Equality and Inclusion Action Plans
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INTRAN
If you need this information in another language or format we will do our best to provide it for you. You can contact us through our website www.norfolkfireservice.gov.uk, by telephone 01603-810351 or minicom 01603-223833.
Introduction

Our Fire and Rescue Service is committed to making life safer for everyone who lives, works and visits Norfolk by reducing risks and saving lives.

Whilst statistics can help us understand our risks, it is more important that we understand the human factors associated with risk. Listening to and working with all our communities will help us to better understand and meet their needs in terms of accessing information, reducing risk, setting priorities and encouraging participation. Working with our partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors will help us to deliver our services in the most efficient, effective and timely way possible.

As an employer we will be most effective when everyone who works with us feels valued, respected and is able to achieve their full potential. While we are committed to developing a workforce which reflects the increasing diversity of Norfolk low levels of recruitment will limit our ability to do this in the short term. We will work with underrepresented groups to raise awareness of our retained duty system, our youth programmes, volunteering opportunities and actively encourage applications when and where vacancies occur. We remain committed to supporting the development of our staff to help them maximise their potential.

There is no way of getting around it – this plan comes into effect at a time when we face the greatest financial challenge in our history. However, as a service and as a department within Norfolk County Council we are committed to working with our communities, staff and partners to continue the progress we have already made in meeting our equality duties.

The Equality Act 2010 is an opportunity to review how our employment practices; spending decisions and service delivery impacts on different groups in our community. This plan is part of this process.

Multiple and diverse voices lead to new ideas, services and encourage innovation. We very much hope that you will be part of our shared future and welcome your comments and ideas both as part of the consultation process and throughout the life of this plan.

Nigel Williams
Chief Fire Officer
Equality - The Law
The Equality Act 2010 has brought together a large amount of equality legislation into one piece of legislation. This makes equality law easier to understand and extends legal protection to more people. It places legal obligations – called the Public Sector Equality Duty - on organisations like the Fire and Rescue Service and the County Council. This means that in the way we deliver services and in our employment practices we must 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 and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This helps us to consider the way our employment practices; spending decisions and service delivery affect different groups in the community. An important part of this is ensuring that our policies, practices and services are appropriate, accessible, and inclusive. This will help us to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics are:
1. Age [younger and older]
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment [transgender]
4. Marriage and civil partnerships
5. Pregnancy, maternity [and breastfeeding mothers]
6. Race [people who are from all ethnic and national backgrounds]
7. Religion and belief [those who have a religious belief and those who do not]
8. Sex [male and female]
9. Sexual orientation [bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian]

The requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act applies to all the protected characteristics. The requirement to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations applies to all with the exception of pregnancy, maternity, marriage and civil partnerships.

Another part of the Equality Act is the Specific Duties Regulations 2011. This requires us to publish information annually about what we have done to meet our equality duty and every four years publish details of our equality plans.
Our Service

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is a service provided by Norfolk County Council through the Norfolk Fire Authority. We are accountable to the Fire and Community Protection Panel at Norfolk County Council. We have a combination of whole-time; day crewed; and retained [on-call] fire stations across Norfolk, as well as control and non-operational support staff.

Information about all aspects of the services we provide, our county, the protected characteristics of our staff and the people we serve, our performance and how we are meeting our equality duties is available on our website. www.norfolkfireservice.gov.uk.

Equality Action Plans

Aims
Contribute to service improvement by embedding equality into the core work of the service by:

- Improving the collection, sharing and use of data and intelligence
- Finding more effective ways of engaging with stakeholders and our communities
- Focusing community fire safety and protection on those most at risk
- Maintaining an inclusive working environment where trust, respect and understanding are the norm
- Meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Specific Duties Regulations 2011

Key Drivers
Information from the following sources helped us identify the areas we need to focus on over the life of this plan:

- Disability Pilot Co-production Project 2011
- Black and Minority Ethnic [BAME] Co-production Project 2012 (will be incorporated into the action plan once the findings and recommendations are available)
- Norfolk County Council [NCC] -Service Perception Survey – Black and Minority Ethnic, Faith and LGBT Groups
- NCC Employee Survey 2011 (will be incorporated into the action plan once the findings and recommendations are available)
- Priority Based Budgeting
- Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework
- Chief Fire Officers Associations [CFOA] review and recommendations on equality monitoring of service delivery
- Discussions with our stakeholders
• The gaps in information identified when preparing to publish information about our service and our staff to meet our obligations under the Equality Act – Specific Duties Regulations 2011
• Our obligations under the Equality Act 2010

Reviewing and Reporting Progress
Progress will be reviewed every six months through performance summaries presented to the Management Board. Annual progress reports will be presented to the Fire and Community Protection Panel and published on our website as part of our demonstration of how we are meeting our equality duties.

Detailed Action Plans
Appendix one provides details of our action plans, how success will be measured, who leads on each action and the time scales for completion. These actions will be reviewed annually as additional relevant information becomes available.

Stakeholders
The people of Norfolk
Our staff
Our Trade Unions
• Fire Brigades Union
• Retained Fire Fighters Union
• UNISON
Local Equality Networks
• Community Cohesion Network
• NCC Equality Lead Officers Group [ELOG]
Local Staff Networks
• NCC BME Staff Group
• NCC Disability Support Group
• NCC LGBT Staff Network
• Norfolk Gay Police Association [GPA]
National Staff Networks
• Asian Fire Service Association [AFSA]
• National Disabled Fire Association [NDFA]
• Networking Women in the Fire Service [NWFS]
Public Sector
• NCC Safeguarding Team
• Norfolk City, Borough and Parish Councils
• NCC Travellers Liaison
• Norfolk Constabulary – Diversity Team
• NCC Specialist Social Work Services - Diverse Communities
Eastern Region Fire Brigades
• Bedfordshire
Voluntary Sector

- Age UK
- Alzheimer’s Society East Anglia
- Bridge Plus +
- BUILD
- Deaf ConneXions
- East of England Refuge Council
- Local Disability Access Groups
- Minority and Ethnic Network Eastern Region [MENTER]
- Nessa Project
- Norfolk Collation of Disabled People [NCODP]
- Norfolk Deaf Association
- Norfolk LGBT and Disabled Group
- Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind
- Norwich Mind Inclusion Team
- Norfolk Trans Forum
- Oasis [Transgender Advice]
- Opening Doors for People First of Norfolk