



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

The professional voice of the UK Fire & Rescue Service

msa

NFCC People Programme Inclusion Strategy

Version 3 SA
Date: August 2019

DRAFT

Contents

Position Statement.....	3
Benefits.....	3
Strategic Objectives.....	4

DRAFT

Position statement September 2019

The national people strategy has six main objectives which all contribute to creating an inclusive and positive workplace:

- Strengthen Leadership and Line Management to support organisational change and improved community outcomes
 - Developing cultural values and behaviours which make the Fire & Rescue Service a great place to work for all our people
 - Ways of working that are able to respond to service needs
 - Provide excellent training and education to ensure continuous improvement of services to the public
 - Continue to support the Health and Well-being of all our people
 - Strengthen our ability to provide good service by diversifying our staff and creating a fair & equal place to work
-
- All FRS have a local Workforce strategy either using part/whole of the national strategy so there is alignment of objectives across the Sector. The needs, expectations and composition of our workforce and communities are changing and all FRS are tackling both recruitment and retention issues. Increasingly the fire sector is looking to innovate in order to develop more flexible, sustainable service delivery models and innovative methods of engagement.
 - All FRS have signed up to the Fire Inclusion Group Diversity MOU, MIND Time to Change Pledge and other initiatives such as HeforShe are gaining momentum. These all suggest commitment is strong and now we need to harness actions which are evaluated and proven to be effective.
 - Many Services have already invested in understanding and shaping their behaviours and values and HMICFRS has identified some cultural aspects of the sector that could be improved by a more inclusive approach at individual, team, organisational and sector levels.
 - As a sector, we have the skills and experience to support sustainable change and we know many talented people within the Fire Sector are already working tirelessly to deliver improvements at local level. The private sector have demonstrated that a more inclusive approach can bring wide ranging benefits and this offers the Fire Sector an opportunity to build on this learning.
 - This strategy sets out to describe a co-ordinated approach to building on what we know, providing clarity about the meaning and benefits of inclusivity, sharing good practice, and ensuring that we are able to make decisions based on evidence rather than assumption.

Benefits of Inclusion

There is a significant body of research that shows a workforce with greater diversity is more innovative, productive and better able to understand its service users¹

Adopting a more inclusive approach, including the creation of a more diverse workforce, will ensure that we meet our legal obligations. But, more than this, it's about selecting and developing the most talented people who help the organisation become more effective. To be truly successful we

¹ The Diversity and inclusion Revolution; Bourke,J ; Dillon, B www.deloittereview.com

need to enable and encourage our workforce to bring themselves to work with all their views and talents, to speak up, feel valued and respected and be able to make an equal contribution²

More than creating a great place to work, a diverse and inclusive workforce has the potential to contribute to improved public services. Public sector experience has shown that innovative problem solving and increased effectiveness, when combined with a better understanding of diverse communities, can lead to better service quality, enhanced productivity and greater service reach. This can then consolidate the public's trust and confidence in us and support greater engagement with our services.

The challenge moving forward is measuring these benefits through public sector data. What is known is that diversity and inclusion is not something that can be managed as a 'bolt on' to workplace practices; it needs to be part of the DNA of a workforce's culture and integrated into organisational strategy. Our existing workforce does have some diversity of thought, inclusion will give this a voice.

DRAFT

² Smoke and mirrors, AFSA, Time to meet the challenge of equality in the fire and rescue service 20181

Key strategic objectives

1. We need to work with all stakeholders to agree 'what good looks like' for Fire, underpinned by some agreed common principles:
 - inclusion by design³ is a key principal for planning, people development and innovation, and must include the application of an effective approach to people impact assessment⁴
 - the sector must hold itself to account, and measure progress, through the development of a suite of meaningful inclusion and diversity performance measures, both quantitative and qualitative, and a programme of cultural auditing⁵ (this can be done in many ways so we can share what has worked in the sector and in other sectors)
 - sharing good practice and learning around diversity and inclusion across the sector is key to achieving the vision
 - we must recognise, and commit to, our legal obligations
 - inclusion requires employing, supporting and developing leaders who want and commit to changing the culture of the sector
2. To gain greater sector-wide commitment to an inclusive culture by evidencing and sharing the true value and benefits of diversity and inclusion (i.e. the business case for change) and how they can address the sector's challenges.
3. To identify and share existing tried and tested tools that will help Services to help themselves in achieving the shared objectives, and encourage collaborative working, including:
 - a. people impact assessment (PIA)⁶ - creation of national PIAs which we all contribute to
 - b. recruitment that selects the most talented people and therefore creates a more naturally diverse workforce
 - c. risk profiling based on increasing understanding of communities and protected characteristics that empowers staff to better address the identified risks
 - d. developing more effective evaluation methodologies which will help us to determine whether, for instance, safe and well visits are being marketed effectively to all communities
 - e. training such as unconscious bias awareness, mental health first aid, understanding how to develop PIA
4. To establish a network of regional forums for sharing best practice and learning
5. To commission primary and share research across the Sector which will benefit the workforce and the people we serve. Specifically:
 - a. to better understand the barriers to people considering, and applying for, a fire service career, (including public perceptions of the firefighter role and working environment⁷) in order to develop strategies for creating a truly diversely talented workforce

³ Inclusion by design means that "people" are considered from the very genesis of an idea or project and this is built into the very design and fabric of any change at a very early stage.

⁴ Sometimes referred to as equality impact assessments

⁵ An example might be HMICFRS

⁶ Sometimes referred to as equality impact assessments

- b. to explore alternative opportunities to influence diversity such as cadet and volunteering schemes, drawing on learning from across the sector both in the UK and overseas
 - c. to review what research has been done to date to improve inclusion in the sector and other sectors and identify opportunities to learn from this.
6. To ensure the well-being aspects are sensibly linked to inclusion will help widen a diversity debate by focusing on current staff in terms of mental health, disability, understanding vulnerability/frailty of customers, and approaches to encourage people to declare disability and support people who want to “come out” and be open about their sexuality. This will only succeed if culturally these messages are supported by seen changes in how managers behave.
7. Ensure that behaviour change is fundamental to the work we take forward and the new Leadership framework has been designed with inclusion as a constant throughout

This strategy will be delivered through a delivery plan for years one and two. This will include requirements for project management and an extensive engagement strategy. It will identify areas where this strategy enables, or is dependent upon, other key strategies, will include aspirational timescales, resourcing needs, anticipated impact and measures of success.

⁷ Building upon research already done, such as LFB’s research into recruitment barriers for women FFs and HMICFRS’s research into public perceptions - <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/public-perceptions-of-fire-and-rescue-services-2018/>

DRAFT