

9. Revised Equality Scheme 2010-2013

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Authority of the revised Equality Scheme, and to seek approval for consultation on the Scheme.
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Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the Authority approve the Scheme for consultation.

Background

2. In 2007 the Authority produced a Single Equality Scheme in response to its statutory requirements under equalities legislation. Pursuant to the requirements for such schemes, it has a life of three years which expires in 2010.
3. The Authority is required at this stage to conduct a full review of the Scheme, and publish a further three year scheme outlining its response to its duties.

The Duties

4. The general duties within the legislation are:
5. Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Equality Act 2006):
 - Eliminate unlawful sex discrimination; and
 - Promote equality of opportunity between women and men.
6. Race Relations Act 1976:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
 - Promote equality of opportunity; and
 - Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.
7. Disability Discrimination Act 1995:
 - Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
 - Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act;
 - Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
 - Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
 - Encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and
 - Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

8. Alongside the general duties, there is a specific duty to publish a scheme outlining how the general duty in each case will be met. There are two options that have been taken nationally: the production of single schemes to meet each equality area, or the publication of a generic scheme that covers all three areas.

The Review of the Scheme

9. A full review of the Scheme has been conducted, and the action plan has been significantly revised and improved based on evidence from assessments, and changes both to the governing legislation and the equalities performance frameworks, most notably the introduction in December 2009 of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework.

Next Steps

10. Following approval by the Authority, a full consultation will be conducted, engaging a wide range of stakeholders, public and voluntary sector agencies, and specifically focusing on specialist equalities groups and support bodies.
11. Following consultation, a revised Scheme will be presented to the Authority at its June meeting for formal approval and publication.

Supporting Information (Separate attachment)

Appendix 1 – Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority Single Equality Scheme 2010- 13 (Draft for Consultation)

Appendix 2 - Business Impact Assessment Form

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