

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion **2018 -2020**

- Introduction – inclusion matters
- Our communities
- Our workforce
- Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion
- External influencers - improvement opportunities
- Measurement and review
- Objectives and action plan 2018-20



## Introduction – Inclusion Matters

Our vision is for safe communities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough where there are no preventable deaths or injuries in fires or other emergencies (Integrated Risk Management Plan [IRMP] 2017 – 2020). To achieve this, we need to achieve operational and community safety excellence in the most cost effective way (value for money), putting **people** at the centre of everything we do – both **people in the community** in terms of their safety and diverse needs and **our own staff** in terms of training, development and well-being.

To make this a reality, we need to engage and work with a broad spectrum of communities and staff groups. We need to ensure their different needs are understood and met and they all feel valued for who they are. This document explains how we intend to do this. It has been developed from our IRMP taking account of the contributions from communities, staff, representative bodies and national influences. The IRMP sets out our aims and objectives in detail and these include our equality objectives. Along with these plans, our responsibilities under the **Equality Act 2010** help us to achieve better equality outcomes for our communities and staff. They ensure that we will continually take action to:

- **Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic<sup>1</sup> and those who don't.**
- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.**

In our work to continually develop a more inclusive culture, we recognise that there are other attributes that make us different from each other e.g. working patterns; family and caring commitments; our work groups; learning styles; trade union support and membership; roles and seniority; educational and professional backgrounds.

---

<sup>1</sup> The term “protected characteristics” refers to those attributes where there is legal protection from disadvantage: age; disability; ethnicity; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion and belief; sex; sexual orientation.

We will aim to make our work environment an inclusive one where these and other aspects of diversity are valued and nurtured to continually develop an excellent fire and rescue service.

This work is a continuation of earlier plans and our performance against our objectives can be found in our latest equality and inclusion compliance report and in our 2015 equality peer assessment, both on our website.

The Service cannot achieve this by itself and a vital part of building trust with communities, partners and staff is to ensure they have a voice and to work alongside them. We hope you'll contribute by sharing your thoughts on this strategy by responding to our equality and inclusion adviser [alison.scott@cambsfire.gov.uk](mailto:alison.scott@cambsfire.gov.uk) by email or consultations on our website.

Chris Strickland  
Chief Fire Officer

Rick Hylton  
Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion lead

April 2018



## Our communities

Our role is to keep people safe and we focus our efforts on those who are most at risk or vulnerable. How we do this is described in our IRMP and the diversity of our communities is also described in Appendix C of that document. **Older people with disability or health related needs** are among those most at risk of injury or fatality in a fire or other emergency and our priority in the last few years has been to provide prevention services to these groups, through targeted interventions and working in partnership with a range of other agencies. We will continue to carry out that work and aim to increase the number of safe and well visits made.

Our work with **young people and children** will continue with specific campaigns (e.g. road safety; water safety) delivered in schools and colleges. Our Firebreak programme, which provides a five day intervention to build confidence and self-esteem in children aged 11 – 16 will also continue and we will seek further funding to develop this while we also explore opportunities to work with Prince's Trust and national Fire Cadets.

While the whole county is **ethnically diverse**, Peterborough and Cambridge cities are particularly so with almost 18 per cent of their communities identifying as Black, Asian or of another minority ethnic group, (BAME). Both cities have active **inter-faith forums** representing a range of faiths. The most commonly followed faiths are Christianity (58 per cent) and Muslim (3 per cent) although in Peterborough the proportion of people of Muslim faith is higher at 9 per cent. Rural areas, particularly Fenland, have also seen an increase in Eastern European migrants. Peterborough has a higher proportion of population from Eastern European countries than the national or regional average, with 7.7 per cent of the population born in countries joining the European Union between 2001 –11. After English, the five most preferred languages in the county are Polish, Lithuanian, Urdu, Punjabi and Chinese (2011 census data).

In responding to emergency calls and delivering our prevention and protection services, we need to be aware of the different cultural and faith observance needs of our BAME communities and those for whom English is not their preferred language. The take up of our targeted Safe and Well visits and attendance at business seminars by BAME communities is lower than we would expect. Our priorities for the next two years will include analysing existing data in more detail to understand this; engaging with BAME communities in a range of ways to ensure they are aware of the services we offer; ensuring there are no barriers for these communities in accessing our prevention and protection services.

While operational, community safety and control staff are provided with information on different cultures and religions and are encouraged to take opportunities to learn from them (e.g. through visits to relevant community and faith groups) there is always scope to expand that knowledge – particularly when our communities are constantly evolving. Therefore existing interventions to



help public-facing staff improve their understanding and ability to respond to **all** communities will be reviewed and where necessary, further learning and development opportunities will be provided.

As part of our day to day work we continue to look for opportunities to engage with a range of communities and to help all communities understand and be able to access the services we offer. This happens both at watch or team level and corporately as we aim to embed inclusion in all we do.

Opportunities to celebrate different cultures and festivals contribute to getting to know our different communities.



Eid celebrations – Peterborough  
Summer 2017



"The Watch really appreciated the opportunity to witness the open air prayer celebration and felt privileged to be invited to join the celebrations. We were looked after tremendously by all the families present and were kindly invited to participate in a mass picnic to break their fast."

Community Safety Champion, Black Watch, Dogsthorpe Fire Station.

# **Our Workforce**

## **Attracting the best**

We continue to work towards a more diverse workforce, both in our efforts to attract diversity in our applicant pool and in ensuring our selection and promotion processes are as fair and objective as possible. The next few years gives us a great opportunity to improve in this area as we estimate we will require a further 70 new operational firefighters in the next five years.

While we have seen improvement in the number of women joining the Service as firefighters in the last three years, there is still more to do in this area, as there is in the attraction and recruitment of BAME job seekers to all work groups in the Service. Our approach to positive action takes account of the need for both long term strategy (engaging with children and young people in their communities and through school and college visits) and short term strategy focused on specific recruitment needs (taster days; social media campaigns; advertising in specialist media). We have refreshed our positive action plan, which details the work we do to improve engagement with under-represented groups and have appointed a positive action officer to work specifically on this. We monitor the demography of applicants and recruits quarterly and look for a consistent increase. This also allows us to investigate any downward trends in specific groups of our workforce.

## **Development and retention**

While encouraging diversity from initial applicants is important, equally important is the retention and development of all staff, including those who are under-represented. We will continue to develop our support for staff with dyslexia by offering assessments, coaching support, relevant assistive technology and awareness to all staff and managers of the issues that staff with dyslexia may face.

We recognise that every decision and micro decision made can be impacted by unconscious bias. We have already provided introductory training on unconscious bias to managers involved in selection decisions and aim to extend this to all managers and the rest of the workforce to ensure decision making is as objective as possible.

To encourage retention of all staff groups and a healthy work-life balance, we will look to develop our flexible working practices, being open to new ways of working and learning from others in the emergency services. As we increase the number of women in operational roles, we will continue to ensure that our maternity and well-being policies and practices deliver the care and support

they need. We aim to explore the impact that the menopause may have on staff – particularly on women working in operational roles – and seek to raise awareness of all staff on this natural life event so they may support their colleagues. In recent years our learning and development programmes have provided opportunities for staff in **all work groups** to fulfil their potential and develop as leaders and these programmes will continue.

## **Well-being**

The well-being of all our staff is a priority and we will continue to participate in the MIND Blue Light Programme, supporting staff at the earliest stages of mental ill health through our Blue Light Champions Network.

A further priority is to bring about lasting cultural change in the way we interact and deal with each other. Since 2007 we have worked to inform and train staff on appropriate behaviours in the workplace; how to challenge inappropriate behaviour, including bullying and harassment; how to seek support in dealing with these issues. Employee feedback has told us there is more to do and our RESPECT action plan has been developed to support staff to raise issues of inappropriate behaviour in confidence; to get the support they need through this process and to ensure that the response to this is thorough, appropriate and proportionate.

We will monitor the roll out of our new fitness policy to ensure that the needs of different groups of staff have been taken into account.

## **Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion**

We have a responsibility to ensure all decisions - whether they impact communities or staff groups - are analysed and considered for their impact on equality groups. While there are good examples of this being done, there is always room for improvement and we will continue to support managers in their decision making so that taking account of equality issues becomes completely embedded in day to day work.

## **External influencers and improvement opportunities**

Nationally, a number of reviews and reports contribute to our diversity and inclusion work. In particular, the national Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) was set up to consider equality, diversity, cultural and behavioural issues and develop an improvement strategy, which could be used at local level to improve outcomes in this area. The Service has benchmarked its performance against the IFSG strategy and was pleased to recognise that much of the work recommended was already underway. Where there is scope for improvement, this has been included in our refreshed IRMP 2018-19 and in our equality objectives. Areas of work suggested by the IFSG that are underway and will continue to be focused on are:

- Flexible working arrangements.
- Review of exit interviews.
- Challenging inappropriate behaviour (including use of peer supporters).
- Extending unconscious bias training.
- Extending engagement with local communities currently under-represented.
- Mentoring opportunities.

## **Measurement and Review**

Progress against this plan is reviewed by the Inclusion Steering Group quarterly and any concerns are raised with the chief officers. An equality compliance report is produced annually in compliance with our public service equality duty. This provides the public, fire authority and staff with information about how we meet our duty to pay due regard to equality. This is scrutinised by the fire authority and published on our website. Our first gender pay gap report was published on our website in January 2018 with the recommendation that that we carry out a more detailed audit to understand some of the gaps and identify how they can be reduced. The Service was last peer assessed against the FRS Equality Framework in 2015 and were deemed to be 'excellent'. The framework has since been reviewed and we will continue to benchmark our progress against this. 2018 sees the start of a new inspection regime under HMICFRS and CFRS is already preparing for a summer inspection which will further direct our priorities.



## Action Plan 2018 – 20

	Objective	Outcome wanted by 2020	Activity in Year 1	Lead
1	Improve attendance of all communities in Cambridgeshire at fire safety business seminars.	Increased attendance at business seminars of all communities.	Ensure information on business seminars is available through a variety of routes, communities and using impact days to target high risk premises and locations.	Group Commander Fire Protection
2	Reduce the risk of domestic fires by increasing Safe and Well visits to the most vulnerable, including those who may find it difficult to access visits.	Ensure access to Safe and Well visits is equitable and those most at risk receive the service.	Analyse Safe and Well visit data in more detail (at district and ward level) to identify if BAME communities are not accessing service or not at risk.	Group Commander Community Safety (Prevention)
3	Improve confidence and skills of operational, community safety and fire safety staff in engaging with different communities.	Staff feedback improved confidence and ability in engaging with different communities and are able to demonstrate improved knowledge in this area.	Conduct training needs analysis and assessment of operational crews from Phase 1 in effective community engagement and put appropriate interventions in place where required.	Group Commander Training
4	Improve gender diversity among operational and control staff; BAME diversity among all staff.	Measurably more diverse workforce.	Deliver positive action plan. Support HeForShe movement.	Recruitment Team Manager with positive action delivery team.
5	Ensure decision making in selection, training, development and promotion is as equitable as possible.	A more diverse workforce.	Roll out unconscious bias and inclusive leadership programmes to managers and staff.	Head of HR with Equality and Inclusion Adviser.

6	Improvement in well-being and retention of staff in under-represented groups.	A more diverse workforce seen to be developing through the Service.	Produce guidance and deliver awareness training on menopause to staff and managers.	Equality and Inclusion Adviser with Occupational Health Adviser and Health and Safety Team Leader.
7	Deliver the RESPECT action plan to improve the reporting and management of inappropriate, bullying or harassing behaviours and reduce the incidents of observed or experienced bullying or harassment.	Staff feedback indicates improved confidence in and management of processes to address inappropriate, bullying or harassing behaviours.	Deliver year one activities of RESPECT delivery plan with outcomes measured.	Group Commander Resilience and Equality and Inclusion Adviser.
8	Take action to understand and reduce the CFRS gender pay gap.	Reduction in both mean and median gender pay gaps.	Carry out a full equal pay audit, including the allocation of allowances and bonuses. Make recommendations to ensure equitable pay decisions and a reduction in gender pay gap.	Equality and Inclusion Adviser; Payroll and managers.
9	Ensure staff have skills and knowledge to achieve and value a diverse workforce.	A more diverse workforce.	Deliver actions in response to equality and inclusion understanding audit as appropriate.	Equality and Inclusion Adviser.
10	Leaders at all levels to demonstrate due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion in decision making and with regard to staff management.	Evidence of clear accountability for equality law compliance.	Take personal responsibility for embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into local delivery plans and staff management, ensuring decisions are assessed for equality impact under the Equality Act 2010.	Line managers.

