



WILTSHIRE
Fire & Rescue
Service

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Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive

Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority

Single Equality Scheme



2011 to 2013



DEVELOPING FIRE &
RESCUE
SERVICE
EQUALITY
FRAMEWORK

Your Safety: Our Priority

For a copy of our Customer Charter please go to our website www.wiltshire.gov.uk

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Chairman

Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority



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Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive

Foreword

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service (Wiltshire FRS) has a high reputation for providing emergency services that meet the needs of all the communities we serve. We will not discriminate in the delivery of services that make Wiltshire and Swindon a safe place to live, work and visit. Our commitment to equality of opportunity is longstanding and we believe that by introducing this Single Equality Scheme we can continue to build on that commitment to great effect.

Nationally, the equalities agenda is moving towards reducing disadvantage on the nine equalities protected characteristics of age, religion and belief, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. We believe that an inclusive approach to the equalities agenda is the most effective method for reducing risk to the communities we serve. This Single Equality Scheme pulls together everything which influences equality and diversity in Wiltshire FRS. It begins to set out our response to the challenges of delivering an emergency service fit for the 21st century, taking account of all the communities that make up Wiltshire and Swindon.

We value our workforce, not only as colleagues who deliver an excellent service but as individuals entitled to dignity, respect and consideration. The objectives of this Single Equality Scheme encompass our vision to be an employer of choice and our commitment to ensuring that all of our employees are able to perform in their role and reach their full potential.

Our Mission Statement

“We will make life safer for people in Wiltshire and Swindon and help strengthen and secure the changing communities we live in, by working together with others to deliver local solutions for local priorities.”

Strategic Aims



To provide a resilient response to fires and other emergencies



To create stronger, safer and more resilient communities



To develop a healthy, safe, well trained workforce which is representative of the community



To protect our environment and heritage



To resource our key aims to ensure maximum efficiency

Our Core Values



Service to the Community

Working with others fairly and with respect, to reduce risk, striving for excellence in all we do and being answerable to our communities.



People

Demonstrating honesty, integrity and mutual trust with our staff, recognising merit and encouraging personal development.



Diversity

Providing different solutions for different needs, promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the service and challenging prejudice and discrimination.



Improvement

Improving our service through consultation, learning from our experience, being open minded and responsible for our performance.

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service: Who are we?

(Reproduced from the Strategic Plan 2010-2013)

To deliver the Service to the communities of Wiltshire and Swindon we employ 587 operational firefighters consisting of 228 wholetime staff and 359 firefighters who work on the retained duty system. Our staff are drawn from all sections of the community.

Our operational crews are based at 24 fire stations, and are supported by 124 corporate staff, a central Training and Development Centre, a tri-service control centre, vehicle workshops and a Service Headquarters.

The Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority is made up of 13 elected members appointed by Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council. The Authority sets the budget, decides on strategic policy and scrutinises the activities of the Service. It is required by the Fire Services Act 2004 to provide the following :

Provision of a Fire and Rescue Service

- Provide trained personnel, services and equipment necessary to meet all normal requirements.
- Make arrangements to deal with calls for help and for summoning personnel and provide crews with safety information.

Fire safety

- Make provision to promote fire safety in its area.

Fire-fighting

- Make provision to extinguish fires, protect life and property and limit damage in the event of fires in its area.

Road traffic accidents

- Make provision to rescue people in the event of road traffic collisions in its area.

Other emergencies

- Make arrangements to respond to emergencies where one or more individuals die, are injured or become ill or there is the likelihood of harm to the environment (including the life and health of plants and animals). Other pieces of legislation, such as the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 require the Fire & Rescue Service to deliver statutory services.

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service

Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority



Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service's Vision for Equalities

Wiltshire FRS is committed to equality of opportunity and fairness in the delivery of our services and in our capacity as an employer. We believe that this commitment must extend beyond legislative compliance and address both the business case for diversity as well as the moral case for ensuring equality of opportunity and fairness for all.

We accept that we have a legal duty to eliminate discrimination in relation to race, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership and age. However, we also recognise that disadvantage can take place due to social and economic factors and we will take steps to ensure that our services are responsive to the needs of all vulnerable groups in society.

Our Strategic Plan 2010-2013 acknowledges that, as an organisation, we exist for the communities we serve and that we must continue to develop and review our activities to ensure they remain appropriate to the needs of those communities. We accept that we cannot do this in isolation of those communities and are committed to engaging with community groups, partner agencies and other external bodies. We see this single equality scheme as being a critical element in our overall commitment to equality and diversity and underpinning our strategic objectives contained within the Strategic Plan 2010-2013 and our Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

What We Believe

- We value diversity
- We believe in promoting equality
- We believe that every individual from every community is entitled to an excellent service from us and should be treated with respect
- We believe that discrimination should be eradicated
- We believe every employee has the right to be treated with dignity and respect

Best Value

We cannot provide a best value service unless we have the trust of Wiltshire and Swindon's diverse communities. Practising equality in all that we do will help build that trust. We will not ignore the varying needs of our communities and will take steps to deliver an appropriate and responsive service. We will continue to recruit and appoint on merit from across all of the communities we represent.

The Equality Act 2010

General Duty:

The general equality duty is set out in the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) see copy at Appendix A. In summary, those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (see page 10) and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty.

The Act helpfully explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

The Act states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status. This means that the first arm of the duty applies to this characteristic but that the others arms (advancing equality and fostering good relations) do not apply.



Specific Duties:

The specific duties apply to all the public authorities that are listed in Schedule 1 to the regulations. A Fire Authority is included in that Schedule. A copy of the regulations introducing the Specific Duties is attached at Appendix B.

Publish information

Publish sufficient information to demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty across its functions. This must be done by 31 January 2012 (and by 6 April 2012 for schools), and at least annually after that, from the first date of publication.

This information must include, in particular:

- Information on the effect that its policies and practices have had on people who share a relevant protected characteristic, to demonstrate the extent to which it furthered the aims of the general equality duty for its employees and for others with an interest in the way it performs its functions.

Public authorities with fewer than 150 employees are exempt from the requirement to publish information.

Manner of Publishing information

Information must be published in such a manner that it is accessible to the public.

The information required to be published under the Act can be published within another published document e.g. within the annual business plan.

Prepare and publish equality objectives

By 6 April 2012, prepare and publish:

- One or more objectives that it reasonably thinks it should achieve to meet one or more aims of the general equality duty.
- Subsequently objectives should be set at intervals of not greater than four years.

It must also:

- Ensure the objectives are specific and measurable.

Protected Characteristics:

The following protected characteristics introduced by section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 replace the previous equality strands:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex (gender)
- sexual orientation

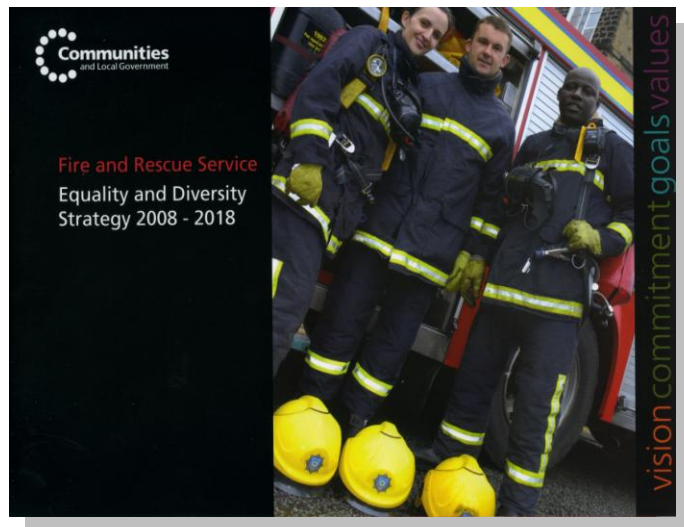
Social Inclusion Key Groups:

Whilst carrying out our assessment of impact on those with a protected characteristic we will also have due regard for the following vulnerable groups:

- Rural inequalities
- Homeless people
- Unemployed people
- People employed on a part-time, temporary or casual basis
- Lone parents
- People with caring responsibilities
- People with mental health needs
- People with substance misuse issues
- People with HIV
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Ex-offenders and people with unrelated convictions*
- People experiencing domestic violence

*An unrelated conviction is a minor conviction which has no impact upon and individual's ability to do a particular job or receive a service where access criteria apply. For instance, somebody with a minor driving conviction would not be prevented from working with vulnerable adults.





National Fire & Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018

Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority and Wiltshire FRS are committed to working in line with the National Equality and Diversity Strategy which was introduced in May 2008. This is a ten year strategy which aims to move Equality and Diversity forward within the Fire & Rescue Service nationally.

In 2010 the Coalition Government removed the recruitment targets and the requirement to report annually to Central Government on progress against the goals of the strategy. However, the vision and goals remain in force.

Why Equality and Diversity are important to the Fire & Rescue Service:

[Quote from National E & D Strategy 2008-2018]

“Equality and Diversity are key issues for the Fire and Rescue Service. They must drive how we treat each other as members of the Service; how we treat each of our customers; how we interact with the diverse communities we serve, and how we deliver our services to those communities. To be an effective Service our policies, practices and procedures must be fair, providing equality of opportunity to all employees and an appropriate and effective service to all parts of the community.”

Vision of the Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018:

We will make fairness and inclusion fundamental to everything we do to ensure:

- That we reduce the impact of fire and other risks on all the communities we serve by effective prevention, protection and emergency response.
- That our workforce better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.
- That all our employees are equally respected and valued.

Goals of the Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018:

The Equality and Diversity Strategy contains the following goals:

By 2018 we want to ensure:

- We serve all communities to the highest standards tailored to their needs
- All communities know that the Service understands their needs and respects difference
- We encourage and value greater diversity and treat everyone with dignity and respect
- All employees know they are respected, supported and valued regardless of their age, disability, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity
- Instances of bullying, harassment, unfair discrimination or unacceptable behaviour are not tolerated in any part of the organisation and are dealt with effectively, fairly and swiftly
- We share understanding, commitment and action with our local, regional and national partners

We will know we have succeeded when, for example:

- The rate of injury and death by fire among more vulnerable or high risk groups in society is falling and is closer to that within the population as a whole
- Employee and community surveys reflect positive attitudes about Fire and Rescue Service culture and service provision
- Gay, lesbian and bisexual employees have no concerns about being open about their sexuality at work
- Levels of retention and progression for employees from all backgrounds, and between men and women, are comparable
- Malicious calls and attacks on firefighters are falling

Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework

“The journey to excellence”

The Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRS EF) was developed following a desire to create a bespoke equality framework for the Service. The Chief Officers Association (CFOA) together with the then Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) enlisted the assistance of nine Fire & Rescue Services across the country to develop and pilot the framework. Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service was one of the nine services.

The FRS EF recognises and addresses equality and diversity objectives that are a priority for the Fire and Rescue Service.

The FRS EF 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’

It has also been cross-mapped with the national ‘Fire and Rescue Service: Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 - 2018’ to incorporate the same five priority areas stated in that document. The priority areas of performance are:

- leadership and promoting inclusion
- accountability
- effective service delivery and community engagement
- employment and training
- evaluation and sharing good practice

The FRS EF compliments and supports the services’ national core values. These are:

- service to the community
- people
- diversity
- improvement

Fire and rescue services may claim performance at the **developing** level based on a thorough self-assessment. But, at the **achieving** and **excellent** levels self-assessments will require validation by a Local Government Improvement and Development Diversity Peer Challenge.

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Services Self-Assessment:

In April 2009 Wiltshire FRS and Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority were assessed under the then Equality Standard for Local Government at Level 2. The standard at that time had five levels, from 1 at the lowest to 5 at the highest.

With the introduction of the new Framework there was a reduction in levels mentioned above. Authorities were able to transfer across to the new levels, with level 2 migrating to the “Developing” level.

However, the Fire Service Framework was slightly different to the Equality Standard for Local Government and this meant that certain areas within the framework had not been evidenced at Level 2. At the “Developing” level an authority is able to self assess using the “Effect” toolkit on the Local Government Improvement and Development website. A self assessment has taken place.



After populating the “Effect” toolkit with evidence in all areas of the Framework, Wiltshire FRS and Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority have assessed themselves to be at the “Developing” level.



Equality Schemes 2005-2010 Progress to date

- Elected members of Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority have taken part in an Equality & Diversity Training session specific to Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- The service has an Equality & Diversity Steering Group Chaired by the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and attended by Directors and Representative bodies.
- One member of the Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority has a portfolio for Equalities and is the Vice Chair of the Services' Equality & Diversity Steering Group.
- Equality Objectives have become a standard part of the annual Performance Review, which all staff including CFO, partake in.
- The Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and Business Plan 2010-2013 acknowledges that as an organisation we exist for the benefit of the communities we serve and that we must continue to develop and review our activities to ensure they remain appropriate to the needs of those communities.
- A section of the plan relates directly to the subject of Equality & Diversity.
- The Wiltshire FRS website home page has a direct link to the E&D web page containing details of the Services' commitment to E&D.
- The Service is committed to understand the community it serves and is working with partners across Wiltshire and Swindon to develop a system of equality mapping to better understand the make-up of its communities.
- The Service has a dedicated Equality & Diversity advisor.
- The Services' Equality Advisor is a member of the Wiltshire & Swindon E&D Lead Officer Group looking at appropriate areas of equalities work which can be carried out in partnership.
- The Service has in place all relevant Equality Schemes, as required by law.
- The Service is reviewing the above mentioned schemes in line with the new General Equality Duty, which came into force on 6th April 2011 (see page 8).
- The Service engaged in joint consultation with Wiltshire Police, NHS Wiltshire and Wiltshire Council on the development of Single Equality Schemes and jointly feedback the results of the consultation to the stakeholders.

- The Service engaged with the community and under-represented groups over the development of its IRMP and Business Plan 2010-13.
- The Service has engaged with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups over the past two years by being involved with Pride, Black History Month and the Swindon Mela events across the county.
- The Service has been instrumental in moving forward Gypsy & Traveller engagement across the county by facilitating meetings between organisations and representatives from that community.
- Staff at all levels within the organisation have taken part in targeted equality training, “Making it Real” training sessions, to ensure that equality & diversity is seen as relevant to the day job of the Fire & Rescue Service.
- Procurement process and practice has equality considerations built into it.
- The Salamander programme has worked with outside organisations to run courses for under privileged young people, those with Downs Syndrome and young carers.
- The Service has worked with outside organisations to develop a rough sleepers’ scheme and provide resources for those sleeping rough within the county.
- The Service has worked with the county’s Hearing and Sensory Loss team to ensure appropriate services are provided for those with hearing or sight problems.
- The Service has been committed to supporting the development of equality groups across the county to ensure better representation for under-represented groups. Examples of this are support for SCAR (Salisbury Coalition Against Racism) and ECBL (Equality Chances, Better Lives).



Our functions and policies

Identification of Functions:

The Equality Act 2010 (mentioned on page 8 of the scheme) highlights that authorities need to consider all of their functions, to determine which of them are relevant to the aims of the duty. The original work which identified our priorities for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments now needs to be revisited and a further assessment carried out.

This process has commenced and once completed will form part of the Corporate Equality Action Plan.



Equality Impact Assessments:

Prior to the introduction of the Act there was a requirement to have a formal Equality Impact Assessment Process. For some months the process has been under review. The new Act is moving organisations to have a system of assessing equality impacts which is much more embedded in the decision making, planning and policy development process.

The assessment of impact is an important part of identifying and developing equality objectives which will form the basis of the corporate equality action plan.

Once completed the new process of assessing the impact of our decisions, policies, processes and functions will be covered by a SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) which will be issued in due course.

This document has been subjected to the Equality Impact Assessment Process.

Access to Information and Services

Wiltshire FRS provides services to the public both on a reactive and proactive basis:

- **Reactive:** attending fires, road traffic collisions, other emergencies
- **Proactive:** community fire safety, technical fire safety

Wiltshire FRS will provide access to information and services by utilising the following methods as appropriate:

- Determine whether information should be provided in languages other than English
- Hold open days on stations and other Fire & Rescue Service venues to encourage members from all sections of the community to learn more about the Fire & Rescue Service
- Encourage local members from all groups including ethnic minority groups to participate in consultation exercises
- Provide information about specific services directly to appropriate sections of the community, including ethnic minority communities
- Train all staff on every aspect of equality and diversity
- Set clear standards for staff conduct incorporating core values and personal qualities and attributes
- Work with local community organisations

Dealing with Complaints

General:

There may be occasions when either members of the public or members of staff do not feel that the Authority is meeting its obligations and duties under the Equality Act 2010. If this is the case, upon receipt of a complaint the following action will be taken:

Members of the Public:

All complaints, whether verbal or written, from members of the public will be passed to the Wiltshire FRS Administrative Officer. In line with the Wiltshire FRS Complaints Procedure a decision will then be made as to who is the appropriate officer to investigate.

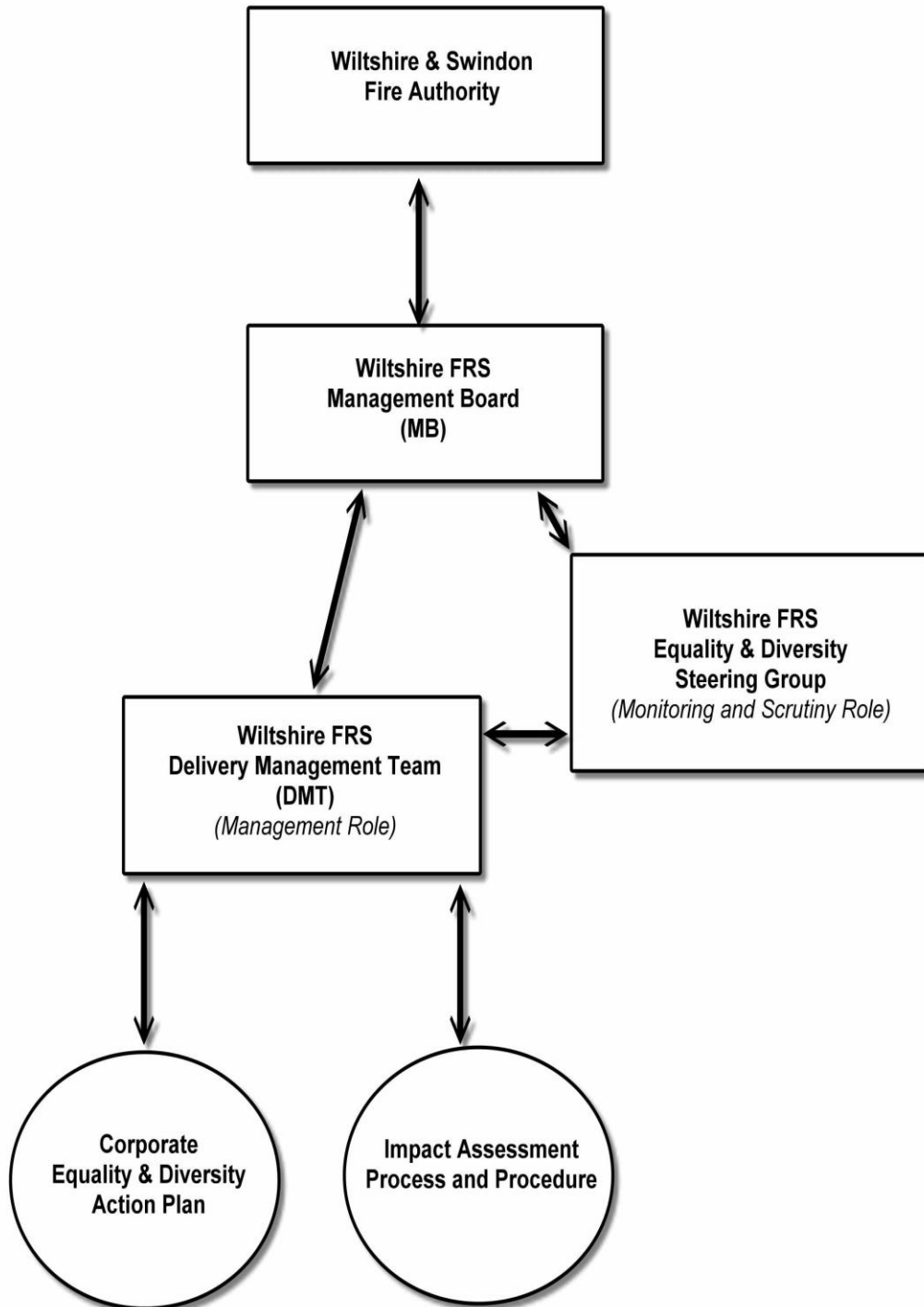
All complaints will be acknowledged within five working days of receipt. The complainant will be provided either with a full reply or details of when a full reply will be made, within ten working days of receipt. If there is a delay, they will be provided with details of why this has taken place, within the same time scale.

Members of Staff:

Complaints from members of staff should be directed under the Services' Grievance Procedure to the appropriate line manager or senior officer. Complaints may also be made direct to the Director of HR, Learning and Development.

Governance for Equality & Diversity

Where it all fits:



The governance structure outlined here will be subject to change in line with the Transformation Change Programme currently taking place in the Service.

Governance - Responsibilities:

Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority:

Statutory responsibility for the effective implementation of the General Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 and any Specific Duties introduced by the Secretary of State, lies with the Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority.

The Authority is also responsible for ensuring that equality and diversity are embedded in all parts of the organisation, covers all the protected characteristics and all Fire Authority business (including employment practice, procurement and service delivery) and is reviewed on a regular basis.

Management Board (MB):

Operational responsibility for carrying out the decisions of the Authority lies with the Chief Fire Officer, who is responsible for the implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure the Service effectively implements and complies with the General and Specific duties and fully implements Equality and Diversity into all functions of the Service.

This responsibility is discharged through the Management Board of Wiltshire FRS. Regular reports on the progress of Equality and Diversity will be compiled by the Director of HR Learning and Development through the People Workstream.

The Management Board will also be responsible for allocating appropriate resources to ensure that identified equality objectives can be achieved.

Delivery Management Team (DMT):

The Delivery Management Team will be responsible for managing the Corporate Equality & Diversity Action plan. They will be responsible for working with the Equality & Diversity Steering Group to identify equality objectives which need to be included in the Action Plan. They will also identify personnel to lead on identified equality objectives and ensure that progress is made to achieve these within the designated time frame.

The DMT will provide reports on progress on the Corporate Equality & Diversity Action Plan to the Equality & Diversity Steering Group and Management Board.

The DMT will receive details of equality objectives which originate through the Impact Assessment process and ensure that these are integrated into the Corporate Equality Action Plan.

The role of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group is to provide strategic direction and ethical leadership for equality and diversity within Wiltshire FRS. The group will provide a forum for the identification of emerging strategic equality and diversity issues and for discussion, development, promotion and sharing of policy and good practice initiatives associated with equality and diversity.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group is accountable to the Service's Management Board. They will be responsible for working with the Delivery Management Team to identify equality objectives which need to be included in the Equality & Diversity Action Plan.

To oversee the audit, monitoring and evaluation of equality impact assessments and equality schemes by monitoring individual representatives and working groups focusing on the Protected Characteristics.

Please see the Steering Groups full terms of reference at Appendix D.



Some members of Wiltshire FRS
Equality & Diversity Steering Group
June 2011

Cllr Peter Davis
Lead Memeber for Equality & Diversity



Individual Managers:

All managers across the organisation should be aware of their role in promoting equality and diversity and of their obligation to ensure that all decisions, plans, policies, practices and procedures relating to any Wiltshire FRS function undergo effective assessment to identify the impact on those with Protected Characteristics. Whilst doing this they must ensure that they have due regard to the General Equality Duty and any Specific duties introduced by the Secretary of State.

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service Staff (All):

- Treat others with dignity and respect in accordance with the Core Values.
- Undertake their role in promoting equality and diversity and ensure any decision, practice or procedure they have responsibility for is effectively assessed for its impact upon those with protected characteristics or those within the social inclusion keys groups (see page 10).
- Challenge and report bullying, harassment, discrimination and unacceptable behaviour.
- Meet his or her equality objectives.
- Understand and comply with legal requirements regarding age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sex (gender), sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership.
- Engage constructively with managers and colleagues in undertaking the annual performance review process.
- Draw attention to potential good practice.
- Seek support and advice as needed to deal with equality and diversity issues in their day-to-day work.
- Complete frankly and return promptly workforce monitoring and employee survey questionnaires.

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service Equality & Diversity Advisor:

- To provide advice to staff, including all levels of management, on equality & diversity issues and to advise the Service on how to achieve compliance with equality & diversity legislation and the Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework.
- Responsible for the production of Equality schemes, strategy, policy and procedures.
- Delivery of equality training.

Joint Consultation on Single Equality Scheme



During the autumn of 2009 informal discussions took place between Wiltshire Police, Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire FRS and NHS Wiltshire which revealed that each of the organisations was at a similar stage in the development of their Single Equality Schemes. It was felt that a joint engagement process would provide an opportunity to ask questions once, share costs and resources, and make better use of volunteers' time by not asking them to be involved in four separate processes.

It was agreed that the engagement process would take the broad principles from the Local Government Equality Framework, which mirrors those of the NHS, the Police and the Fire & Rescue Service, as a basis for discussion. However, it was recognised that each organisation would also need to have more detailed discussions about its own services and so provision for this was built in.

The broad principles for the engagement were:

- Knowing our communities
- Shaping our communities
- Engaging with our communities
- Responding to individual needs
- Employment opportunities

The engagement Process:



A joint engagement document was produced, explaining the aims of the four partners, their achievements to date and the themes for discussion along with a questionnaire. This document was also available in an easy read format, and in hard copy or electronically. The questionnaire was incorporated into an online survey, hosted and managed by NHS Wiltshire, but available on all of the partners websites and also on the Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership website via a link.

165 separate organisations were contacted on two separate occasions. Firstly to introduce the engagement process, invite responses and outline how people could get involved, and secondly to invite all those on the mailing list to a public meeting on 24 February at the Sports Club in Devizes. Some of the organisations approached, such as Council's for Voluntary Services, sent the details of the consultation on to the small single issue groups that make up their wider membership.

In addition to the public meeting it was felt that a particular effort should be made to engage with disability groups to make sure those people had adequate opportunity to give their views. To achieve this, the Wiltshire & Swindon User Network was commissioned to organise and facilitate two meetings for their members where the Single Equality Scheme engagement was the focus of the discussion. These meetings were held in Chippenham and Salisbury in February 2010 and captured a broad range of views and ideas which have been incorporated into the overall feedback.

The three engagement meetings were attended by approximately 120 people. However, the partner organisations gave a commitment to attend any scheduled meetings on request and this ensured the issues were discussed more widely.

The partners have agreed to work together to make sure all those who contributed to the engagement process receive feedback about how their views have been used to shape services and policies.

Conclusions from the consultation:

- Reducing inequalities is a real issue of concern for people and, as well as maintaining emphasis on the recognised strands of equality, special consideration must be given to rural inequalities in Wiltshire as being of particular relevance.
- Increased knowledge and understanding of individual's rights, in turn increases the desire for control and influence over how services are designed and delivered. This is in line with the principles of the NHS Constitution and therefore presents an opportunity to work with service users and the public over longer periods of time to develop more meaningful opportunities for engagement, influence and decision making.

- The most vulnerable people in society are disadvantaged, even by processes designed to support them in accessing services. For instance, the majority of information is still produced in written format with all details about how to obtain other formats and languages generally printed on the back. There needs to be a more “common sense” approach to the production and dissemination of information if we are to reach people that we know suffer the greatest health inequalities, such as Gypsies and Travellers and people with learning disabilities.
- Whilst people in Wiltshire broadly agree that public services work hard to know and engage with communities, there is still room for improvement, and a particular need to encourage certain groups who are not well represented to become involved. In particular, younger people and certain ethnic minority groups that we know are living in Wiltshire.
- There is a level of cynicism about the ability to shape the development of public services, with people often feeling that their views are gathered to “tick a box”. It was widely agreed that the only way to demonstrate the benefits of engagement is to improve the way we feedback to people about how we have used the information they give us.
- Responding to individual needs is the area where improvements really need to be made as the majority of people who responded said that public services do not do this well. People felt that front line staff do not receive enough training in equality and diversity to be able to understand different perspectives and it was also suggested that those who actually deliver services need to be more involved in community engagement work in order to know more about what residents of Wiltshire really think.

Wiltshire and Swindon Equality & Diversity Lead Officer Group

Membership:

Equality & Diversity lead officers nominated by members of:

- (a) Wiltshire Public Service Board.
- (b) Swindon Borough Council
- (c) Local Hospital Trusts

The membership of the group will be reviewed as required.

The Group will have the authority to co-opt individuals with specific skills to assist in achieving its objectives (e.g. Equal Chances Better Lives service and other voluntary / community organisations)

Purpose:

To put equality & diversity at the forefront of service delivery through a structured, co-ordinated and collaborative approach by public service providers across Wiltshire and Swindon

Objectives:

- To develop joint working to meet agreed equality objectives, plans and schemes
- To create and maintain links with strategic thematic partnerships to support them in integrating equality as a core part of their work.
- To support and promote in partnership effective equality achievements, across communities and wider partnerships
- To share, monitor and assess developments and progress towards improving performance on equality, diversity and inclusion
- To make a demonstrable and measurable difference to the lives of people in Wiltshire and Swindon

Accountability:

Each member will initially be accountable to their own organisations Equality and Diversity Steering Group (whatever form that group takes within their organisation).

In the Wiltshire Council area any joint work which this group embarks upon will be accountable to the Wiltshire Public Service Board (WPSB). This group will provide updates and progress reports direct to the WPSB.

In the Swindon Borough area any joint work which this group embarks upon will be accountable to (to be confirmed). This group will provide updates and progress reports direct to Swindon Partnership Board

Any Working Groups set up to progress pieces of joint working will be required to report their progress at the meetings of this E&D Lead Officers' Group.

Equal Opportunity in Employment

Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority is committed to all aspects of equal opportunities 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.

Monitoring, Evaluation and review:

In order to meet the needs of the community and staff employed at Wiltshire FRS, it is important to monitor and analyse employment data which will enable us to progress and improve our performance and service delivery.

The publication of equalities data is a requirement of the Specific Duties under the Equality Act 2010 referred to on Page 9, this also applies to employment information.

Monitoring of the following areas is essential to establish trends and information which can help us measure adverse impact upon those employed by Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority, including people with protected characteristics.

- 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 and reasons for leaving

Recruitment and selection – Positive Action:

Wiltshire FRS's recruitment policies have been designed to ensure that all processes are non-discriminatory and do not pose an adverse impact upon any groups or individuals, including people with protected characteristics.

Positive Action is a tool that can be used to target and encourage interest and applications from under-represented groups.

Positive Action is a lawful tool that employers can use with the purpose of trying to prevent discrimination or to overcome past discrimination. However, we must be able to evidence that during the past 12 months no-one from a particular race or gender, or only a few people from that particular group, have been doing a certain type of work. It is then lawful to offer training only for people from that race or gender or to encourage people from that racial group or gender to apply.

Selection itself, once someone has applied for a role will always be based on merit and all applications will be treated equally.

Wiltshire FRS 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 all applicants for posts aware of the full process of recruitment and selection and of their right to be treated with dignity and respect throughout.

Reasonable Adjustments - Disability:

For potential or current employees who have or develop a disability, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act and laterly the Equality Act 2010, 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 their jobs or be considered for re-deployment if that is necessary.

Bullying and Harassment:

Wiltshire FRS aims to provide a working environment which is free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and intimidation and one in which all employees are treated with respect, dignity and are shown common courtesy. To this end a comprehensive Bullying and Harassment Policy is in force which is constantly being reviewed to ensure that it is up to date and fit for purpose.

Where bullying or harassment is based or found to be based on discrimination i.e. on the grounds of one or more of the protected characteristics, then the Equality & Diversity Advisor should be advised of the situation. It is the responsibility of the line management to resolve all such behaviour in the workplace.

This does not preclude the right of any individual within the Service seeking advice and guidance from the Equality & Diversity Advisor at any time.

Wiltshire FRS have also signed-up to "Expolink". This is an external, confidential helpline and reporting procedure which all staff have access to. All employees are made aware of this service and the means of accessing it.

Equality & Diversity Training:

Since 2008 all new starters to Wiltshire FRS have and continue to receive, basic Equality & Diversity training upon induction. This takes the form of a two hour sessions on their first induction day.

Also since that time, Equality & Diversity training has been focussed on relating equality and diversity issues directly to the “day” job of the Fire & Rescue Service. To this end a specific session entitled “Making it Real” was created. There are two components to this training, a two and a half hour session for all staff (both Operational and Corporate) up to Watch Manager or equivalent and a four hour session for all Managers of Station Manager and above or equivalent.

Wiltshire FRS also provided specific Fire & Rescue Service related Equality & Diversity training for members of Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority.

Attendance at these sessions was as follows:

| | |
|--|-------|
| Elected Members of the Combined Fire Authority..... | 85% |
| Managers (Station Managers and above and equivalent)..... | 96.5% |
| Staff (Corporate and Operational up to Watch Manager)..... | 64% |

N.B: *These figures correct as of July 2011.*

From April 2012 there will be a move to ensure that elements of equality and diversity are included in all aspects of training where appropriate. The basic induction input for new starters to the organisation will continue.

There may be a need for specific sessions to be developed, especially around equality legislation. These needs will be identified and appropriate training sessions designed and carried out.



Equality in Procurement

Benefits of embedding equality:

Integrating equality into our commissioning/procurement work can improve our services by making them more appropriate and responsible to the needs of different groups. This can lead to better value for money. Good equality practice makes good business sense for a Fire & Rescue Service. It will make Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority a better employer, it will improve their ability to meet the needs of staff and potential service users and it can help them to be better placed to deliver public services.

Equality legislation:

The general equality duty (referred to on Page 8) will apply to procurement and commissioning by Wiltshire FRS.

Wiltshire FRS is legally responsible for complying with the general equality duty in its timing and undertaking of procurement. Where functions are contracted out, the external contractor may themselves be subject to the general equality duty in carrying out a public function. Where the duty does not directly apply to the contractor, the commissioning public authority may need to include obligations relating to equality in the contract relating to the service, in order to comply with its obligations under the duty.

The requirement to comply with the general equality duty applies to all procurement regardless of the value; the value of the contract may, however, impact upon the relevance and proportionality of equality considerations.

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service Procurement Process:

In addition to complying with national and European Union Public Procurement legislation, Wiltshire FRS 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.
- Make sure that our selection and tendering processes positively address and include equality considerations that are in line with the procedures mentioned above.
- 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 and are offered equal opportunity in the tendering process.

Equality in Service Delivery

Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority commits to ensuring that equality considerations are integrated into all relevant areas of service planning, management and delivery.

In general, Service providers will:

- Ensure the Authority's services are accessible and are delivered appropriately in order to facilitate equality of treatment.
- Ensure that information about services is offered in appropriate formats and languages to meet the needs of all members of the community.
- Ensure that the Authority's resources are targeted to promote equality of access.
- Improve the monitoring of service provision in relation to service users, including those with a protected characteristic or within the social inclusion key groups (see page 10) and the similar monitoring of complaints.
- Assess the equality impact* of proposed and amended decisions, functions and policies.
- Improve the Authority's awareness and understanding of the needs of different groups through effective community profiling, consultation and engagement.
- Train staff to ensure that they are aware of this Equality Scheme and are able to apply it to their own area of work.

*Equality Impact – the positive or negative effect on a group or individual, including those with a protected characteristic or within the social inclusion key groups.

Community Engagement

Equality Act 2010 / General duty:

Although there is no specific requirement under the general duty to engage with the public, the general duty to have due regard requires public authorities to have an adequate evidence base for its decision-making, and engagement can assist with developing that evidence base.

Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework:

In order to progress to the “Achieving” level on the Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework, the Service will need to show evidence of continued community engagement. This is normally evidenced by the production of a Community Engagement Strategy, which includes details of how the Service will engage with those who have Protected Characteristics (see page 10).

Benefits of engagement:

Engagement will help Wiltshire FRS to perform the following tasks, all of which will in turn help the Service to meet the general equality duty:

- Identifying particular needs, patterns of disadvantage and poor relations between groups.
- Understanding the reasons for disadvantage, low participation rates and poor relations.
- Designing initiatives to meet these needs and overcome these barriers.
- Identifying opportunities to promote equality and foster good relations.
- Helping to fill gaps in equality information.
- Determining priorities.
- Identifying the relevance of functions to equality.
- Analysing the equality impact of particular programmes, policies or proposals.
- Monitoring and evaluating initiatives, policies and programmes.
- Checking the quality, relevance and comprehensiveness of information held by Wiltshire FRS.



When engagement is done well, it can help to improve the design and delivery of services, policies and practices affecting our staff and service users. It can help increase trust in public authorities by promoting transparency and be a mechanism by which public authorities can be held to account by services users. It can lead to efficiency gains by improving service design at the planning stages.

For example, public bodies who listen to the expertise and experience of disabled people may avoid costly changes to services or buildings at a later stage, as well as legal action. It can also help to identify whether more favourable treatment is necessary in order to meet particular needs.

Good engagement can mean more sustainable services, as services that better meet the needs of users are likely to be more effective in the longer term.

Business Planning

Equality Act 2010 / What this means for Wiltshire FRS:

It is good practice to integrate the general equality duty into all of the Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service business-planning process and this will help the Service to meet the duty. This includes:

- drawing up budgets
- developing and approving Service plans
- having clear equality objectives in your business plan and annual work plan
- measuring the progress made
- reporting progress against the equality objectives in the annual business plan

This will help improve staff ownership and increase transparency and accountability to the public.

Clear leadership from senior management is crucial to ensuring that the Service meets the duty. This involves:

- taking responsibility for compliance with the duty
- taking account of equality analysis when making decisions
- taking the duty into account in strategic planning
- building it into partnership working
- informing and reminding staff about the duty
- designating clear staff roles for implementation
- allocating resources for advancing equality
- including equality objectives in performance reviews
- requiring updates on action taken and outcomes from the duty
- promoting the benefits of the duty in public communication

It is good practice to give operational responsibility for coordinating work on the equality duty to staff at a senior level.

It is poor practice to rely only on a few staff to implement the duty. The duty involves generating a culture change across the Service, where equality issues are viewed as a matter for everyone. Case law has established that public bodies need to ensure their staff members are aware of their obligations. Training covering the requirements of the equality duty and the implications for their role would be beneficial for staff from a range of functions.

Appendix F “The duty at a glance for senior managers” starts the process for managers with a number of questions for them to consider.

This Single Equality Scheme has been designed to run from 2011 to 2013. It will require a review in 2013 at the same time as the Corporate Plan and IRMP. The intention would be to fully integrate the scheme with those plans at that time. In the meantime managers will need to ensure that all Service plans take into account the General Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 (See Page 8) from 6th April 2011 and any Specific Duties introduced by the Secretary of State.

Appendix A

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010

Public Sector Equality Duty:

- (1) – A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- (2) – A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1).
- (3) – Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
 - (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- (4) – The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- (5) – Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
- (a) tackle prejudice, and
 - (b) promote understanding.
- (6) – Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

(7) – The relevant protected characteristics are – age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

(8) – A reference to conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act includes a reference to –

(a) a breach of an equality clause or rule;

(b) a breach of a non-discrimination rule.

(9) Schedule 18 (exceptions) has effect.

Appendix B

The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2011

Specific duties:

Citation, commencement and interpretation

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2011 and come into force the day after the day they are made.

(2) In these Regulations “the Act” means the Equality Act 2010.

Publication of information

2.—(1) Each public authority listed in either Schedule to these Regulations must publish information to demonstrate its compliance with section 149(1) of the Act.

(2) A public authority listed in Schedule 1 to these Regulations must publish the information—

(a) not later than 31st January 2012; and

(b) subsequently at least at intervals of not greater than one year beginning with the date of last publication.

(3) A public authority listed in Schedule 2 to these Regulations must publish the information—

(a) not later than 6th April 2012; and

(b) subsequently at least at intervals of not greater than one year beginning with the date of last publication.

(4) The information a public authority publishes in compliance with paragraph (1) must include, in particular, information relating to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic who are—

(a) its employees;

(b) other persons affected by its policies and practices.

(5) Paragraph (4)(a) does not apply to a public authority that has fewer than 150 employees.

Equality objectives

3.—(1) Each public authority listed in either Schedule to these Regulations must prepare and publish one or more objectives it thinks it should achieve to do any of the things mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 149 of the Act.

(2) The objectives must be published—

(a) not later than 6th April 2012; and

(b) subsequently at intervals of not greater than four years beginning with the date of last publication..

(3) An objective published by a public authority in compliance with paragraphs (1) must be specific and measurable.

Manner of Publication

4.—(1) Each public authority listed in either Schedule to these Regulations must publish the information referred to in regulation 2 and 3 in such a manner that the information is accessible to the public.

(2) A public authority may comply with its duties to publish information imposed by regulations 2 or 3 by publishing the information within another published document.

SCHEDULE 1 Regulation 2(2)

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES REQUIRED TO PUBLISH INFORMATION

BY 31ST JULY 2011 - Includes.....

A fire and rescue authority constituted by a scheme under section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004**(b)**, or a scheme to which section 4 of that Act applies, for an area in England.

Appendix C “A Developing Authority”

Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework:

A 'developing' authority has the following characteristics:

- Councillors and officers understand the significance of equality of opportunity in creating local areas that people want to live and work in. They provide clear and visible leadership in building partnerships to address inequality.
- It has demonstrated clear plans to undertake equality mapping and understands the profile and needs of communities of interest in its locality.
- It has publicly committed to improving equality outcomes and the elimination of discrimination in both service delivery and employment based on race, gender, disability, age, religion and or belief and sexual orientation and other areas of disadvantage.
- It is compliant with all legal requirements, including having all the public duty equality schemes in place.
- It has systems in place at corporate and service and or unit levels to ensure the delivery, review and scrutiny of its equality and cohesion priorities.
- Key internal and external stakeholders and community members are involved in and consulted on equalities issues.
- It has earmarked specific resources for improving equality practice.
- It is carrying out both retrospective and prospective equality impact assessments.
- It is clear about its workforce profile and has plans to ensure equal pay and to improve representation where appropriate.



Appendix D

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Steering Group

Terms of Reference

1.0 Purpose:

- 1.1 The role of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group is to provide strategic direction and ethical leadership for equality and diversity within Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service. The group will provide a forum for the identification of emerging strategic equality and diversity issues and for discussion, development, promotion and sharing of policy and good practice initiatives associated with equality and diversity.

2.0 Detailed responsibilities:

- 2.1 To mainstream equality and diversity into the fabric of Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- 2.2 To review the progress of the action plan developed in line with the Fire & Rescue Service National Equality to ensure that equality and diversity is an integral part of Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service strategies, policies, procedures and services.
- 2.3 To Champion a culture supportive of equality and diversity to underpin Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service Core Values and promoting the Core Values and Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQA's).
- 2.4 To provide a platform for the discussion of all aspects of equality and diversity and joint working both internally with other groups within Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service and externally with other organisations within Wiltshire & Swindon from the public, private, business, voluntary and community sectors.
- 2.5 To oversee the audit, monitoring and evaluation of equality impact assessments and equality schemes by monitoring individual representatives and working groups focusing on the Protected Characteristics¹

¹ Equality Act 2010: Protected Characteristics = Age, Sex, Racial identity, Disability, Gender reassignment, Religion and belief, sexual orientation, maternity and pregnancy, marriage and civil partnerships

- 2.6 To review the involvement of all staff and local stakeholders, including user and community groups involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of equality impact assessments, equality schemes and equality and diversity initiatives.
- 2.7 To ensure that the service's Management Board is kept regularly informed of Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Services' progress in developing and implementing equality and diversity requirements.
- 2.8 To monitor data and information on equality and diversity issues, including trends and performance across employment and service provision.
- 2.9 To provide strategic oversight and support to the Equality and Diversity Advisor.

3.0 Membership:

- 3.1 Chief Fire Officer (Chair)
- 3.2 Lead Member Champion for Equality and Diversity (Deputy Chair)
Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority
- 3.3 Director, HR Learning and development
- 3.4 Director, Corporate Services
- 3.5 Director, Service Delivery
- 3.6 Equality & Diversity Advisor
- 3.7 FBU (Fire Brigade Union) Representative
- 3.8 Unison (Corporate Staff Union) Representative
- 3.9 RFU (Retained Firefighters Union) Representative
- 3.10 Members listed at paras. 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.8 & 3.9 to have a nominated deputy to attend in their absence, empowered to make decisions.
- 3.11 The Chief Fire Officer will chair the meeting. In the absence of the Chair the Lead Member Champion will chair the meeting. If both are absent a Chair will be agreed for the duration of that meeting.
- 3.12 Members should not rotate attendance from meeting to meeting but should have assigned responsibility on an ongoing basis.
- 3.13 The membership of this group should be kept under constant review and where necessary changes made to ensure the most representative balance of membership is maintained.
- 3.14 If circumstances warrant it the group are free to co-opt individuals with specific skills to join the group to assist in achieving its aims.

4.0 Role of the Members:

Members will be expected to:

- 4.1 Act as Champions for equality and diversity within Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- 4.2 Feedback into their work areas and representative groups and drive forward the equality and diversity agenda as part of their overall work programmes.
- 4.3 Report back to the Steering Group on progress made by their work areas and representative groups.
- 4.4 Report back to the Steering group on issues relating to equality and diversity that come up through their work areas and representative groups.

5.0 Accountability:

- 5.1 The Equality and Diversity Steering Group is accountable to the Service's Management Board.

6.0 Minutes and Reports:

- 6.1 The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will produce a set of minutes from each meeting which will be publicised to all staff and managers.
- 6.2 Annual reports on actions and plans will be provided to the Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority through the HR Learning and Development workstream and the Fire Authorities Programme and Scrutiny Board.

7.0 Frequency of meetings:

- 7.1 The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will meet at least four times during the year.
- 7.2 The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will review the frequency of meetings on a regular basis and set dates which are appropriate and necessary for achieving their aims.

8.0 Agenda items:

- 8.1 Proposed agenda items should be submitted at least 8 days in advance of the meeting to Director, HR Learning and Development. Agenda and associated papers to be circulated 7 days prior to the meeting.

Appendix E

Wiltshire & Swindon Equality and Diversity Lead Officer Group

Terms of Reference:

Terms of Reference for Public Service Equality & Diversity Lead Officer Group

1. Purpose:

- To put equality & diversity at the forefront of service delivery through a structured, co-ordinated and collaborative approach by public service providers across Wiltshire and Swindon

2. Objectives / Delivery Role:

- To develop joint working to meet agreed equality objectives, plans and schemes
- To create and maintain links with strategic thematic partnerships to support them in integrating equality as a core part of their work
- To support and promote in partnership effective equality achievements, across communities and wider partnerships
- To share, monitor and assess developments and progress towards improving performance on equality, diversity and inclusion
- To make a demonstrable and measurable difference to the lives of people in Wiltshire and Swindon

Delivery Role:

- Develop a partnership work plan to deliver shared equality priorities
- Build and model a culture of co-operation, and mutual support across agencies to ensure:
 - Joint communication and promotion of equality and diversity priorities across public services
 - Delivery of actions under these shared priorities
 - Effective use of resources to deliver initiatives
 - Effective peer assessments of equality performance under equality frameworks / standards.

- Where possible, to provide joint evidence of positive outcomes on equality (for example, case studies etc)
- Support and advise relevant Public Service Board / Partnership Board in their decision making and resource allocation

3. Membership of the Group:

- Equality & Diversity lead officers nominated by members of:
 - (d) Wiltshire Public Service Board.
 - (e) Swindon Borough Council
 - (f) Local Hospital Trusts
- The membership of the group will be reviewed as required
- The Group will have the authority to co-opt individuals with specific skills to assist in achieving its objectives (e.g. Equal Chances Better Lives service and other voluntary / community organisations)

4. Chair:

- A chair shall be nominated and agreed by the Group on an annual basis

5. Responsibilities of Members:

- Attend the group on behalf of their organisation and represent their organisation's approach to equality and diversity
- Members of the group will be responsible for feeding back to their own organisations Equality & Diversity Steering groups (whatever form that group may take) the recommendations and discussions which occur at the meetings
- Work together to identify and secure resources to enable pieces of joint working to be completed
- Where appropriate, take the lead on projects identified as suitable for joint working and be responsible for reporting back to the group on progress made
- Recommend and make decisions that are suitable for developing joint working to improve equality and diversity in our area
- Decisions of the group will be reached by and quorate of 3 or more organisation vote of agreement

6. Accountability:

- Each member will initially be accountable to their own organisations Equality and Diversity Steering Group (whatever form that group takes within their organisation).
- In the Wiltshire Council area any joint work which this group embarks upon will be accountable to the Wiltshire Public Service Board (WPSB). This group will provide updates and progress reports direct to the WPSB.
- In the Swindon Borough area any joint work which this group embarks upon will be accountable to (to be confirmed). This group will provide updates and progress reports direct to Swindon Partnership Board
- Any Working Groups set up to progress pieces of joint working will be required to report their progress at the meetings of this E&D Lead Officers' Group.

7. Secretariat / Administrative support:

- Secretarial and administrative support should be provided through the Chair's respective organisation where possible.

8. Frequency of Meetings:

- The Group will meet 6 times year on a two monthly basis

9. Review of Terms of Reference:

- These Terms of Reference will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are relevant and up to date.

Appendix F Equality Act 2010 – General/Specific Duties

The duty at a glance for senior managers – getting started:

- Is your organisation covered by the general or the specific duties?
- If you are covered by the specific duties, do you have 150 employees or more?
- Have you already undertaken any engagement or information collection on the new protected groups?
- Do staff and leadership understand their obligations?
- Can you undertake any of your equality work with other public authorities?
- Are you aware of the key dates for the duty?
- Who will be accountable for the duty within your organisation?
- How will you build the duty into your decision-making?

Appendix G Regulatory Framework

Government Equalities Office

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) is responsible for the legislative framework for equality in Great Britain. This is contained mainly in the Equality Act 2010.

Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Commission is the regulator of equality legislation, including the equality duty. It commented on the development of the legislation and now has a critical role to play in promoting awareness and understanding about the duty. This includes the provision of advice, guidance and information to a range of audiences. Examples of this include:

Guidance: Producing a range of guides on the equality duty. Further guides are planned, including on procurement/commissioning and for voluntary and community organisations.

Code: Developing a statutory Code of Practice on the public sector equality duty for England and non-devolved bodies in Wales and Scotland. This is expected to go out for consultation early in 2011 and is expected to be laid before the UK parliament later in the year.

Information: Providing dedicated web pages on the equality duty providing guidance, updates, government documents, equality information about the new protected groups and frequently asked questions.

Advice: Providing advice to public authorities on technical aspects of the duty and advice to individuals about using the duty to advance equality. This is done through the EHRC helpline, with support from the EHRC public sector duty team.

Promotion: Promoting awareness about the equality duty and its business benefits, for example through EHRC media and marketing work and through collaboration with sector-based organisations, unions and voluntary bodies.

Capacity: Developing the capacity of stakeholders to understand the Equality Act and to use the equality duty to scrutinise public authorities on equality and good relations issues (for example, voluntary bodies, equality organisations, advice agencies, law centres and recognised trade unions).

Good practice: Collating and promoting good practice among public authorities.

Partnership: Working with a range of public service inspectorates to ensure that their inspection frameworks fit with their own obligations under the duty.

Monitoring and enforcement

The Commission (EHRC) has responsibility for monitoring and enforcing the equality duty. The main purpose of this work is to promote compliance, improve standards, and collate and promote best practice.

Monitoring: EHRC monitoring work will involve assessing equality information published by public bodies, undertaking research on progress in different sectors, collating best practice, and compiling evidence to support our compliance and enforcement work. This includes monitoring compliance with duty obligations, and wider progress on equality outcomes.

Compliance: EHRC will use a range of strategies to promote compliance. This may include: working with organisations to ensure that remedial or preventative action is taken; giving specific advice or guidance to an organisation; meeting with senior managers and other staff. It may also include: carrying out desk-based reviews of information provided by organisations and providing feedback, and exchanging relevant information with other law enforcement bodies and regulators. EHRC will select the most appropriate tool to achieve the best outcomes, depending on the circumstances. This can involve building collaborative relationships with public bodies to achieve wider and more sustainable change. We will work to promote compliance as the preferred option and EHRC will usually only take formal enforcement action where efforts to encourage compliance have failed.

Enforcement: EHRC have a number of statutory powers to enforce the general and the specific duties. These include undertaking assessments under section 31 of the Equality Act 2006, to assess to what extent a body has complied with the equality duty. EHRC can issue compliance notices in respect of a failure to comply with the general equality duty or the specific duties. These notices require public authorities to provide information about how they will comply with the general or specific duties, including what steps they will take.

EHRC can intervene in legal proceedings related to the duty by providing the Court with expert advice to help the Court reach its decision. EHRC can enter into a formal agreement with an organisation under section 23 of the Equality Act 2006 if we believe that they have breached an equality duty. A section 23 agreement usually includes developing and implementing an action plan to address any breach and prevent future breaches and will required reports on progress on the action plan to the Commission.

If a public authority doesn't comply with the general equality duty, its actions or failure to act can be challenged through an application to the High Court for judicial review. An application could be made by a person or group of people with an interest in the matter, or by the Commission.

Civil society: The equality data published by public bodies will enable the public and external stakeholders to hold public bodies to account on their performance on equality. This involves citizens (including people from the protected groups) being able to scrutinise equality data and challenge decisions that they are unhappy with, including through judicial review.

Inspectorates: Inspectorates are subject to the general equality duty so they must have due regard to the aims of the duty in their inspection functions. Where their inspection functions are relevant to the aims of the duty, this would include ensuring that their assessment of public sector performance included consideration of performance on equality. They can help public authorities to identify equality issues through individual inspection reports and through national studies. This may help public authorities to benchmark their progress made, and they will be a source of information for the Commission.

Appendix H Political Extremism

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service is committed to creating an environment whereby no one is discriminated against on any grounds.

We aim to ensure that we promote equality in the way our services are delivered, and in our employment practices, so that potential and existing members of staff feel welcomed, developed and able to fulfil their potential.

There are many forms of discrimination and as a public sector organisation we have a moral and legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that we pro-actively challenge and oppose all forms of discrimination.

As such, any member of staff who is a member of an organisation whose constitution, aims, objectives, pronouncements or ideology contradict the duties to promote equality, and who displays behaviour in support of these organisations will be subject to formal disciplinary investigation, which may result in dismissal.

Membership of organisations such as the British National Party (BNP), National Front and Combat 18 will not necessarily lead to dismissal. However, Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service do not believe that anyone holding or expressing the views and opinions of political organisations such as those above would be capable of meeting the range of personal qualities and attributes that we require of our staff. We work to ensure that all those working for the Service have the personal qualities and attributes that allow us to work effectively with all sections of our community. These personal qualities and attributes are now assessed during entry tests, at ADCs, and in the Personal Development Review process.

The Service will not hesitate to act against unlawful, discriminatory or other unacceptable behaviour by employees, whether they are members of extreme political organisations or not. Such action will include disciplinary action.

Nationally, regionally, and locally, the Fire Brigades' Union, Chief Fire Officers' Association, Fire Officer's Association, Unison and the Retained Firefighters' Union support this view and will not condone any behaviour which contradicts the values of promoting equality within the workplace of our fire and rescue service.

Appendix I

Referenced Documents

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2011
- Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service Corporate Plan and IRMP 2010/13
- Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework
- National Fire & Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018
- Equality and Human Rights Commission – Equality Act 2010 guidance for English public bodies Volume 1-5

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