



Statement of Intent

Positive Action

June 2023



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Purpose

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) is fully committed to meeting the diverse needs of the communities it serves. To achieve this, we will strive to have a workforce that understands and reflects this diversity.

This statement of intent sets out how we will utilise positive action principles to encourage certain under-represented members of the community to engage with recruitment or prevention activities. This reflects our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

The statement supports the [Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services](#) in England and underpins the Service's ability to deliver the three core strategies of Prevention, Protection and Response, and the People Strategy.



What is Positive Action?

Positive action is a range of lawful initiatives to improve equality for people who share a protected characteristic, through reducing disadvantages, meeting the differing needs and increasing participation. Proportionate action can be taken when there is evidence of under representation or that a barrier exists. Section 158 of the Equality Act 2010 allows employers to use the positive action general provisions.

There are nine Protected Characteristics:

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

Positive action gives individuals from under-represented groups opportunities to overcome barriers and to compete with others on a level playing field. It supplements the support the Service provides to all staff to reach their full potential and positions are awarded to the best candidate regardless of whether they fall into a particular group or not.



Positive Action Verses Positive Discrimination

Positive action is not positive discrimination. Positive discrimination is unlawful and not used at HWFRS. An example of positive discrimination is recruiting or promoting someone because they have a protected characteristic rather than on merit.

Statutory Context

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires HWFRS to advance the equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic, to publish equality information annually and equality objectives every 4 years. The HWFRS Equality Objectives 2021 – 2025 are:

Our Organisation

Leadership and Corporate Commitment

Our leaders will provide visible leadership to ensure our people, our partners and our communities see the personal commitment to inclusion.

We will maximise the transparency of our organisation so our activities can be scrutinised and we can be held accountable.

Our Communities

Understand, engage and build good relationships

We will better understand our communities by ensuring we put in place systems that enable the collection, collation and analysis of community data and information.

We will enhance our engagement with our communities to foster good relationships and understand the community priorities.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives

Our People

Develop, engage and understand

We will develop our people to better understand diversity and inclusion.

We will create an inclusive culture where our people feel able to be themselves.

We will better understand our workforce composition through our workforce data.

Our Partners

Working together

We will work with external partners to develop strategies that enable effective service provision to our communities.

We will collaborate across our own business functions and staff networks to better build equality and inclusion into our policies, processes and practices to ensure inclusion and the Core Code of Ethics are at the heart of everything we do.

Why do we need Positive Action?

Using positive action to increase representation within HWFRS is beneficial to us all. As well as enabling us to recruit from a wider pool of talented, skilled people to create a more forward-thinking, inclusive and positive working environment, it helps us to understand the diverse needs of the communities we serve. In addition, this supports HWFRS to achieve its statutory requirements.

HWFRS workforce representation is monitored on a regular basis through equality data and published annually in the Equality and Gender Pay Gap Report, available on the [HWFRS Website](#). The monitoring of equality data helps us identify where the workforce profile does not represent the community, and therefore where positive action is appropriate.



Data shows HWFRS should focus efforts to increase the representation of women in operational roles in order to better represent the local community. The ethnicity profile of the workforce is more reflective of the communities we serve, but could be improved within certain work groups. Disclosure rates for other protected characteristics, such as sexual orientation and disability tend to be lower but could suggest there may be an underrepresentation in HWFRS of people who consider themselves to have a disability or identify as LGBTQ+.

Positive Action Principles

Recruitment

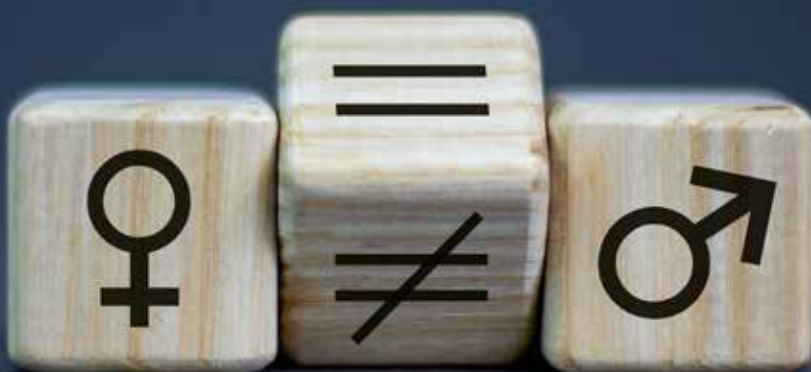
Use positive action initiatives to support recruitment processes for roles where the workforce does not represent the community.

- Evaluate whether positive action initiatives are appropriate for recruitment campaigns i.e. using the positive action decision making model as part of workforce planning.
- Utilise the appropriate and proportionate positive action initiatives to increase participation and recruitment of underrepresented groups e.g. targeted marketing, awareness sessions, specific support (such as fitness programmes) and engagement (i.e. buddies).
- Evaluate recruitment equality data to measure positive action success and inform future activity.

Progression

Use positive action initiatives to build diversity at all levels of management in the organisation.

- Support the development of underrepresented groups through positive action initiatives, such as coaching and mentoring, sponsoring, events and training.
- Use appropriate and proportionate positive action initiatives to increase participation of underrepresented groups at promotion processes.
- Evaluate promotion data to measure positive action success.
- Supplements our inclusive approach to progression for all to reach their potential.



Positive Action Principles

Community

Build positive relationships with our communities resulting in a more effective service.

- Attend community events to promote HWFRS as an inclusive employer and support prevention activities e.g. engage with children and young people to dispel traditional Firefighter stereotypes.
- Use positive action to enable or encourage members of our communities who share protected characteristics to participate in activities or use our services, where their participation is disproportionately low e.g. accessing Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV).
- Promote inclusive awareness events to the public e.g. via social media, press releases, etc.
- Promotion of Equality of Access documents to Watches to target HFSV or promote community engagement with specified groups as appropriate.



Retention

Create a positive and inclusive organisational culture that supports underrepresented groups within the workplace where all people can be their authentic selves.

- Annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion education to include positive action input.
- Support staff networks to better understand the lived experiences of minority groups in HWFRS e.g. Women@HWFIRE and Neurodiverse Staff network.
- Promote inclusive awareness events internally e.g. Neurodiversity celebration week, International Women's Day, Black History month, Pride month, etc.
- Consider staff engagement survey feedback based on protected characteristics.
- Evaluate retention equality data and exit information.



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