

## Report of Assistant Chief Officer – Director of Prevention

### Equality Objectives 2021-2025 Update for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2022-2023

#### Purpose of report

1. To provide a summary of progress against the Service's Equality Objectives 2021-2025 for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2022-2023.
2. To provide an update on the future delivery and governance of the Service's equality agenda from 2023-2024.

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#### Recommendations

##### *It is recommended that Members:*

- i. Note the progress made against the Equality Objectives 2021-2025 for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2022-23.*
- ii. Note the future delivery and governance of the Service's Equality Agenda from 2023-2024.*

#### Introduction and Background

3. The Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires all public sector organisations to prepare and publish specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years.
4. The aim of setting these objectives is to assist the Service to perform the general Equality Duty and focus on its priority equality issues in order to drive and deliver improvements. The Service's current Equality Objectives were approved by the Fire Authority on 28 July 2021 and are published on the [Service website](#):

<p><b>Our Organisation: Leadership and Corporate Commitment</b></p> <p>Our leaders will provide visible leadership to ensure our people; our partners and our communities see the personal commitment to inclusion.</p> <p>We will maximise the transparency of our organisation so our activities can be scrutinised and we can be held accountable.</p>	<p><b>Our Communities: Understand, engage and build good relationships</b></p> <p>We will better understand our communities by ensuring we put in place systems that enable the collection, collation and analysis of community data and information.</p> <p>We will enhance our engagement with our communities to foster good relationships and understand the community priorities.</p>
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<b>Our People: Develop, engage and understand</b>	<b>Our Partners: Working together</b>
<p>We will develop our people to better understand diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>We will create an inclusive culture where our people feel able to be themselves.</p> <p>We will better understand our workforce composition through our workforce data.</p> <p>We will put in place effective strategies to enable engagement with our staff and networks to continue to develop an inclusive culture.</p>	<p>We will work with external partners to develop strategies that enable effective service provision to our communities.</p> <p>We will collaborate across our own business functions and staff networks to better build equality and inclusion into our policies, processes and practices to ensure inclusion and our values are at the heart of everything we do.</p>

## Progress Headlines

5. The Equality Objectives are currently being met through an annual programme of work in support of the Service's [People Strategy 2022-2025](#).
6. Appendix 1 provides a summary of activity against the deliverables expected in Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2022-2023. Progress is RAG rated to demonstrate the areas where actions have been completed or are on-going. Good progress has been made and there are no significant areas of concern.

## Approach for 2023-2024

7. The EDI Plan was developed in 2020 to support the Service in delivering against its strategic Equality Objectives. Significant progress has been made in this area, as previously reported to SLB and the Fire Authority over the last three years.
8. Members will be fully cognizant of national assessment of values and culture in FRSs conducted by HMICFRS, as well as the significant progress and improvements that the Service has already made in relation to culture and inclusion, such as:
  - Adopting the NFCC Core Code of Ethics.
  - Gaining excellent participation rates (65%), employee feedback and overall engagement score from the staff survey (84%).
  - Commencing delivery of the bespoke EDI training to all staff, delivered by ioda.
  - Improving Speak Up processes for staff through Say So.
  - Commissioning an independent Service cultural audit.
  - Commissioning an independent workplace environment review
9. As part of the Service's journey to further improve its organisational culture and workplace behaviours, the Service will evolve to a more holistic and aligned approach to EDI and culture going forward.

Therefore, although organisational oversight for the equality agenda will remain with SLB, delivery of actions will sit with the Culture & Ethics Steering Group, Chaired by ACO Anna Davidson, via a Culture & Ethics Improvement Plan, replacing the EDI Plan 2020-2025.

10. The plan will be reported on a biannual basis to SLB and annually to the Fire Authority.

## Conclusion

11. The Service continues to make excellent progress in furthering our equality, diversity and inclusion agenda for the benefit of our employees and our local community. Meeting our Equality Objectives fulfils the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010 and more importantly confirms our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The Service is now maturing its approach to embedding culture and inclusion via the Culture and Ethics Steering Group and the Culture and Ethics Improvement Plan.

## Corporate Considerations

<p><b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no resource implications arising from publishing the report.</li> <li>• Implications of championing and embedding equality into mainstream business may incur financial and management support for implementation, dissemination of resources and consideration of different ways of working.</li> <li>• The report helps the Service meet its statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Policy Links &amp; Core Code of Ethics</b> (Identify how proposals link with current priorities &amp; policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRMP</li> <li>• Core organisational strategies</li> <li>• People Strategy</li> <li>• Core Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct</li> <li>• EDI Policy</li> <li>• Positive Action Statement of Intent</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to EDI, promoting an inclusion culture and addressing unacceptable behaviour may damage our reputation as an employer of choice and attract public, media and political scrutiny.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a continued collaborative approach across all business functions.</li> <li>• Ongoing engagement with the Women@HWFire network, Neurodiverse staff network and Representative Bodies continues to take place.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As this is an update report, no people impact assessment is required. However, any actions arising from the implementation of the equality outcomes may require individual assessment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b> (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)</p>	<p>N/A</p>

### Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Equality Objectives Progress Update Summary for Quarters 3 & 4 2022-2023

## Appendix 1 - Equality Objectives Progress Update Summary for Quarters 3 & 4 2022 - 2023

Our Organisation – Leadership and Corporate Commitment				
Objective	Action	Performance Measure	Progress Update	RAG
Our leaders will provide visible leadership to ensure our people, our partners and our communities see the personal commitment to inclusion	<b>Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) Equality objectives:</b> SLB to set measurable Equality objectives for 2022/2023.	Objectives reviewed and outcomes published in Bulletin and website.	<p>SLB have set their own equality objectives to demonstrate their personal commitment to mainstreaming diversity and inclusion practices across the organisation. These are reviewed on a regular basis and progress communicated to the wider workforce.</p> <p>Q1/Q2 - The Director of Prevention &amp; Assets attended the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) Summer conference in June 2022 along with a cross-section of staff, and SLB members have contributed to staff bulletin articles about Ramadan and our attendance at local Pride events.</p> <p><b>Q3/Q4 – Assistant Director of Response attended a Women in Leadership Conference facility by AFSA in March 2023, with operational and support staff representatives. SLB have updated staff on various EDI events such as World Mental Health Day, Neurodiversity Celebration Week and the Neurodiverse staff network.</b></p>	Green
We will maximise the transparency of our organisation so our activities can be scrutinised and we can be held accountable	<b>People Impact Assessments (PIAs):</b> Review current process and guidance. Establish Quality Assurance process. Deliver workshops. PIA available for scrutiny on our intranet.	All key decisions, policies and processes are supported by an EIA and published on the Service website, leads to positive outcomes for protected groups.	Q1/Q2 - Two in-house training videos, a toolkit and process have been established and are regularly used by staff and managers. Input on PIAs is included in the training for Station Prevention Champions to link into the need to understand our communities. Bespoke input and support for departments and teams in the Service is available on request. In liaison with the Performance & Information team, a quality assurance process has been established for PIAs accompanying Service policies.	Green
	<b>EDI Policy:</b> Develop overarching EDI policy	<b>Policy published and understood.</b>	<b>Q3/Q4 - EDI policy published.</b>	Green
	<b>Equality &amp; Gender Pay Gap Reporting:</b> Complete report and publish results. Communicate results and future actions to staff and community.	Analysis informs specific actions to help reduce the gender pay gap.	<p>Q1/Q2 – Report created.</p> <p><b>Q3/Q4 - Report for 2021-22 presented at SLB in November 2022 and approved for publication at the Audit and Standards Committee meeting in January 2023. Gender Pay Gap reporting completed as per legislation.</b></p>	Green

Green – Completed

Amber – In Progress/On Target

Red – Delay

Our Communities – Understand, engage and build good relationships				
Objective	Action	Performance Measure	Progress Update	RAG
We will better understand our communities by ensuring we put in place systems that enable the collection, collation and analysis of community data and information.	<b>Communities at greater risk:</b> Enhance data collated regarding communities at greater risk.	Our communities are better protected from preventable risks.	Q1/Q2 - National statistics are available through the NFCC Equality of Access documents for protected groups. Local analysis of data undertaken by Prevention and P&I Team. The Senior Technicians in the Prevention team have been working on relevant action plans, with support from the EDI Officer.  The Prevention team has adopted the NFCC Person-Centered Framework, which allows for the collection of standard national data, including ethnicity, age, specific vulnerabilities.  <i>Data to be updated to reflect the 2021 census.</i>	Amber
	<b>Community events:</b> Active participation in events e.g. local Pride events, etc. as a recruitment/ outreach opportunity. Incorporate into Station campaign calendars with rationale behind why Service is supporting; demonstrating how we champion inclusion locally and promote safety messages to specific groups.	Increased attendance and participation at events. Positive feedback gathered from protected characteristic groups in the community and workplace.	Q1/Q2 -Local Pride events at Bromsgrove, Malvern and Worcester have been supported with the opportunity fully utilised to promote working for the Service and our HFSV offer.  Notable EDI events are incorporated into the NFCC campaign calendar which is shared with Stations. This will continue to be done annually.	Green
	<b>Community groups:</b> Develop and maintain a central list of community groups for engagement and consultation purposes.	Up to date list of contacts developed and utilised. Local priorities are shaped through partnership and community engagement. Groups are consulted on equality plans, recruitment messages, etc.	Q1/Q2 - A directory of community group contacts is in development and is due to be completed within Quarter 1 2023-2024. This will be shared and maintained with Senior Technicians in the Prevention team to aid engagement with protected groups.	Amber
We will enhance our engagement with our communities to foster good relationships and understand community priorities	<b>Promote accessible services to specific communities:</b> e.g. the Emergency SMS Service for deaf and hard of hearing community to report fire emergencies and incidents.	Positive feedback gathered from protected characteristic groups in the community.	Q1/Q2 - Senior Technicians within the Prevention team have links with local partners and promote accessible services to specific communities as appropriate. The new Home Fire Safety Visit leaflet has been produced in large print for those who have a sight impairment. It has also been produced in other languages which are predominant within our communities.  NFCC Equality of Access documents are being fully utilised by the Prevention Team who focus on specific topics each quarter, supported by the EDI Officer.	Green

Green – Completed

Amber – In Progress/On Target

Red – Delay

Our People – Develop, engage and understand				
Objective	Action	Performance Measure	Progress Update	RAG
We will develop our people to better understand diversity and inclusion	<b>EDI training:</b> Commission a service wide EDI Training Programme to be delivered by an external specialist.	Feedback from staff is positive and staff awareness in relation to EDI is increased.	<b>Q3/Q4 - Tendering process for a Service-wide EDI Training Programme completed and awarded to preferred provider. Mandatory programme to commence in April 2023 for all staff with delivery over an 18-month periods. One day in-person delivery for all Wholetime and Support Staff, and condensed 3-hour session for On-call.</b>  <b>An associate from ioda, Dr Willoughby commissioned to undertake Service cultural review in Q4 to underpin and direct the content of the EDI Training.</b>	Amber
	<b>Values / Code of Conduct:</b> Develop guidance for inclusive behaviours to outline expectations of how staff can expect to be treated and how they should treat others.	Discipline, grievance and attendance levels demonstrate staff feel more included in the workplace.	Q1/Q2 - A Gap analysis has been conducted against the Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard and the Service's Ethical Framework & Code of Conduct. A People Strategy objective for 2022-2023 is to source an external provider to deliver a Service-wide inclusion training programme. A provider has been identified following a tender process,  <b>Q3/Q4 – A Core Code of Ethics Steering Group has been established to embed the Code, meeting on a monthly basis from December 2022.</b>  <b>The Steering Group are producing a short training session on the Code to be rolled out to staff in addition to the EDI Training, SharePoint page and promotional materials, as well as Staff communications via the Bulletin and triple play video. A new Code of Conduct is being developed to replace the Service's ethical framework and code of conduct, aligned to the NFCC Core Code of Ethics and associated Fire Standard.</b>	Amber
	<b>Performance appraisals:</b> Review performance management system and process, ensuring does not disadvantage any group and helps to promote inclusive skills and behaviours.	Ethical principle of EDI reviewed until Values and Leadership section of appraisal form.	<b>Q3/Q4 - Performance appraisal framework reviewed and people impact assessment completed. Revised form and guidance updated to comply with British Dyslexia Association recommendations. Guidance provided in a variety of formats – written document, separated into section online as well as a completion support video.</b>  <b>Additional section included within the appraisal to consider employee's performance in relation to the Core Code of Ethics.</b>	Green

Green – Completed

Amber – In Progress/On Target

Red – Delay

We will create an inclusive culture where our people feel able to be themselves	<p><b>Local staff survey:</b> Conduct local survey focused on workforce opinion and understanding of EDI matters to inform EDI activity focus.</p>	Enhanced understanding of staff experiences and perceptions of EDI.	<p><b>Q3/Q4 -Tendering process for a Staff Engagement Survey. Survey launched in January 2023 with an excellent, 65% participation rate. Results presented in March 2023 to SLB and Senior Managers at the Managers Away Day.</b></p> <p><i>Service-wide webinar and actions to be shared with staff in Q1.</i></p>	Amber
	<p><b>EDI Allies:</b> Develop this staff network and produce TORs, training, events/workshops, etc.</p>	Learning shared amongst Allies and the wider workforce.	<p>Q1/Q2 - Updates are shared with group members on a regular basis, including events such as NFCC “Lunch and Learns”.</p> <p>An EDI Ally attended the AFSA Summer Conference to share learning and best practice.</p> <p>There may be opportunities to further develop EDI Allies as part of the Service-wide inclusion training programme and this will be explored within the rollout.</p>	Green
We will put in place effective strategies to enable engagement with our staff and networks to continue to develop an inclusive culture	<p><b>Reasonable adjustments:</b> Review guidance available to staff and managers.</p>	Updated information available to managers and staff.	<p>Q1/Q2 - A Practical &amp; Reasonable Adjustments Toolkit has been drafted to support line managers and staff in addition to the information already available on SharePoint. A newly formed Neurodiverse Staff Network, which is growing in membership, will be asked for their feedback on the toolkit before it is published. The process of seeking advice and support for reasonable workplace adjustments is now established and working well.</p> <p><i>This is due to be completed in Quarter 1 2023-2024.</i></p>	Amber

Green – Completed

Amber – In Progress/On Target

Red – Delay



Our Partners – Working together				
Objective	Action	Performance Measure	Progress Update	RAG
<p>We will work with external partners to develop strategies that enable effective service provision to our communities</p> <p>We will collaborate across our own business functions and staff networks to better build equality and inclusion into our planning, policies, processes and practices to ensure inclusion and our values are at the heart of everything we do</p>	<p><b>Equality groups:</b> Establish/develop relationships with local, regional and national EDI groups and bodies e.g. Worcestershire Equalities Group</p>	<p>Greater engagement and consultation with equality groups. Resources, skills and expertise are pooled to deliver equality outcomes.</p>	<p>Q1/Q2 - Our EDI Officer is a member of regional and national EDI groups.</p> <p>Engagement continues with local groups e.g. North Worcestershire Hate Crime Partnership and Herefordshire Addressing Hate Crime Partnership and this has been useful in understanding issues and gaining contacts.</p> <p>Staff from our Women’s network and our Neurodiverse Staff Network were invited to attend the AFSA Summer Conference to gather and promote learning to colleagues. Each one who attended found it a valuable, useful and inspirational experience.</p> <p><b>Q3/Q4 - Our women’s network partnered with West Mercia Police women’s network in March 2023 to celebrate International Women’s Day, with a photo session to commemorate a flower planting activity – one flower planted for every female employee of both services.</b></p> <p><b>Our women’s network also played a key part in the success of our Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment Taster Sessions in January 2023. They further supported by reaching out to potential female applicants, answering any questions and encouraging applications. They also took part in a staff information video about to promote the Inclusive Recruitment approach. A member of the Neurodiverse Staff Network also took part in the video.</b></p>	<p>Green</p>

<p>We will collaborate across our own business functions and staff networks to better build equality and inclusion into our planning, policies, processes and practices to ensure inclusion and our values are at the heart of everything we do</p>	<p><b>Staff networks:</b> Continue to encourage and engage with staff networks as critical friends e.g. Organisational Development and Challenge Group, Women@HWFire.</p>	<p>Staff networks are contributing to organisational priorities and are agents for change.</p>	<p><b>Q3/Q4 - Neurodiverse Staff network launched. Two well-attended meetings have taken place so far.</b></p> <p><b>Membership continues to grow as awareness increases within the Service. Members of the network attended The Dyslexia Show at the NEC in March 2023 to gather learning and information about supportive technology which can be fed back and considered. The group now provide input to new recruits on the existence and purpose of the group, and are key drivers in progressing training and awareness of neurodiversity.</b></p>	<p>Green</p>
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**Green** – Completed

**Amber** – In Progress/On Target

**Red** – Delay