring of complaints. The information is used to support our performance management and strategic planning process. However, we do recognise that greater use of customer information is still possible and changes to our approach to information gathering will help us to monitor and improve performance.

All information storage is in line with our statutory responsibilities under the Data Protection Act.

### **Access to Information and Services**

We aim to ensure that our services are accessible to all members of our community both in emergency and non-emergency situations. We will provide information by using our website, the local press, free publications, public meetings, leaflets, community organisations and any other appropriate media where possible.

The Media and Communications Manager leads on the development of a communications strategy, looking at ways of improving the information that is available to staff and our communities.

We aim to improve our understanding of who is using and who has access to our services, with the purpose of trying to improve the service we provide and

its accessibility to people who are at greatest risk in the community. We will provide information about our services in plain language and community languages, including accessible formats.

We have already started a long term programme to improve access to our stations. Not all buildings are open to members of the public, however those that are, have been assessed for compliance with the buildings regulations definition of 'accessible'.

Language can also be a barrier to equality and accessing of services. We use a service by Language Line, a 24 hour telephone interpreting service. Connection to a trained interpreter can be provided in 90 seconds and assistance provided in up to 140 languages. Every appliance has a Fire and Rescue specific Phrasebook which houses up to 40 languages that can be presented during an incident at the initial point of contact should an individual not be able to speak or speak English.

## **Responsibilities/Accountabilities**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer will have overall responsibility for equality and diversity, and provide strategic leadership at Principal Management level.

The Head of Organisational Development will support and oversee the implementation and progression of equality and diversity along with the Scheme, helping to develop and change the culture of the Fire Service.

The responsibilities for delivering aspects of the Scheme which lie with departmental heads are defined within the Action Plan. Progress will be measured quarterly at the Strategic Performance Management group (SPMG).

Each individual member of the Service has their responsibilities to support the delivery of equality and diversity. These responsibilities are defined under the Service's Ethical Framework and Code of Conduct.

## **Complaints**

Complaints are a useful tool for gathering information about the effectiveness and efficiency of the service we provide. We welcome comments and suggestions about the way our services are provided.

We will acknowledge receipt of a complaint or concern within 3 working days. We will then investigate the complaint or concern within 10 working days. Where the concern or complaint is more complicated we will write within 10 working days to advise regarding progress.

## Reviews

The scheme and accompanying action plan will become a live document that will be monitored and will incorporate feedback and provide updates of progress within HWFRS. Throughout this process new targets and objectives will be established. The scheme itself will be formally reviewed every 3 years for publication.

The Equality and Diversity Officer will be responsible for the co-ordination of the review process and will provide advice in relation to any issues or areas of non-compliance with the general and specific duties of the Equalities Acts.

## Publishing

We will publish bi-annually data in relation to the workforce, which will be monitored by race, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation and age where possible.

Our equality action plan is a live document and will be reviewed and published annually to incorporate our progression throughout the year.

Our impact assessments for our policies, practices and procedures will be available as a requirement of the Freedom of Information Act. Results of consultation, engagement and involvement will be available incorporating why the consultation took place, how was it carried out, a summary of the responses, an assessment of the policy options and what we are proposing to do.

## How You Can Contribute and Feedback

Feedback about the content of our Equality Scheme is important to us. If you would like to comment about the contents of our scheme or just to know more, you can contact us by any of the methods listed below:

Please write to:

The Chief Fire Officer  
FAO Equality & Diversity Officer  
Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service  
Headquarters  
2 Kings Court  
Charles Hastings Way  
WORCESTER  
WR5 1JR

Or Telephone:  
01905 368363

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Or Email:  
Equality&Diversity@hwfire.org.uk

Or Fax:  
01905357466

Or through our Website to make comments at:  
[www.hwfire.org.uk](http://www.hwfire.org.uk)

**APPENDICES**

Appendix One: The Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework Levels

Appendix Two: The Equality Scheme Action Plan 2010 – 2013

Appendix Three: Equality Scheme Consultation Report 2010 – 2013

Appendix Four: Progress Review Equality Scheme 2007 – 2010

## **Appendix One: The Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework Levels**

The FRS Equality Framework is outcome-focused and based upon the same principles as the Equality Framework for Local Government, including the use of three achievement levels:

- 'Developing'
- 'Achieving'
- 'Excellent'.

An excellent Fire and Rescue Authority has the following characteristics:

- Fire authority members and senior Service leaders have a reputation for championing equality issues, ensuring that they are relevant to communities and are embedded in the integrated risk management plan (IRMP) and other relevant documents.
- It works with all strategic partners, including the voluntary and community sector, to achieve defined equality outcomes.
- It has good evidence of the equalities profile, including the socio-economic differences of the community, based on national and local data that is regularly reviewed.
- It is measuring progress on equality outcomes, is able to disaggregate data on relevant performance indicators and can demonstrate real outcomes that have improved equality in service delivery and employment.
- It identifies the changing nature of its communities and their expectations, then prioritises its activities and explains its decisions.
- It provides a good standard of service, delivered by knowledgeable and well-trained employees who understand the needs of their communities.
- It has improving satisfaction and perception indicators from all sections of the community and employees.
- The Service is integrally involved in community engagement programmes.
- There are opportunities for a wide range of equality stakeholders to share experiences and evaluate the Authority's progress.
- It has implemented action for equal pay outcomes and demonstrates progress on under-representation, flexible working and access to training and development.
- It promotes an inclusive working culture based on respect.
- It reviews its equality strategy and response to the statutory duty requirements every three years and seeks innovative improvement challenges.
- Through its achievements, it is an exemplar of good practice for Fire Authorities and other public sector organisations. It works with others to share best practice.

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**Appendix Two: The Equality Action Plan 2010 – 2013**

**Generic Equality Objectives**

**PRIORITY AREA 1: Leadership and Promoting Inclusion**

No.	Ref	Aim (What we intend to achieve)	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Comments/Indicators of Progress
1	FRS 3.1 & 3.5	Conduct a full review of targets annually. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of program against all standards of equality.</li> <li>• Ensure all legislative requirements are complied with.</li> </ul>	Annually May 2011	Head of Organisational Development	Revised action plan published. Report to FRA.
2	FRS 3.2	Members and Officers perform their role effectively: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In promoting human rights, equality, diversity and fairness</li> <li>• Providing leadership to others.</li> </ul>	Review Sept 2010	Head of Organisational Development	Training delivered. Effective responses to community needs.
3	FRS 3.2	Ensure resources for HR and equality and diversity functions are sufficient to deliver fair and effective employment practices.	Review Sept 2010	CFO	Performance indicators continue to be met. HR and E&D Objectives evidenced of progress.
4	FRSPA1.4	Managers are aware of their need to promote human rights, equality and diversity and ensure all FRA plans, practices and procedures relating to any function undergoes effective EIA.	Review Sept 2010 Complete March 2011	AM PPP/ Head of OD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training in equality and diversity and EIA.</li> <li>• EIA conducted and published.</li> </ul>
5	FRS 3.4	Ensure equality and diversity issues are fully implemented, monitored and reviewed in the procurement of goods and services.	April 2011	Head of Asset Management	Strengthened procurement procedures in place.
6	FRS 3.6	Representative bodies are expected to fulfil a positive role in delivering a wide range of equality and diversity improvements. Fully consult with representative bodies with regards to all equality, diversity and fairness objectives in order to develop a partnership approach.	September 2010	Head of Organisational Development	Consultation and engagement strategy in place, and strengthened links with equality groups and communities demonstrated.

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7	ESLG08 3.4 Ex	Working with partners, the Authority improves equality in Service Delivery and employment.	Review Sept 2010	ACO Service Delivery/ACO Service Support	Improved outcomes.
8	ESLG08 3.6 Ex	Benchmark achievements against comparable partners. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share experience and develop good practice across the public sector.</li> </ul>	September 2010	Head of Organisational Development	Benchmarking undertaking through peer review, and good practice disseminated.
9	ESLG08 3.7 Ex	Corporate and inter-service self-evaluation process is working effectively.	Review Sept 2010	DCFO	Demonstrable benefit from review process.
10	FRS 3.3 & 3.36	The Service is a champion for achieving equality outcomes, and has a reputation within local government and partners.	Review Sept 2010 Complete March 2010	CFO	Service continues to be asked to present and support equality initiatives through workshops, conferences and other good practice.
11	FRSPA1.11	Ensure all marketing and public events reflect positive images and reinforce our commitment to all equality strands.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Organisational Development	Increase public satisfaction and outcomes for positive action initiatives.

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**PRIORITY AREA 2: Accountability**

No.	Ref	Aim (What we intend to achieve)	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Comments/Indicators of Progress
1	CLG	Annual Report on equality and diversity activity for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FRA</li> <li>• CLG</li> </ul> Including:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The steps taken in relation to the scheme.</li> <li>• The results of our information gathering.</li> <li>• What use we have made of the information collected and the changes and improvements we have made.</li> <li>• Priority actions for the remaining years of the scheme</li> </ul>	September 2010 each year	Head of Organisational Development	Annual report produced and published.
2	ESLG08 1.7 Em	Evidence of progress on Service Delivery and employment practice published on website – for publication.	March 2010	ACO Service Delivery/ACO Service Support	Evidence published.
3	FRS 3.26	All appraisal systems have equality and diversity objectives. All employees have an annual appraisal.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel Services	Evidenced by monitoring systems.
4	FRS 3.7 & 3.8	Demonstrate improvements and outcomes as a result of our Equality Scheme and review progress through IRMP.	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD/ Head of PPP	Equality Scheme scrutinised, and evidence of compliance provided. Progress review published as part of annual IRMP plan.
5	ESLG08 1.29 Ex	Ensure unacceptable behaviours are tackled fairly, quickly and transparently (include bullying, harassment and unfair discrimination).	Review Sept 2010	Head of Service Support	Evidenced by reduced complaints, grievances and discipline.
6	FRS 3.9	Regular reporting and Peer Review conducted (at least every 3 years).	Sept 2010	DCFO	Improve performance across a wider range of equality and diversity matters.
7	FRS 3.10	Outcomes from equality impact assessment can be provided.	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD/ Corporate Risk	EIAs published.

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**PRIORITY AREA 3: Effective Service Delivery and Community Engagement**

No.	Ref	Aim (What we intend to achieve)	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Comments/Indicators of Progress
<b>Planning</b>					
1	FRS 3.11	Ensure equality of service to all sections of the community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence regularly updated of the equalities profile of our communities and their changing needs.</li> </ul>	Review Sept 2010	GM Community Safety	Information and monitoring systems - disaggregate data in a range of performance indicators.
2	FRS 3.13	Identify and take account of the needs of the full range of communities through a sophisticated and segmented understanding which informs and influences the integrated risk management plan.	Review Sept 2010	AM PPP/GM Community Safety	IRMP takes full account of local community needs. All aspects of the planning process have been effectively impact assured.
3	FRS 3.11	EIA all new policies, plans and procedures.	Review Sept 2010	All	All aspects of the planning process have been effectively equality impact assessed.
4	FRS 3.21	Review all policies, plans, procedures and practices regularly.	Review Sept 2010	All	Effective systems are put in place to obtain improved outcomes, ensuring that changing and conflicting community needs and interests are taken into account.
5	FRS 3.14	Ensure that significant improvements and equality outcomes are being delivered.	Review Sept 2010	All	Audit feedback is positive, positive action initiatives increasing workforce diversity and objectives achieved.
6	FRS 3.19	A reduction of fire incidents, deaths and injuries across local communities.	March 2011	AM PPP	Statistics indicate a reduction.
<b>Engagement</b>					
7	ESLG08 3.4 Ex	Consistently communicate progress on service delivery to all local communities, including targeted communication.	Ongoing	Media and Communications Manager	Undertakes high quality engagement with all local communities on a regular basis,

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partner agencies/community advocates to improve/create new ways of communicating with community groups.</li> </ul>			<p>including newer communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish effective consultation and engagement process and policies, which accounts for all standards of equality.</li> </ul>
8	FRSPA3.8	Ensure complaints are dealt with quickly, fairly and transparently.	Review Sept 2010	ACO Service Support	
9	FRS 3.16, 3.17 & 3.18	Monitor and take action on community perceptions and satisfaction identified through surveys, complaints, procedures etc.	Review Sept 2010	DCFO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased satisfaction amongst key stakeholders and services and progress in meeting equality and cohesion targets.</li> <li>Effective forums are in place to enable all equality stakeholders to challenge, scrutinise and evaluate the Authority's progress.</li> </ul>
10	FRS 3.15	Ensure improvement in outcomes for communities, including those who are vulnerable and marginalised.	April 2011	GM Community Safety	Community needs are met and satisfaction levels are high.
11	ESLG08 1.11	Enhance the information published on our external website and intranet about all strands of equality.	Dec 2010	Head of Organisational Development	Increased availability of information that meets all needs of the community.
12	ESLG08 Au	Review our events' procedures to ensure that all our internal and external events are fully accessible to all people.	June 2010	Head of Organisational Development	All events held are fully accessible to all equalities groups.
<b>Training and Awareness</b>					
13	FRSPA1.13	Provide employees with appropriate training and development to build skills and confidence when working with local communities.	March 2011	GM Training and Development	Training provided to appropriate staff, and its impact assessed.

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14	TDII	Communicate clearly and consistently with staff to raise awareness and understanding of local community issues and the actions needed to address them.	Review Sept 2010	GM Community Safety/Media & Communications Manager	Improved understanding and awareness.
15	FRS 3.20	All Employees behave appropriately and respectfully to members of the public and colleagues. The Service's employees are informed, aware, engaging, open and approachable.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Organisational Development	Number of complaints received are low and public satisfaction is high.

**PRIORITY AREA 4: Employment and Training**

No.	Ref	Aim (What we intend to achieve)	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Comments/Indicators of Progress
1	FRS 3.23 & 3.24	Continue positive action and awareness campaigns to encourage applications from under-represented groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate significant progress towards achieving minimum recruitment targets, results in greater equality within the workforce profile.</li> <li>• Improved diversity of applicants for employment, promotion and development.</li> </ul>	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel Services	Positive action plan in place; activity undertaken; impact assessed; activity reviewed.
2	FRSPA4.2	Review the use of national procedures for recruitment, development and promotion of staff to ensure meeting organisational need.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel Services/GM Training	Consistent approach to processes and successful
3	ESLG07 4.3 & 4.8	Continue to review and EIA employment policies, practices and procedures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use monitoring data.</li> <li>• Conduct exit interviews.</li> </ul>	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel Services	Demonstrate high satisfaction and perception indicators from all staff across a range of employment processes.
4	FRSPA4.4	Assess all aspects of the working environment to ensure all employees receive support and tailored resources.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel Services	Reasonable adjustments continue to be carried out wherever possible. Employee satisfaction levels high.

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5	FRS 3.27	Undertake Equal Pay Audit and monitor and address any unjustified pay gaps across all equality strands (Audit Commission).	March 2011	Head of Personnel Services/ Head OD	Action is in place to ensure equal pay is fully implemented.
6	ESLG07 4D.11	Carry out annual appraisals (to include equality and diversity objectives) to provide evidence of fair progression.	Review Sept 2010	All Heads of Dept	Managers have been appraised against Service equality objectives.
7	FRS 3.28	Training and development on all aspects of equality and diversity for all staff.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Organisational Development/ E&D Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services are provided by knowledgeable and well trained staff, who are equipped to cater to particular needs of groups where necessary.</li> <li>• Staff are confident with equality issues.</li> </ul>
8	FRS 3.29	Training for all managers on grievance and discipline handling, tackling bullying, harassment, unfair discrimination and unacceptable behaviours.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel Services/ Head OD	Complaints or issues are low however where present dealt with quickly, efficiently and effectively.
9	FRS 3.25	Continue to demonstrate movement towards greater equality in the workforce profile and in employment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where adverse trends identified the Service acts promptly to address these issues.</li> </ul>	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel Services	Employment targets set, and regular monitoring of impact of recruitment procedures.
10	FRS 3.26	The implementation of equality objectives through annual appraisal is helping to maximise the potential of all employees.	Review Sept 2010	All Heads of Dept	All staff have been appraised against Service equality objectives, knowledge is increasing.
11	FRS 3.30	All employees are delivering improvement on equality and diversity objectives	Review Sept 2010	All	All staff have been appraised against Service equality objectives, knowledge is increasing.
12	FRS 3.31	High satisfaction and perception indicates under-represented staff are fully supported in all areas of their employment.	March 2011	AM PPP	Retention levels are stable.

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**PRIORITY AREA 5: Evaluation and Sharing Good Practice**

No.	Ref	Aim (What we intend to achieve)	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Comments/Indicators of Progress
1	FRS 3.32	Collect and submit qualitative and quantitative evidence of improvements in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service delivery.</li> <li>• Employment practice.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Against targets</li> <li>○ Monitoring data</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Review Sept 2010	DCFO	Good quality, regularly updated evidence of the equalities profile of its local communities and their various changing needs. Data collected and reviewed as part of performance review arrangements; submitted as part of annual E&D report.
2	FRS 3.33	Equality objectives and outcomes are regularly reviewed and evaluated, based on updated equality data.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Organisational Development	Data reviewed as part of performance review arrangements; submitted as part of annual E&D report.
3	ESLG07 4.3 & 4.8	Continue to undertake robust EIA – all policies, practices, plans and procedures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review</li> <li>• Monitor</li> <li>• Evaluation</li> </ul> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; margin-left: 10px;"> <span style="font-size: 2em;">}</span> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies</li> <li>Practices</li> <li>Plans</li> <li>Procedures</li> </ul> </div> <p>RME – procedures for dealing with harassment and bullying.</p>	Review Sept 2010	All	EIAs undertaken and published.
4	FRS 3.34 & 3.35	Undertake employee and community surveys in partnership with representative bodies, to measure perceptions of the FRS.	Review Sept 2010	AM PPP	As part of partnership arrangements allowing the identification of how communities are changing and the impact this.
5	FRSPA5.5	Ensure personal monitoring data is collected and stored securely. Encourage and support members of staff to disclose personal diversity data.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel Services/ Head OD	Increase in the number of people disclosing information.

Quoted from FRS Journey to Excellence Framework

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- (FRSPA1) PRIORITY AREA 1: Leadership and Promoting Inclusion**  
**(FRSPA2) PRIORITY AREA 2: Accountability**  
**(FRSPA3) PRIORITY AREA 3: Effective Service Delivery and Community Engagement**  
**(FRSPA4) PRIORITY AREA 4: Employment and Training**  
**(FRSPA5) PRIORITY AREA 5: Evaluation and Sharing Good Practice**

**RACE**

No.	Ref	Aim (What we intend to achieve)	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Comments/Indicators of Progress
1	(FRSPA4) 3.28	Continue to deliver training programmes to improve the ability of managers to deal with race equality issues.	March 2011	Head of OD	Increase in understanding, improved service delivery.
2	(FRSPA3)	Increase engagement with different Black and Minority Ethnic groups.	March 2011	Head of Personnel/GM Community Safety	Increased satisfaction/perceptions, greater involvement with feedback informing service delivery, employment and performance.
3	(FRSPA3)	Support cultural events and produce a cultural calendar for staff and service users.	March 2011	Head of OD/GM Community Safety	Improved community engagement and increase in results from positive action initiatives.
4	(FRSPA1)	Continue to have a Principal lead for Race issues.	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD	Dedicated lead who proactively promotes race equality.
5	(FRSPA5)	Use monitoring data to allow the identification of adverse or negative impact and to assist in future planning.	March 2011	AM PPP/Head of Personnel	Clear analysis enables reduction in impact.
6	(FRSPA3)	Ensure that procedures are in place for communication, interpretation and translation requirements.	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD	Clear processes established.
7	RAC7	Ensure that community safety initiatives proactively meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities.	March 2011	GM Community Safety	Improved community engagement and increase in results from initiatives.
8	FRSE&D Strategy 08-18	Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) employees across the whole organisation to be at the same percentage as the BME representation in the local working population.	April 2013	Head of Personnel	Improved community engagement and increase in results from positive action initiatives.

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**GENDER**

No.	Ref	Aim (What we intend to achieve)	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Comments/Indicators of Progress
1	GEN1	Women's Action Committee to take a more proactive role in the progression of gender equality.	Review Sept 2010	DCFO	Proactive elimination and promotion of gender equality.
2	GEN2	Continue to deliver training programmes to improve the ability of managers to deal with gender equality issues.	March 2011	Head of OD	Increase in understanding, improved service delivery.
3	GEN3	All new and replacement posts are considered on part-time/job share basis where practicable.	Review Sept 2010	All Heads of Department	Increase in statistics for under-represented staff groups.
4	GEN4	Continue to work with the Networking Women in the Fire and Rescue Service Group to drive change.	Review Sept 2010	DCFO	Ongoing advice and guidance received, improvement in equality.
5	GEN5	Continue to have a Principal lead for Gender issues.	Review Sept 2010	DCFO	Dedicated lead who proactively promotes gender equality.
6	GEN6	Use monitoring data to allow the identification of adverse or negative impact and to assist in future planning.	March 2011	AM PPP/ Head of Personnel	Clear analysis enables reduction in impact.
7	FRSE&D Strategy 08-18	A minimum of 15% of new entrants to the operational sector to be women.	April 2013	Head of Personnel	Improved community engagement and increase in results from positive action initiatives.

**GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT**

No.	Ref	Aim (What we intend to achieve)	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Comments/Indicators of Progress
1	GENRE1	LGBT working group to take a more proactive role in the progression of gender identity and re-assignment equality.	March 2011	ACFO Service Support	Proactive elimination and promotion of gender identity/re-assignment equality.
2	GENRE2	Continue to deliver training programmes to improve the ability of managers to deal with gender identity and re-assignment equality issues.	March 2011	Head of Organisational Development	Increase in understanding, improved service delivery.
3	GENRE3	Encourage a culture of openness about gender identity/re-assignment and ensure that staff are free from Trans phobic bullying and harassment.	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD/ Personnel	Increased understanding and welfare provision.
4	GENRE4	Consider corporate sponsorship of the Gender Advisory	April 2010	Head of OD	Ongoing advice and guidance

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		Bureau.			received, improvement in equality.
5	GENRE5	Continue to have a Principal lead for Gender Identity and re-assignment issues.	Review Sept 2010	ACFO Service Support	Dedicated lead who proactively promotes gender re-assignment equality.
6	GENRE6	Use monitoring data to allow the identification of adverse or negative impact and to assist in future planning.	March 2011	AM PPP/Head of Personnel	Clear analysis enables reduction in impact.
7	GENRE7	Develop and implement gender reassignment guidance ensuring all staff have the understanding of this subject and are aware of their responsibilities.	March 2011	Head of Organisational Development	Clear commitment, advice and processes to support individuals and line managers.

**DISABILITY**

No.	Ref	Aim (What we intend to achieve)	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Comments/Indicators of Progress
1	DFG 1	Continue to support developments required to improve accessibility within Employment, Service Delivery and Communications.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel/OD & ACFO Service delivery	Proactive elimination and promotion of disability equality.
2	DFG 2	Increase the profile of the group ensuring disability issues maintain a high profile including HIV.	Review Sept 2010	ACFO Service Delivery	Proactive elimination and promotion of disability equality.
3	DFG 3	To develop disability awareness training programmes to improve the ability of managers to deal with disability equality issues including HIV.	March 2011	Head of Organisational Development	Increase understanding, improved service delivery and support for staff.
4	DFG 4	Consider the issues surrounding hearing loss in the workplace for operational staff.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel	Clear processes, welfare and support available for staff.
5	DFG 5	Review the viability of the 'Two Tick' scheme and the Employers Forum for Disability.	March 2011	Head of Personnel	Ongoing advice and guidance received, improvement in equality.
6	DFG 6	Review the provision of Service Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish accessibility of services (esp. CS)</li> <li>• to explore data on disabilities</li> <li>• to look at provision for disability access in premises investigated for Fire Safety</li> <li>• establish link with IRMP delivery</li> </ul>	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD/ ACO Community safety	Ensure that a review of the provision of Service Delivery is undertaken. Work programme of reasonable adjustments to be established. Ongoing training where necessary provided for Fire Safety Officers.

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					People with disabilities recognised as priority group within IRMP.
7	DFG 7	Continue to ensure that all reasonable adjustments are provided for staff with disabilities including HIV.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel	Reasonable adjustments made for staff who require them.
8	DFG 8	All reasonable adjustments have been undertaken following access audits.	Review Sept 2010	Property Services	Programme of reasonable adjustments finalised.
9	DFG 9	Signage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review signage for accessibility.</li> </ul>	Review Sept 2010	Property Services	Signage programme being delivered throughout Service.
10	DFG 10	Review promote and develop procedures for communication, interpretation and translation requirements.	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD	Clear processes established.
11	DFG 11	Communication, consultation and engagement strategy to be designed to promote disability and improved access.	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD	Increased access meeting needs successfully.
12	DFG 12	Review our booking and procurement procedures to ensure that all meeting rooms and training facilities we use cater fully for staff and service users.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Asset Management	Increased access meeting needs successfully.
13	DFG 13	Improve the percentage of staff who record information about disability or state they would prefer not to disclose.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel/ Head of OD	Statistics show an increase in disclosure.
14	DFG 14	Ensure that job application forms are available in other formats and allow applications to be made in formats other than in writing where necessary.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel	Processes in place for different formats.
15	DFG 15	Encourage a culture of openness about disability and ensure that staff are free from Disability related bullying and harassment including HIV.	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD/ Personnel	Statistics showing that the numbers of disability related complaints are low and reducing.
16	DFG 16	Use monitoring data to allow the identification of adverse or negative impact and to assist in future planning.	March 2011	AM PPP/Head of Personnel	Clear analysis enables reduction in impact.

DFG - Disability Focus Group (Equal Access Group)

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**SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

No.	Ref	Aim (What we intend to achieve)	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Comments/Indicators of Progress
1	WEI 10	LGB working group to take a more proactive role in the progression of sexual orientation equality.	Review Sept 2010	ACFO Service Support	Proactive elimination and promotion of LGB equality.
2	WEI 1	Ensure that LGB equality links to and is transparent in wider organisational aims.	March 2011	ACFO Service Support/Head of OD/ AM PPP	Proactive elimination and promotion of LGB equality, improvement in service delivery and safety.
3	WEI 11& 14	Continue to deliver training programmes to improve the ability of managers to deal with sexual orientation equality issues.	March 2011	Head of OD	Increase in understanding, improved service delivery and support for staff.
4	WEI22	Work with partners to identify risks relating to homophobic crime and arson and identify ways in which we can work more closely with our lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) communities to prevent and protect them from such incidents occurring.	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD/ GM Community Safety	Community safety initiatives successful, statistics show that the numbers of homophobic incidents are low and reducing.
5	WEI 4	Review policies and procedures ensuring that they are not based on the assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel/AM Operations Intervention	Evidence that there is an elimination of LGB discriminatory practices, processes and procedures.
6	WEI 4&5	Ensure that current and new policies and procedures are inclusive of LGB staff, customers and service users needs.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel/AM Operations Intervention	Evidence that there is an elimination of LGB discriminatory practices, processes and procedures and that needs are met.
7	WEI 7	Encourage a culture of openness about sexual orientation and ensure that LGB staff are free from homophobic bullying and harassment.	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD	Statistics show that the numbers of homophobic complaints are low and reducing.
8	WEI18	Improve the percentage of staff who record information about their sexual orientation or state they would prefer not to disclose.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel/ Head of OD	Increase in statistics around disclosure.
9	WEI22	Continue to be part of Stonewall's Diversity Championship	Review	ACFO Service	Improvement in LGB equality and

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		Programme and promote our commitment through the Diversity Champions Logo.	Sept 2010	Support/Head of OD	entry into Workplace Equality Index.
10	WEI22	Continue to work with Gay Worcester especially in the lead up to their first Pride event.	June 2010	Head of OD/ Personnel/ GM Community Safety	Event attended, increased engagement, improved reputation, supports positive action initiatives and community safety.
11	WEI22	Continue to work with our Regional FRS's to attend the annual Birmingham Pride event for the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year running.	May 2010	Head of OD/ Personnel/GM Community Safety	Event attended, increased engagement, improved reputation, supports positive action initiatives and community safety.
12	WEI 3	Continue to have a Principal lead for LGBT issues.	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD	Dedicated lead who proactively promotes LGB equality.
13	WEI 8	Review the systems in place to ensure that an appropriate LGB network is available for staff.	April 2012	ACFO Service Support/Head of OD	LGB support network for staff available.
14	WEI 16	Use monitoring data to allow the identification of adverse or negative impact and to assist in future planning.	March 2011	AM PPP/Head of Personnel	Clear analysis enables reduction in impact.
15	WEI19 & FRS 3.31	Perception and satisfaction rates are high in relation to sexual orientation monitoring and workplace culture.	March 2011	AM PPP	Allows the ability to analyse the data by LGB demographics.

WEI = Workplace Equality Index (Stonewall)

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**RELIGION OR BELIEF**

No.	Ref	Aim (What we intend to achieve)	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Comments/Indicators of Progress
1	REL1	Continue to deliver training programmes to improve the ability of managers to deal with religion or belief equality issues.	March 2011	Head of Organisational Development	Increase in understanding, improved service delivery and support for staff.
2	REL2	Engage with all faith communities within the Service.	Review Sept 2010	GM Community Safety/AM PPP	Improved community engagement, and safety, increased under-representation.
3	REL3	Continue to have a Principal lead for Religion or Belief issues.	Review Sept 2010	Head of OD	Dedicated lead who proactively promotes religion or belief equality.
4	REL4	Review policies and procedures ensuring that they are not based on the assumption that everyone is or should be the most dominant Religion.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel/GM Community Safety	Evidence that there is an elimination of religion or belief discriminatory practices, processes and procedures.
5	REL5	Improve the percentage of staff who record information about their religion or belief.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel/ Head of OD	Statistics indicate an increase.
6	REL6	Continue to work with the Chaplains scheme to ensure that all religion and faith needs are being catered for.	Review Sept 2010	ACFO Service Support	The scheme is able to cater for a large variety of requests.
7	REL7	Review our booking and procurement procedures to ensure that all meeting rooms and training facilities we use cater fully for staff and service users.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Asset Management	Increased access meeting needs successfully.
8	REL8	Use monitoring data to allow the identification of adverse or negative impact and to assist in future planning.	March 2011	AM PPP/Head of Personnel	Clear analysis enables reduction in impact.
9	REL9	Consider requests for religious observance within the workplace.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel	Statistics will enable action to be addressed where practicable.
10	REL10	Where practicable ensure that personal protective equipment and uniform requirements incorporate religious headwear, facial hair and other symbols of religion or faith.	Review Sept 2010	ACFO Service Support	Improved equipment, meeting needs successfully.

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**AGE**

No.	Ref	Aim (What we intend to achieve)	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Comments/Indicators of Progress
1	AG1	Continue to deliver training programmes to improve the ability of managers to deal with all age equality issues specifically around welfare.	March 2011	Head of OD	Increase in understanding, improved service delivery and support for staff.
2	AG2	Consider the need to have a Principal lead for Age issues.	Sep 2010	Head of OD	Dedicated lead who proactively promotes age equality.
3	AG3	Review policies and procedures ensuring that they are not based on the assumption that everyone is or should be a certain age.	March 2011	Head of Personnel/GM Community Safety	Evidence that there is an elimination of age discriminatory language
4	AG4	Review policies and procedures to ensure that all recruitment, selection, promotion, redundancy, pay and benefits do not discriminate in respect of age, length of service or experience.	March 2011	Head of Personnel/GM Training & Development/ Finance Manager	Evidence that there is an elimination of age discriminatory practices, processes and procedures.
5	AG5	Continue to monitor the 'right to request' procedure to enable employees to request to continue working beyond their normal retirement date.	Review Sept 2010	Head of Personnel	Process established enabling the increase in retention and improved succession planning.
6	AG6	Use monitoring data to allow the identification of adverse or negative impact and to assist in future planning.	March 2011	AM PPP/Head of Personnel	Clear analysis enables reduction in impact.

## Appendix Three: Equality Scheme Consultation Report 2010 – 2013

### Equality Scheme 2010-2013: Consultation Results

1. Following approval from the FRA this revised Scheme was consulted on with a range on internal and external stakeholders (full details of respondents are listed at the end of this appendix). The revised Scheme and an accompanying questionnaire were published on our website for those who preferred to access the documents electronically or respond by email. A variety of group and one to one meetings were conducted to provide an overview and update of the required changes to the Scheme by law and as a result of ongoing feedback and initiatives undertaken with the Service.
2. The consultation period lasted 12 weeks and ended on 4 June 2010. All responses received were used to inform this final Scheme. The review of the Scheme has also taken account of the Equality Act 2010 and its duties on public authorities.

### Summary of Feedback

3. The majority of respondents indicated that they found the document to be well written and structured, easy to read, understand and user friendly. There were requests to use fewer abbreviations and jargon and provide a clear glossary of terms used that are not common language to the public.
4. Responses indicated that they were in agreement with the principles of the scheme and felt that these were well explained. The approach to maintaining the incorporation of the other strands of Equality were well received with respondents appreciating that all necessary information could be obtained in one place rather than several other documents should their needs require.
5. Key elements of feedback includes:
  - The Fire Service more generally still retains elements of its stereotypical culture in the eyes of the public, although the Scheme outlines the work being undertaken internally to modernise and develop organisational culture and public awareness of the role of the Fire and Rescue Service.
  - Respondents stressed the importance of performance management systems to ensure delivery of the actions, and early awareness of any areas for improvement.
  - Some respondents felt that some areas of equality featured more strongly than others (i.e. Disability and sexual orientation), and some also suggested that more specific policies should be developed for all areas.
  - A range of suggestions regarding community safety activity and potential methods for engaging specific groups formed the bulk of suggestions, and these will be discussed with the Community Safety department for their potential implementation.
  - The fact that the Service has a high-profile female DCFO was greatly commended, and the need to identify more positive role models in the other equality areas was also felt to be important. Also commended was the clear involvement from across the organisation of managers and staff in developing

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this approach to equalities.

- A significant level of fear was expressed regarding the potential for public sector cuts and the impact this may have on equality and diversity work. It was felt that this was a key area of work, which linked well with other areas of the Service's activity, most notably IRMP and reducing risk. The Scheme did not clarify what resources were required to deliver its objectives, and whilst this may not be an issue now, it was suggested that it may well become pertinent in the future.
- There was limited information of the Authority's approach to Equal Pay, which was felt to be growing in its importance across the whole of the public sector.
- It was felt that training and the general approach to equality Impact assessments could benefit from being more transparent.

All respondents have been thanked and informed about the next stages within this process, acknowledging that the feedback received would be built into the final scheme where possible and engagement would continue through the lifetime of the Scheme. Feedback was also given to respondents regarding any suggestions which fell outside the remit of the Scheme, and the nature of any subsequent action.

### **Conclusion and Future Direction**

6. "Delivering Equality for All: The Scheme 2010 – 2013" sets out our commitment to embedding equality and diversity throughout our organisation. It addresses the concerns and feedback raised by our partners, stakeholders and the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
7. Key priorities for the future are around the implementation of the new single Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. The main requirements that need to be encompassed are:
  - The tackling of discrimination, promotion equality of opportunity and encouragement of good community relations.
  - The reduction of socio-economic inequalities.
  - The publication of information about the difference in pay between male and female employees.
  - Implementation of the new Protected Characteristics:
    - Race
    - Gender
    - Disability
    - Religion or belief
    - Sexual orientation
    - Age
    - Gender reassignment
    - Marriage and civil partnership
    - Pregnancy and maternity

## Schedule of Consultation/Key Respondents

Date:	Meeting
	<b>A range of H&amp;W FRS Staff, including:</b> <b>Group Manager Operational Logistics</b> <b>Media and Corporate Communications Manager</b> <b>Corporate Support Manager</b> <b>Head of Corporate Risk</b> <b>Head of Policy, Planning and Performance</b> <b>Group Manager West District</b> <b>Group Manager South District</b> <b>Group Manager North District</b> <b>Area Manager Operations</b> <b>Area Manager Policy, Planning and Performance</b> <b>Area Manager Service Delivery</b> <b>Fleet Manager</b> <b>Head of Asset Management</b> <b>Head of Facilities Management</b> <b>Head of IS</b> <b>Head of Training and Development</b> <b>Approved Centre Manager</b> <b>Head of Personnel Services</b> <b>Community Safety Manager</b> <b>Performance/Improvement Manager</b> <b>Blue Watch Kidderminster</b>
18.1.2010 17.5.2010	<b>Principle Management Team</b>
4.2.2010 18.5.2010	<b>Senior Management Team</b>
6.1.2010 8.4.2010	<b>E&amp;D Steering Group</b>
19.3.2010	<b>Disability Focus Group</b>
19.4.2010	<b>LGBT Working group</b>
25.2.2010 8.4.2010	<b>Women's Action Committee</b>
2.2.2010 17.3.2010	<b>Worcester Community Engagement Forum</b>
1.2.2010 12.4.2010	<b>Bromsgrove Black History Society</b>
11.2.2010 15.4.2010	<b>Bromsgrove Equality and Diversity Forum</b>
9.2.2010 29.3.2010	<b>Worcestershire Equalities Group</b>
6.4.2010	<b>Herefordshire Diversity Leads</b>
15.12.09 11.3.2010 6.4.2010	<b>West Mercia Police</b>

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6.4.2010 29.3.2010	<b>Worcester University</b>
6.4.2010 18.3.2010	<b>Gallant 2000</b>
11.12.09 6.4.2010	<b>Gay Worcester</b>
6.4.2010	<b>Pertemps Mouzer</b>
4.2.2010 6.4.2010	<b>Bromsgrove District Council</b>
6.4.2010 31.3.2010	<b>Malvern Hills District Council</b>
12.2.2010 5.3.2010 6.4.2010	<b>Worcester City Council</b>
6.4.2010	<b>Wyre Forest District Council</b>
6.4.2010	<b>Worcestershire Race Equality Council</b>
30.4.2010	<b>Deaf Direct Worcester</b>
5.5.2010	<b>Descendants of Windrush</b>
27.4.2010	<b>Herefordshire Travellers Support Group</b>
6.4.2010	<b>Gender Advisory Bureau</b>
6.4.2010 10.5.2010	<b>Stonewall</b>
23/24.5.09	<b>Birmingham Pride 2009</b>
6.4.2010 11.5.2010	<b>Dorset Fire and Rescue Service</b>
16.2.2010 6.4.2010 28.4.2010	<b>Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service</b>
16.2.2010 6.4.2010 28.4.2010	<b>Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service</b>
16.2.2010 6.4.2010 28.4.2010	<b>West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service</b>
3.3.2010	<b>Website consultation</b>
22.2.2010	<b>Intranet and Staff Bulletin</b>

## **Appendix Four: Progress Review Equality Scheme 2007 – 2010**

Organisational re-structure has repositioned and strengthened the equality function which now sits within the Policy, Planning and Performance team. This has provided the Authority with the strategic leadership necessary to ensure that equality is mainstreamed through the organisation; the team is led by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

During 2006 we sought to simplify the requirement for separate equality schemes into one integrated scheme, extending the coverage to include age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and gender reassignment. We recognised that a more user friendly way of presenting equality information was required when individuals often hold multiple identities and as a result have a variety of needs which need to be addressed. The creation of this scheme in this format enabled individuals to seek guidance from one source of information.

The 2007 – 2010 Equality Scheme Action Plan detailed the many activities required, the target dates, those responsible for actions and progress comments.

The action plan was originally formulated using:

- The Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions; Towards Diversity II Action Plan
- The Equality Standard for Local Government objectives
- The Equality Duties housed within the:
  - Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
  - Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005
  - Equality Act 2006
  - The Employment Equality Regulations (Religion or Belief 2003; Sexual Orientation; Age 2006)

The combination of the above requirements into one action plan enabled a focused approach to the performance and improvement of equality issues within the Service. It highlighted a clear and transparent approach showing which objectives met which requirement and their reference history.

The action plan was organised and presented utilising the Equality Standard for Local Government; levels 1 to 5 and further subdivided into Priority areas A to D, entitled Leadership and Corporate Committeemen; Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny, Service Delivery and Customer Care and Employment and Training. This approach enabled clear cross referencing of objectives to meet the performance requirements of the standard and highlighted the Equality areas they relate to.

### **Equality Standard**

Throughout 2007 the Service continued to progress and develop our performance against the Equality Standard for Local Government, which enabled us to deliver real results and outcomes within the equality function.

In April 2008, the Service finalised its self assessment report for achievement of level 4 of the standard; this level required external validation of our progress which can only be undertaken at levels 3 and 5.

The external validation process was therefore undertaken as part of the self assessment process by Local Government Association assessors enabling the Service to achieve the Equality Mark Certificate for achievement at level 3, and self assessment at level 4.

### **Areas of Strength**

There were a number of strengths and some areas for review and improvement indicated within the external auditing process. Throughout the following years 2008 and 2009 the Service has continued to build and maintain these strengths whilst implementing the changes required within the areas for review and improvement.

### **Leadership and Corporate Commitment**

- There is a strong commitment from Authority leadership to equality improvement and to the Equality Standard as a means of engaging with improvement. With commitment being well communicated throughout the organisation, developing corporate information, guidance and training materials for understanding and working with the equality standard.
- An Equality and Diversity Steering Group has been established for a number of years with defined officer responsibilities to drive the action plan and timescales which manages the progress of the implementation of the Scheme and the Standard with requirements for reporting across all service areas.
- The Service has produced a unified Equality Scheme with a well-structured equality action plan that indicate how commitments will be implemented by all departments.
- Two Authority Members have direct responsibility for equality; which enables Members and senior management to be actively involved in the development and support of specific equality action plans and equality improvement action is embedded in directorate plans.
- The interviews and focus groups conducted during the audit all showed a very clear understanding of the need to continuously review progress and also showed, particularly at a senior level, an awareness of where things had worked well, and where greater effort needs to be concentrated.
- The Service has well developed systems for data collection and analysis and is able to generate monitoring reports quickly and effectively enabling review to be undertaken.
- Corporate priorities and strategic plans are aligned to same core aims and objectives, with clear targets and local performance indicators in use.
- The Service has included equality impact assessment within its overall risk management process. The review of this process has enabled the Service to consider all risk related to policies and decisions.

### **Consultation and Community Development and Scrutiny**

- The Service has engaged with Service users from all the equality strands and has actively worked with stakeholders at both a local and regional level and has made good progress in working in partnership.
- The Service can demonstrate that it has opened its objectives, target setting processes and strategic equality priorities to involvement, consultation and scrutiny from staff, stakeholder and partnership groups; and that a range of feedback mechanisms are utilised to support the processes.

## DRAFT

- Information relating to equality objectives and targets are available on the website.
- Appropriate language and translation services are available during consultation and information is translated into appropriate languages as necessary.

### **Service Delivery and Customer Care**

- A corporate equality policy exists and action planning has taken account of accessibility and reasonable adjustment which is highlighted within the Equal Access Service Group Plan.
- The service has made good progress in addressing barriers to accessibility and has involved disabled representatives in proposed changes and improvements. Access reviews have been completed and have been the basis for improvement action.
- The employee appraisal system has helped to embed accountability with the requirement for staff to deliver on equality objectives.
- A performance management system is in place to monitor and report on progress against both BVPIs and Corporate Plan Objectives. Corporate guidelines are in place for information gathering and equality monitoring; a review of the corporate information system to assess the adequacy of departmental information and monitoring systems has been undertaken.
- The procurement guidance requires contractors and suppliers to demonstrate that they have an equality policy and that all procurement contract specifications include equality indicators.

### **Employment and Training**

- The unified Equality Scheme's content is consistent with employment and training requirements of Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes; the HR and Training Departmental Objectives have appropriate content on employment and training. With HR and Training, managers have a clear understanding of action plans and the need for equality improvement targets.
- Equality targets have been set for improving the recruitment and retention of under-represented groups in its departmental objectives and People Strategy, along with a well-defined Positive Action Strategy and has implemented this through a series of positive action events.
- Equality principles are clearly stated in the Ethical Framework distributed to all staff through personal issue and training presentations.
- Interviews indicated a good understanding of the equality issues facing HWFRA and demonstrated commitment to working on equality improvement in employment and service delivery.
- An equal pay audit will be carried out following the approval of the draft Fair Employment and Equal Pay Statement.
- Members are aware of action plans and their implications and have endorsed the HWFRA targets and actions for making equality improvements.

### **Areas for Review or Improvement**

#### **Leadership and Corporate Commitment**

- The Authority must be able to produce evidence of **monitoring** across both employment and services to comply with their duties under the Equality Act 2006.

## DRAFT

Disaggregated statistics will enable the Authority to develop that evidence.

- Progress: The Service has been working to address this area of improvement by implementing the recording of data that we have previously been unable to report on. The Personnel Department this year (2010) have been awarded funding to enable achievement of this requirement for annual reporting to commence in September 2010.
- Supplementary guidance is required on equality in **procurement** to ensure that the Authority meets national guidance and best practice throughout all aspects of this procedure.
  - Progress: The new Head of Asset Management is in the process of reviewing the whole department; part of this process includes the area of Procurement. During 2010 the department will be improving all strategy and policy regarding procurement; ensuring that robust processes are in place to monitor the equality aspects of our contractors and suppliers.
- The equality scheme and directorate **business plans** need to be clearly integrated.
  - Progress: Work has been undertaken during 2009 to align the reporting process with the business cycle, to help us to ensure that our equalities priorities are thought about at the same time as our strategic priorities.

### Consultation and Community Development and Scrutiny

- The **scrutiny** role of **external service users** should be strengthened to enable closer management of activity at Service level.
  - Progress: One element of this has been achieved during 2009 with the establishment of a Community Engagement Forum, working in partnership with Worcester City Council. This element will be further developed to ensure that external scrutiny is available across the whole Service area.
- A more strategic and strengthened approach to consultation, involvement and **engagement** will improve response rates and help to develop continuing dialogue with the community. The strategy also needs to indicate how consultees are selected, with regular analysis of consultation methodologies for their usefulness in practice.
  - Progress: Work is being undertaken during 2010/11 to review and amend the Service's consultation, involvement and community engagement strategy.
- More information needs to be made available on the **website** about action on equality objectives.
  - Progress: Further information is currently being produced to highlight progress and action on equality that can be incorporated into the Equality section on the website.

### Service Delivery and Customer Care

- Disaggregation of the **at-risk groups** (as identified by the IRMP process) will help identify the most appropriate way of addressing the different needs of each group within the high risk categories.
  - Progress: This area of improvement has been incorporated within the Community Safety Strategy How to Guide with specific information stating the approach the Service will take to address these needs.
- **Specific action plans** in relation to race, gender, LGBT, age and religion or belief are required making it more inclusive enabling objectives and activities that relate only to one strand to be easily identified and monitored.

## DRAFT

- Progress: The draft Equality Scheme 2010 – 2013 is currently undergoing internal and external consultation following the implementation of various methods of feedback during 2007 – 2010. The action plan of the new scheme begins with a generic scheme structured around the Equality Framework; with each objective covering all six equality strands. Specific action plans have then been created which focus upon the specific strands of equality: Race, Gender, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Age, Religion or Belief and Gender Re-assignment.

### **Employment and Training**

- The relationship between the Corporate Plan, Departmental Equality Objectives and IRMP objectives needs to be more clearly defined.
  - Progress: Ongoing work is being conducted to ensure that the relationships between the processes are more clearly defined. The deadline for each of these processes at present do not align neatly and so consideration of how this can be improved to help with the improvement is also being discussed.
- **Equal Pay** reviews should be carried out at all levels to ensure that differentials in staff salaries are justifiable.
  - Progress: Advice and guidance on this process is being sought through solicitors, with the view for completion of the review to be achieved by the end of the financial year 2010/11.
- Equality training for managers to specifically include procurement and contracting.
  - Progress: Professional advice and guidance is being sought to help with the review process of our Procurement and contracting procedures, with training being provided to compliment the new process.

### **Progress during 2008/2009**

Since this validation the regional equality and diversity practitioners within our family of Fire Services have been working to provide an Equality Auditing Management System that will provide additional resilience for the management of performance against equality.

Practitioners and relevant representatives within each Service were trained to audit equality; this was strengthened further with equality practitioners being trained to train others, again providing resilience. The process enables the internal self assessment of progress against the Equality Framework as well as independent assessment across the region.

### **LGBT Equality**

LGBT equality has been progressed this year building upon the attendance at Birmingham Pride events in 2008. This has led to the membership of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme in January 2009 and further attendance at Birmingham Pride 2009.

Advert entries were created for the Midlands Zone to support Pride 2008 and 2009 as well as for the Stonewall **Starting Out** Recruitment Guide 2009/10.

## DRAFT

Other LGBT activities have included:

- The establishment of an LGBT Working Group to assist and support in the attendance of LGBT events and support and advice to staff. Along with a Principle Officer was established to lead and progress LGBT equality.
- Partnership working with Bromsgrove District Council to create the first LGBT event in Feb 09.
- Coordination of the Sexual Orientation and Religion or Belief monitoring information and survey to staff.
- Ongoing benchmarking meetings with Stonewall regarding the Workplace Equality Index and general LGBT Equality progress.
- Gap Analysis was undertaken against the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index to provide an update to PMM and to feed into the revision of the Equality Scheme.
- Ongoing Bulletin and Grapevine entries have continued for various events such as Birmingham Pride, Stonewall and LGBT History month.
- Discussions and initial organisation of our attendance at Worcester Pride 2010.

### **Disability Equality**

- A review of the Equal Access Service Group was conducted to assess whether its function was still fit for purpose.
- A relevant Principle Officer was established to lead and progress disability equality work.
- Terms of reference were reviewed and amended along with a change in the group's name to incorporate the new structure and initial priorities of the group.

### **Women's Action Committee**

- A review of the Women's Action Committee was conducted to assess whether its function was still fit for purpose. It was agreed that the committee would still operate in its current function, however it was suggested that a forum should be created for female members of staff only; with the purpose of providing a 'safe haven' for raising issues that may be of a sensitive nature.
- A relevant Principle Officer was established to lead and progress gender equality work.
- Terms of reference were reviewed and amended along with a change in the group's name to incorporate the new structure and initial priorities of the group.

Other activities have included:

- WAC leaflet helping to raise awareness of the group.
- The research into managing the menopause as a guidance document.
- Supporting an undergraduate degree student to carry out their dissertation within the service on Women and Gender identity.
- Charity donation event for International Women's Day, supporting Knickers for Africa appeal.