

**Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service**

**Gender Equality Scheme**

**2007 - 2009**

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## **FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

The Fire and Rescue Service has been an area of traditionally gender segregated employment. There were no women firefighters in the modern service until the 1980s and still, nationally only 2.4% of firefighters are women. Women were traditionally employed in support roles in the Service. In Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MF&RS) we have worked hard to change these stereotypes – we employ 32 women firefighters – 2.7% of our operational staff, including some of the longest serving women firefighters in the UK Fire and Rescue Services. However, progress has undoubtedly been slow and we must continue to remove barriers to equality of opportunity so that men and women from all backgrounds can achieve their full potential in the Service.

The gender equality duty (GED) is the biggest change in sex equality law in 30 years. MF&RS welcomes the new gender equality duty. It is a powerful tool that will help us increase the pace of change within MF&RS. It will also impact on the service we deliver to the communities of Merseyside – from the boys and girls who are on our Youth Engagement programmes to the men and women who receive our Home Fire Safety Checks.

The duty has been introduced in recognition of a new approach to equality, one which places more responsibility on us to think strategically about gender equality and develop practices and arrangements that make real the original intentions of the sex equality laws: to deliver equal opportunities for men and women. This Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan will ensure that gender equality is at the heart of our business and mainstreamed into all our activities. It will make a real and lasting difference to the communities we serve and our own workforce.

This first Gender Equality Scheme will run for 2 years 2007 – 2009 to bring it into line with our Race and Disability Equality Schemes 2006-2009. Thereafter the Schemes will be amalgamated and extended to cover all six equality strands within a comprehensive Diversity Equality Scheme that will run in 3 year cycles from 2010.

## INTRODUCTION

The Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts were enacted in the mid 1970s as the result of a government White Paper published in 1974 called "Equality for Women". This set out what needed to be done by legislation to promote equal opportunities for men and women. The laws were to apply to discrimination against either sex, but were designed to be of more immediate benefit to women because they were more likely to be the victims of unfair treatment on the grounds of sex. Thirty years on progress in improving equality for opportunity for women in UK society has been slow.

### The Legal Framework

The **Equal Pay Act 1970** (as amended) provides for the provision of equal pay between women and men who are undertaking like work, work of equal value or work rated as equivalent. Equal pay is a notoriously complex area of law. Where there is a disparity in pay between a woman and a man, or groups of men and women, an employer is required to show that the practice is genuinely due to a material factor unconnected with sex. The Equal Pay Act does not just cover pay, but includes other benefits such as bonuses, holiday pay and shift allowances.

The **Sex Discrimination Act 1975** (as amended) prohibits discrimination, harassment and any subsequent victimisation on the grounds of gender, pregnancy/maternity leave and married/civil partnership status. (It does not make it unlawful to discriminate against single people.) The protection from discrimination applies in employment, vocational training and to the provision of goods, facilities and services.

The **Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999** amended the Sex Discrimination Act to cover transsexual people (i.e. those who are intending to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment) in respect of employment and vocational training. In December 2007 the Gender Reassignment Regulations will be extended to the provision of goods, facilities and services.

### The Gender Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2006 amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to place a statutory duty on all public authorities.

### The General Duty

This means that MF&RS must, when carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment; and
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women

NB This also applies to all services and functions which are contracted out.

## **Specific Duties**

Those specific duties, in brief, are:

- To prepare and publish a gender equality scheme, showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives.
- In formulating its overall objectives, to consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.
- To gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
- To consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
- To assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality.
- To implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.
- To report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.

## OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

### Strategic Priorities

The promotion of equality and diversity is embedded into all that we do.

**Our Vision** is “Making Merseyside a safer, stronger community”.

**Our Mission** is “To work in partnership to provide an excellent, affordable service to all the diverse communities of Merseyside that will:

- **Reduce Risk** throughout the community by protective community safety services
- **Respond** quickly to emergencies with skilful staff who reflect all the diverse communities we serve
- **Restore** and maintain quality of life in our communities

Our corporate aims are:

- **Reduce Risk**

We will reduce the risk of fire and other emergencies in all communities of Merseyside through a combination of prevention and protection, working in partnership with other service providers.

- **Respond**

We will respond to all emergency calls for assistance with a level of response appropriate to the risk and deal with all emergencies efficiently and effectively.

- **Restore**

We will work with partners to help individuals, businesses and communities recover from the impact of emergencies and help the return to normality.

- **Organisation**

We will operate efficient and effective organisational functions that will support the core functions of the Authority in a way that provides value for money for the communities of Merseyside with skilled staff who represent the rich diversity of the communities of Merseyside.

Our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) sets out our strategy for delivering our Vision. Merseyside has a higher than average level of poverty and disadvantage which raises the potential for fires, and injuries and deaths caused by fires. We recognise that lone parents, who are primarily mothers, along with single pensioners, who are again mainly women, have the lowest chance of escaping poverty.

We are committed to the promotion of gender equality through this Gender Equality Scheme and associated Action Plan and will monitor, review and refine the Scheme and Action Plan throughout its first 3 years.

## **Leadership**

The Chief Fire Officer has overall responsibility for the delivery of equality and fairness throughout all the policies and practices operated by MF&RS. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer has responsibility for this Gender Equality Scheme and the associated Action Plan.

The Diversity Team is part of the Performance and Values Directorate reporting to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer alongside the Community Safety, Knowledge and Information Management and Strategy and Member Development Directorates. All have responsibility for delivering actions under this Scheme. The Diversity Team provides professional advice and guidance to managers on the delivery of actions under the Action Plan and supports the Diversity Action Group (DAG) who monitor and scrutinise the implementation of the Action Plan.

## **Scrutiny**

Appropriate structures have been put in place to monitor progress of the Gender Equality Scheme. The scheme overall is the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and is owned by the Diversity Action Group (DAG). The DAG is made up of representatives from each department in MF&RS. Each Representative is responsible for conducting and maintaining a register of Equality Impact Assessments relevant to their department. They are also expected to lead on equality and diversity in their area and to develop the work of the DAG and the promotion of equality and diversity by MF&RS.

External scrutiny of the work of the DAG is provided by three elected Fire Authority members who sit as Diversity Champions on the Group, and by an external Equality Advisor who chairs the DAG.

The secretary to the DAG is the Diversity Manager who is responsible for the strategic direction of the work of the Group. The Diversity Manager heads up the Diversity Team which is part of the Performance and Values Directorate answering directly to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. It is an integral part of the Service's Planning processes.

Data collection and analysis of that data in relation to functions, policies and practices is the responsibility of the Director of Knowledge and Information Management who makes regular reports to the DAG. An annual Monitoring Report which brings together the results of the monitoring and the results of the Equality Impact Assessment process is the responsibility of the Director of Strategy and Member Development.

## **The Role of the Fire Authority**

Merseyside Fire & Civil Defence Authority scrutinise progress on all aspects of the Gender Equality Scheme. The Fire Authority receives quarterly reports on progress.

## **Implementation and Review**

We will implement the actions set out in this Gender Equality Scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so. We will report on our progress every year and keep the Scheme under review on a three year cycle.

## **Comprehensive Performance Assessment**

Fire and Rescue Authorities are also subject to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and Performance Framework Assessment. MF&RS has been classed as an Excellent Authority and 'Improving Well' and with the highest rating for its use of resources. We will use this Scheme and Action Plan to build on this assessment over the next 3 years

## **Best Value**

The government has set National Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) intended to help us improve the quality of local services by establishing high standards. The Department of Communities and Local Government has set and monitors BVPIs for all Fire Authorities to measure individual progress in the area of equality and diversity.

Under the BVPI system all Fire and Rescue Authorities have been set gender targets for the employment of women firefighters. The national target set by the government in 2000 was for each FRS to employ 15% women in their operational firefighter grades by 2009. This has proved to be an unrealistic target that has proved to be unachievable in the timescale. Nationally women made up just 2.4% of firefighter grades in 2006 and in MF&RS this was slightly above the national average at 2.7%.

## **Equality Standard for Local Government**

The Local Government Equality Standard was developed by the Local Government Association, the CRE, EOC and DRC as a tool for mainstreaming equalities for race, gender and disability in Local Authority organisations. It is designed to help fire authorities develop the structures that will help them determine the equality outcomes appropriate to their local fire service and provide evidence based continuous improvement in all aspects of equality.

The Equality Standard for Local Government requires the Fire & Rescue Service to mainstream equality and diversity into policy and practises at all levels. The Standard consists of five levels of achievement in Leadership and Corporate Commitment: Consultation and Community Development and Scrutiny: Service Delivery and Customer Care: Employment and Training:

- Level 1 – commitment to a comprehensive equality policy (CEP)
- Level 2 – assessment and consultation
- Level 3 – setting equality objectives and targets
- Level 4 – information systems and monitoring against targets
- Level 5 – achieving and reviewing outcomes

Under the self assessment process MF&RS has achieved actions towards Level 3 of the Local Government Equality Standard under its Equalities Action Plan 2002-5

## IDENTIFYING RELEVANT FUNCTIONS AND POLICIES

Public authorities have a duty to consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.

The evaluation of functions and policies in MF&RS has been undertaken under the following framework:

### Definition of a Policy

Within MF&RS we have clarified the corporate use of the following terms:

- **A Policy** is the Authority's strategic approach, statement or code of conduct relating to any area of the Authority's business. It specifies the way in which elected members and employees of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service will deal with the issue that is the subject of the policy and how they will conduct themselves.
- **A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** supports a policy and outlines in more detail how that policy should be tactically undertaken.
- **An Instruction** is a clearly defined document that outlines specifically, and in very detailed language, how employees should perform. It should also state whether or not any deviations are permitted and what the consequences are to the individual if deviations are not permitted. It should not duplicate a SOP and should only support a policy.

Within the Impact Assessment process DAG members and policyholders will be required to identify and assess policies and procedures as relevant and incorporate those findings in the overall impact assessment.

Our Diversity Team, DAG, and Knowledge & Information Management directorate are available to provide guidance to DAG members and policyholders responsible for undertaking equality impact assessments on new or existing policies and procedures. The Diversity Manager and the DAG have the responsibility for the scrutiny of the completed Equality Impact Assessments. Directorates have assessed each of their functions or policies by completing an Initial Equality Impact Assessment (see Appendix A).

### Relevance Assessment

We undertake an Initial Equality Impact Assessment (IEIA) of all policies and functions on the basis of gender, race, disability sexual orientation, religion/belief and age. This has provided an indication of relevance and a measure of prioritisation of the need to undertake Full Impact Assessments (FEIA) of our policies and functions.

All new and revised policies and procedures are considered by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) which meets fortnightly. All new and revised policies must be submitted to the CLT in a standard format that includes the completed and approved Equality Impact Assessment Template and also details "Implications for Equality and Diversity" on the front sheet.

In addition we have conducted consultation with a number of women and men from within the different departments in MF&RS. This consultation was undertaken against the following background. It resulted in the prioritisation of policies for review that is contained in our GES Action Plan at Appendix B.

## **Relevance Background**

In 1999 the HM Fire Service Inspectorate undertook a thematic review of equality and fairness. The findings of the review were critical of the culture within the Fire Service which was described as a white male monoculture that was unlikely to attract a diverse workforce. There was a gender segregated workforce where women firefighters made up less than 1% of the total, but made up the great majority of Control Room staff. Women were disproportionately reflected in the lower grades of support personnel.

The review also showed a strong service delivery ethic and a genuine commitment to provide a fair equitable high quality service to the whole community.

Since then MF&RS has followed a radical modernisation agenda. We have:

- Developed a new approach to community fire safety through an Advocate system whereby staff deliver a fire safety service direct to members of minority groups and those at particular risk of fire. We employ a number of Disability Advocates; Deaf Advocates; Alcohol & Drug Abuse Advocates; Bi-Lingual Advocates and a Refugee & Asylum Seeker Advocate. This has resulted in increased opportunities for women to work in operational grades within MF&RS.
- Introduced more flexible and family friendly shift patterns for operational personnel including a Small Fires Unit (SFU) that operates at times of higher demand, a wholtime and retained duty system at fire stations where there is a Low Level of Activity and Risk (LLAR) and recently introduced a self rostering system at two fire stations. This has increased opportunities for women to work as firefighters in MF&RS.
- Undertaken a review of facilities for women in our fire stations in 2005. This resulted in improvements to washing, showering and changing facilities, but recent consultation with women has indicated that further improvements are required. This is part of our GES Action Plan.
- Introduced a range of other policies that will enhance the workplace for women and men including a domestic violence policy, a harassment & bullying policy and a comprehensive Work Life Balance policy. Consultation showed that staff are not fully aware of many of our policies and this will be addressed through our GES Action Plan.
- Enhanced maternity leave for all staff. We pay contractual maternity pay over and above statutory maternity pay (SMP) that makes up a woman's pay to full pay for the first 6 weeks of her leave and provides for half pay in addition to SMP for the remainder of the SMP period (currently 33 weeks). This has enabled women to enjoy the full benefit of their maternity period and will improve the retention of women in MF&RS.
- Undertaken a comprehensive positive action strategy for firefighter recruits that has increased the number of women who apply to work for us. We have a comprehensive

Youth Engagement strategy; we engage with people from minority ethnic groups and operate the Two Ticks system for disabled applicants. These policies have increased the numbers of women and men from different backgrounds who work for MF&RS and form continuing actions under our Race and Disability Equality Schemes.

- of 1440 operational staff 34 posts are occupied by 32 women (2 have a retained contract as well as a wholetime); 2 male operational staff and 6 women out of 46 staff in our Mobilisation & Control Centre (MACC) work flexible hours. 358 support staff are made up of 174 women and 184 men.

## Relevance Conclusions

Our services to the community consist of our emergency response to fires and other incidents, the provision of community fire safety advice and Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) and the deliver of our Youth Engagement programme. Our current monitoring of these services shows no significant disproportionate impact on women or men.

However, our consultation with our employees has shown that there is still some way to go before the outcomes of our employment policies can be said to be delivering real equality of opportunity for men and women. We have therefore decided to focus our Gender Equality Action Plan on our recruitment and employment practices and arrangements.

Our Gender Equality Action Plan for 2007 – 2010 is set out at Appendix B. This will address the following main issues:

- As part of our **general scheme development** we will undertake a pay audit and produce action points to address any identified gender pay gap. We will also develop a comprehensive policy to support transgender/transsexual people in recruitment, in employment and service delivery;
- We will develop an internal consultation group of women employees as part of our duty to **consult to identify relevant functions and policies** and will use this group to review our uniform and corporate clothing specifications to ensure appropriate wear available for all staff (inc pregnant women & those from different religious groups)
- As part of our duty to **monitor policies for adverse impact** we will review will our maternity & Work-Life Balance policies and analyse the take up of flexible working policies. We will also review our policies on Bank Holiday leave arrangements for Part Time Workers, our Absence & Attendance Policy and our policy on women working at radiation incidents
- We will set up **training** on the GES for employees and elected members. We will develop update training for all Professional and Organisational Development staff and managers on our family friendly and Absence & Attendance procedures.

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS AND CONSULTATION**

Public authorities must assess the impact of their current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality. The purpose of an impact assessment is to ensure that neither sex is disadvantaged by an authority's decisions and activities and to identify where public authorities can promote equality of opportunity between men and women

### **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

We use the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) format developed by the Chief Fire Officers Association. EIA is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy or procedure, whether it is written or unwritten, formal or informal. The function of the EIA is to determine whether and to what extent there is any differential impact upon the relevant groups and in turn whether that impact is adverse, i.e. whether it has a negative impact on groups or individuals in relation to one or more of the equality categories i.e. race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religious or belief and/or age. Whilst the EIA must address all six categories, it is not intended that each category will be afforded equal emphasis throughout the assessment process. The EIA must be responsive to emerging issues and prioritise these accordingly. In the light of this assessment, if it is decided that the policy fails to meet the needs of specific groups or has discriminatory outcomes, the Service must consider alternative policies, which more effectively achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity or a measure, which might be employed to mitigate the adverse impact.

Our EIA is a two-stage process. The first stage is to assess whether the policy or procedure is likely to result in any differential impact on any one group. If there is likely to be adverse impact it may be necessary to carry out a full EIA. A Full Impact Assessment requires DAG members and/or policy holders to define the required monitoring arrangements and consultation activity. Our Equality Assessment Templates are attached at Appendix A.

### **Consultation**

Our Consultation Strategy is part of our Communications and Consultation Strategy which is published as a separate document. It is available on our website or from our Director of knowledge and Information Management, MF&RS Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle, Liverpool L30 4YD. Telephone 0151 296 4000.

Our Consultation Strategy is based on three levels of consultation and is developed in line with the future needs of the community and service. Analysis of the effectiveness of the methods used consists of:

1. Generally at local level with external stakeholders such as the general public, service users and external organisations.
2. Consultations on specific issues with external stakeholders for example, hard to reach groups or fire safety enforcement users.
3. Involvement and consultation at all levels with internal stakeholders including employees, Fire Authority members, Corporate Leadership Team and representative bodies.

The Authority is a member of the Fire Services Consultation Association which carries out a variety of consultation work with stakeholders on behalf of a number of Fire & Rescue Services. The Association has engaged the services of Opinion Research Services as its preferred supplier of consultation services. This Authority is however free to engage consultation services from any supplier. This is particularly useful to areas of the service wanting to carry out comparative consultation with other Fire and Rescue Services.

### **Frequency of Consultation**

There are certain prescribed times of the year when consultation is required; for example Communities and Local Government, which is the central government department we report to, requires Merseyside wide consultation to be undertaken every three years to determine the performance against BVPI3. Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation will take place at a similar time each year. There will be other occasions where consultation is part of a larger project or initiative, for example in relation to best value, the budget process or a specific proposal on how we deliver our services. Regular consultation takes place to assess the effectiveness of initiatives, measure the quality of service we deliver and consider how we develop and improve our plans and policies.

A list of the regular consultative work required is included at Appendix A of our Consultation Strategy. A comprehensive list of methods of consultation is included at Appendix B of our Consultation Strategy.

To further support consultation we have established a dedicated consultation working group. This includes key stakeholders and a consultation network partner which currently is Greater Manchester Police.

### **Network Consultation**

We also network with a number of Fire Service peer groups and undertake regular consultation with a range of internal groups

- Equality Practitioners from the North West Region
- Metropolitan Brigades Equality Practitioners
- Networking Women in the Fire Service
- Equality & Diversity Forum with representative bodies (which includes BEME, the Women's Committee of the FBU and Gay & Lesbian Committee of the FBU)
- Disability Forum
- Women's Forum

## **MONITORING POLICIES FOR ADVERSE IMPACT**

Public authorities must gather and use information on how their policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.

Monitoring is an essential part of the EIA process. Monitoring specific areas of our activity and service delivery enables us to assess whether different minority groups experience the same treatment or level of service delivery, allowing us to identify areas that need improvement or reform. Our Equality and Diversity Monitoring Policy is set out in detail in our Race Equality Scheme and available on our website or from the Diversity Team, MF&RS, Bridle Road, Bootle, Liverpool L30 4YD Tel & minicom 0151 296 4355

Monitoring our employment and service delivery practices and arrangements provides us with the basic tools to measure equality of opportunity and equality of service to all people on Merseyside. The monitoring data is considered and analysed by the Diversity Action Group and provided to CLT on a regular basis. The Fire Authority will review the data to ensure that our policies and arrangements are fit for purpose.

We have systems in place to monitor in the following areas:

- Employment data
- Service delivery, in particular our key service of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC)
- Customer satisfaction
- Staff attitudes and perceptions surveys

Collating monitoring data is the responsibility of the Knowledge and Information directorate. Monitoring data is reported through individual policy holders to the Diversity Action Group. The Diversity Action Group has responsibility for analysing and interpreting results,

## **PUBLISHING ASSESSMENT CONSULTATION & MONITORING RESULTS**

Public authorities must prepare and publish a gender equality scheme, showing how they will meet their general and specific duties and setting out their gender equality objectives.

The Strategic Planning and Democratic Services Director is responsible for producing an annual "Equality and Diversity Annual Monitoring Report" on the results of our equality and diversity monitoring and our equality impact assessment process.

### **This will include:**

- Details of our progress in implementing our Gender Equality Action Plan
- Details of all policies which have been assessed for their impact on gender equality since the last published summary, and the results of these assessments
- Actions taken to mitigate any potential adverse impact of newly assessed policies identified as having the potential to impact on gender equality
- The results of the monitoring of policies previously identified to have potential to impact on gender equality
- The results of any consultation regarding policies

### **Publication**

We will make copies of the annual report available to view at all libraries in Merseyside. We will maintain a mailing list of interested parties and send them a copy of the report annually. The report will be published on our website <http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk> together with information about how to obtain the Report in alternative languages and formats.

### **Detailed Report**

The full assessment, consultation and monitoring reports will not be published, but will be made available for viewing on request. All such requests should be made to the Diversity Team, MF&RS, Bridle Road, Bootle L30 4YD. Tel & minicom 0151 296 4355

## **CONTRACTED OUT SERVICES & FUNCTIONS**

Public Authorities must, when contracting out services and functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment; and promote equality of opportunity between men and women

### **Procurement**

The procurement process plays an important role in ensuring that our policies and practices are not compromised or diluted by engaging companies that do not share the same commitments to promote equality. When we go out to tender we insist that all companies evidence their eligibility for the contract being awarded by providing information on their equal opportunities policies and where subject to formal investigations by any equality body, and specifically their provisions under the disability equality duty.

Any contracts awarded may be subject to a dip sampling verification process. The full criteria for procurement are shown at Appendix D of our Disability Equality Scheme.

### **Partnerships**

MF&RS is involved in a considerable number of partnerships; in particular, our Community Fire Safety, District and Station Managers work closely with a variety of partnerships across Merseyside. These vary enormously in terms of size, remit and membership. The listed authorities within these partnerships are responsible for ensuring that the functions and policies of the partnership are carried out in compliance with the equality duties. MF&RS encourages our partnership organisations to take account of the duty to promote equality, and ensures that all members of the partnership are aware of our responsibilities. We are developing a Partnership Agreement that sets out our commitments and expectations for the promotion of equality and specifically the provisions under the equality duties

Any partnerships may be subject to a dip sampling verification process.

## **TRAINING**

All relevant staff in the public authority should have an understanding of the Gender Equality Duty, its meaning for their work and the priority goals for gender equality

Training our employees in the area of equality and diversity and in particular in the requirements of the public sector duty to promote gender equality is a key element of our training programme. We aim to equip all our staff and managers with the skills and knowledge to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equal opportunities for men and women in all our employment and service delivery practices and arrangements.

### **Equality and Diversity Training**

All staff and managers in MF&RS receive equality and diversity training and training on the public sector duties to promote equality as appropriate to their role and responsibilities. Our Training Strategy identifies a range of role-related training on the General and Specific Duties to be delivered initially during 2006-7, and thereafter on a rolling programme:

#### **Strategic Managers**

Training received by Fire Authority members and the Corporate Leadership Team includes legal update, impact assessment process, policy making, implementation and monitoring, cultural and faith awareness training.

#### **Diversity Action Group**

Training includes legal update, impact assessment process, implementation and monitoring of policies and procedures, cultural, faith and disability awareness training.

#### **Managers & Staff**

Training includes legal update, impact assessment process, policy making, implementation and monitoring, cultural, faith and disability awareness training.

#### **Operational Crews & Mobilisation and Communications Staff**

Training includes legal update, impact assessment process, cultural, faith and disability awareness training, dealing with the public at operational incidents and in community groups.

#### **Community Fire Safety Advocates**

Our Training Review has included an assessment of the role and activities of our Community Fire Safety Advocates. We currently employ over 35 Community Advocates who specialize in delivering community fire safety initiatives in specific areas including non-English speaking communities, the Refugee and Asylum seeking communities, disabled communities, alcohol and drug abusers and for elderly people.

## **Monitoring of Training**

Training of staff and elected members is an on-going process. The Training and Professional Development department is responsible for identifying training needs, training delivery and evaluation. In particular they facilitate feedback from staff and incorporate this and the development needs identified through our appraisal procedure into the development of future training.

The Training and Professional Development department is responsible for the production of annual monitoring and evaluation reports for scrutiny by our Diversity Action Group. The Diversity Action Group can recommend changes to training in the light of the evaluation reports.

## **Training Monitoring**

The Training & Professional Development Section collect and report diversity monitoring data on all applications for training, actual training provided, selection for career development schemes, applications for promotions and successful candidates. They also monitor attendees on Work Experience placements.

## **Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS)**

IPDS is a role-based rather than rank-based system to provide employees of the UK fire and rescue service with a structured career path and fire services with a national, consistent, measurable benchmark for training. MF&RS, in line with all other Fire Services, currently is implementing a new performance appraisal system under guidance issued by the DCLG. All outcomes of the system will be monitored for disproportionate impact on any group.

## **Publication**

We are committed to publishing the results of our employment monitoring duty on an annual basis. The Strategic Planning and Democratic Services Director is responsible for producing an annual "Equality and Diversity Annual Monitoring Report" on the results of our and diversity monitoring and our equality impact assessment process. The employment duty report will be made available through our Freedom of Information Policy in order to ensure that any personal information of individual employees remains confidential. All such requests should be made to the Diversity Team, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle L30 4YD.

## **EMPLOYMENT MONITORING**

Public Authorities needs to ensure that it has due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment in its employment practices and actively promotes gender equality within its workforce. This includes discrimination and harassment of transsexual people on grounds of their gender reassignment.

Public authorities need to check which issues are relevant to any gender pay gap in their organisation by monitoring where women and men work in their organisation, what hours they work and at what grade. They need to ask staff if they have caring responsibilities, and whether this is for children or for older people.

Our Equality and Diversity Monitoring Policy is set out in full in our Race Equality Scheme, available on our website or from the Diversity Team. MF&RS, Bridle Rd, Bootle, Liverpool L30 4YD Tel & minicom 0151 296 4355

We monitor and impact assess, by reference to gender, and where appropriate, family status (which includes caring responsibility) in order to:

- ensure fair recruitment processes
- identify and address occupational segregation
- promote and manage flexible working
- ensure quality part-time working opportunities and support for part-time workers
- ensure fair work-based training opportunities.
- manage appropriate use of leave for parents and carers
- manage pregnancy and return from maternity leave
- eliminate harassment including sexual harassment and transsexual harassment
- ensure appropriate use of grievance and disciplinary procedures
- ensure fair leaving processes including redundancy, retirement and dismissals
- identify and address any gender pay gaps

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring is carried out in accordance with the Information Commissioners Code of Practice on employment monitoring. In keeping with our responsibilities under Data Protection, we ask each employee to verify the personal information we hold about them on a regular basis.

### **Recruitment Monitoring**

The Recruitment Team are responsible for all positive action initiatives to increase the representation of people from minority groups in our application process. They report on the success of these initiatives to the DAG.

## **Retention and Progression Monitoring**

Our Absence and Attendance Team are responsible for monitoring staff in post, sickness absence and access to Occupational Health support in order to assess any potential equality impacts for male and female staff and those with caring commitments.

## **COMPLAINTS**

In order to increase public confidence in this Gender Equality Scheme it is important that there is a mechanism in place for people to complain about it. The system should allow interested parties to change the scheme where appropriate.

MF&RS has a comprehensive procedure to ensure any complaints are dealt with in a fair and efficient manner. A complaint can be made in writing, by email through our website, in person or by phone to any Merseyside community fire station or Fire Service Headquarters. We believe that by listening to and acting upon complaints we can improve our services

### **Complaints Procedure**

Step 1 - a complaint can be made in person, by telephone, by email or in writing to any Fire Service premises. The officer in charge should be able to resolve the problem there and then.

Step 2 - failing an immediate resolution the officer in charge will forward a complaint to Service Headquarters. Acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within two working days of receipt at Headquarters. The complainant will be advised of the findings and decision of these investigations within 28 working days or advised of any delay.

Step 3 – if the complainant disagrees with the findings of their complaint they need to inform us within 28 days. The complaint will be passed on to an appropriate senior officer, who will investigate and advise the complainant of the findings of their investigations within 28 days or advised of any delay.

Step 4 - if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the findings they need to inform us within 28 days. The complaint then will be referred to the Clerk to the Authority, who will conduct an independent assessment and inform the complainant of the outcome within 28 days or advise of any delay.

Step 5 - if a complainant remains dissatisfied with the findings they are entitled to send their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The contact for the North of England is:  
Local Government Ombudsman  
Beverley House, 17 Shipton Road, York YO30 5FZ  
Phone: 01904 663200 FAX: 01904 663269

A pamphlet giving more information about the procedure of complaining to the Ombudsman can be obtained from your local council, library or Citizens Advice Bureau. Alternatively log on to: [www.open.gov.uk/lgo](http://www.open.gov.uk/lgo)

## **Role of the Merseyside Fire & Civil Defence Authority**

Any complaints, feedback or ideas about the Gender Equality Scheme can also be directed to the Fire Authority at:

Merseyside Fire & Civil Defence Authority  
The Clerk to the Authority  
Fire Service Headquarters  
Bridle Road  
Bootle L30 4YD  
Merseyside  
Tel: 0151 296 4000

## **Role of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)**

The EOC and (from late 2007) the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) will have enforcement powers on the duty. The general duty can be enforced through judicial review or by compliance notice by the CEHR; the specific duties are legally enforceable through compliance notices by the EOC/CEHR.

Further assistance and guidance can be provided by the EOC at:

Arndale House,  
Arndale Centre  
Manchester  
M4 3EQ  
Email: [info@eoc.org.uk](mailto:info@eoc.org.uk)  
Fax: 0161 838 8312  
Tel: 0845 601 5901

## **APPENDIX A**

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

MF&RS has adopted the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure recommended by the Chief Fire Officers Association. This ensures that all equality strands (race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief and age) are considered when we are impact assessing our new and existing policies.

### **Initial Impact Assessment (IIA)**

An IIA is carried out on each new policy and when we consider changes to an existing policy by the policyholder. The form to be used is available on the intranet together with full instructions as to how to carry out each stage of the process. .

If the IIA raises concerns that the policy could result in unjustifiable adverse impact against members of a particular group it should be withdrawn and redrafted. Any potential for disproportionate impact on members of a group or where there are concerns that the policy does not promote equality of opportunity for a particular group it needs to go forward to a full impact assessment.

IIAs are considered by the Diversity Action Group (DAG).

### **Full Impact Assessment (FIA)**

The form to be used for a FIA is available on the intranet and is undertaken by the DAG.

The report should begin with an Executive Summary of the results of the EIA, in particular focusing on any decisions which may have been reached. It should contain a description of the policy aim, the context within which the policy operates, the scope of the policy and any existing data which are available and which may have informed development in the past.

An example of how the report should be constructed is as follows:

#### **Introduction**

This section should explain why the EIA came to be undertaken.

#### **Background**

This section should give the background information to the policy and the perceived problems with the policy which are the reason for the Impact Assessment.

#### **Methodology and Sources of Data**

This section should outline the methodology used to collect data and what sources of data were used. In addition to this it should explain any other procedures which have been used to draw together pertinent information (such as original data collection exercises).

## **Assessment of Impact on Equality**

This section should consist of a detailed explanation and assessment of the policies impact on race/gender/disability/sexuality/religion/age equality.

## **Consideration of Alternative Approaches/Mitigation of Adverse Impact**

This section should explain in detail all the considerations of alternative approaches/mitigation of adverse impact of the policy.

## **Monitoring Arrangements**

This section should also outline systems which will be put in place to monitor for adverse impact in the future and should include all relevant timetables. In addition it may include the following:

- An explanation of monitoring and why it is important
- Monitoring systems and methods you used
- Summary and assessment of your monitoring, making it clear whether you found any evidence of discrimination
- How you will use these results to develop future policy and practice.

## **Formal Consultation**

This section should outline all the consultation that has taken place on the EIA, and may include the following:

- Why you carried out the consultation
- Details about how you went about it
- A summary of all the replies received from people you consulted
- An assessment of your proposed policy (or policy options) in the light of the responses you received.
- A statement of what you plan to do next

## **Publication of Equality Impact Assessment**

This section should state how the EIA will be published.

## **Conclusions**

Conclusions drawn from the results in terms of the policy impact and will outline the decision-making process concerning policy review. This section should state the decisions made by the authority on the basis of the EIA, for example, by the way of an action plan, with associated timescales. If a decision is made to introduce measures to mitigate adverse impact or alternative policies then it would be appropriate to address each of the six questions listed below:

- How does each option further or hinder equality of opportunity?

- How does each option reinforce or challenge stereotypes which constitute or influence equality of opportunity?
- What are the consequences for the group concerned and for the public authority of not adopting an option more favourable to equality of opportunity?
- How will the relevant group be advised of the new or changed policy or service?
- What are the costs of implementing each option? Will the social and economic costs and benefits to the relevant group of implementing the option outweigh the costs to the public authority or other groups? An evaluation of net social benefits achieved by adopting each option must be considered.
- Does the public authority have international obligations which would be breached by, or could be furthered by, each of the options?

## INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Directorate	Department/Section		Manager		Telephone No. e-mail	
Name of Policy/Service to be assessed			Date of Assessment		Is this a new or existing policy?	
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy/service.						
2. Who is intended to benefit from this policy/service, and in what way?						
3. What outcomes are wanted from this policy/service?						
4. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy/service?			5. Who implements the policy/service, and who is responsible?			
6. Are there concerns that the policy/service has/could have a differential impact on the following groups and what existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?						
Race	Y	N				
Gender	Y	N				
Disability	Y	N				
Religion or Belief	Y	N				
Sexuality	Y	N				
Age	Y	N				

7. Could the differential impact identified in 6 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy/service?	Y	N	Please explain	
8. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Have you consulted those who are likely to be affected by the policy/service?	Y	N	Please explain for each equality heading (questions 6) on a separate piece of paper.	
9. Should the policy/service proceed to a full impact assessment?	Y	N	10. Date on which Full assessment to be completed by.	<b>Date</b>

I am satisfied that this policy has been successfully impact assessed.

I understand the Impact assessment of this policy is a statutory obligation and that, as owners of this policy, we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this process.

Signed (completing officer) ..... Date.....

Signed (Head of Section)..... Date.....

PLEASE NOTE – THIS IMPACT ASSESSMENT WILL BE SCRUTINISED BY THE DIVERSITY ACTION GROUP WHO REPORT TO THE DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER.

## FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Directorate	Department/Section	Manager	Telephone No. Email			
1. Review Policies and Services <b>What is the policy/service being assessed.</b>						
2. Examine the Evidence <b>In which areas does the Policy/Service differentially/adverse impact?</b>  <b>Please identify specific group/s</b>	<b>Disability</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Religion or Belief</b>
<b>Where differential/adverse impact has been identified, is this intentional and/or justifiable?</b>  <b>If yes please explain</b>	<i>Please explain intentional impact</i>			<i>Please explain justifiable impact with an example</i>		
<b>For which group/s is the impact most relevant?</b> <b>Please identify specific group/s</b>  <b>Has consultation already taken place with this group/s?</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Staff/Members</b>	<b>Community groups</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Contractors</b>	<b>Consultants</b>
	Yes      No	Yes      No	Yes      No	Yes      No	Yes      No	Yes      No

If you have identified unjustified differential/adverse impact on areas of either function, policy or service provision, please read the guidelines and complete below. If you haven't, please go to 7 and sign and date

3. Consultation <b>Who was consulted</b> <b>What were the key points identified in the consultation.</b>					
4. Options <b>List the options considered to modify the policy/service to reduce adverse impact on group/s.</b>					
5. Decisions <b>What solution/s was chosen to modify the policy/service to remove unintended or unjustified impact on group/s.</b>	<i>Please List Solutions for Unjustified Impact</i>		<i>Please List Solutions for Unjustified Impact</i>		
6. Monitor/Review <b>How will you monitor the progress on impact of policy/service.</b>	<i>Please explain</i>		<i>Date of Review</i>		
7. Signed Name Job Title		Date Started		Date Completed	
<i>Reminder: This Impact Assessment will be published as part of our Equality % Diversity Annual Monitoring Report</i>					

PLEASE NOTE – THIS IMPACT ASSESSMENT WILL BE SCRUTINISED BY THE DIVERSITY ACTON GROUP WHO REPORT TO THE DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

## APPENDIX B GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN 2007-2010

This Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Action Plans in our Race & Disability Equality Schemes 2006 – 2009 which contains a number of generic actions to promote equality for all protected minority groups. The numbering sequence follows on from our Disability Equality Action Plan. The following 15 new actions are specific to our duty to promote gender equality.

### 1 General Scheme Development

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Deliverables
1.14 Undertake pay audit using EOC's toolkit	April 2008	Dir of People & Org Development	Report to DAG
1.15 Produce Policy on Transgender people in recruitment employment & service delivery	April 2008	Diversity Manager	Publication of policy

### 2 Identifying Relevant Functions and Policies

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Deliverables
2.9 Develop internal consultation group of women employees	June 2007	Diversity Manager	Policy consultations

### 3 Assessing and Consulting on Likely Impact of proposed Policies

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Deliverables
3.11 Review maternity & Work-Life Balance policies	June 2007	Dir of People & Org Development Diversity Manager	Publication of revised policy
3.12 Review clothing specifications to ensure appropriate wear for all staff (inc pregnant women & those from different religious groups)	June 2007	Procurement Manager Dir of Operational Preparedness and Resilience.	Revised contract
3.13 Repeat the Audit of facilities for women in firestations, the TADA and SHQ	Dec 2007	Diversity Manager Estates Manager	Report to DAG

### 4 Monitoring Policies for Adverse Impact

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Deliverables
4.6 Review policy on radiation incidents	Dec 2007	Diversity Manager Dir of Operational Preparedness and Resilience.	Revised policy

4.7 Review Bank Holiday leave arrangements for Part Time Workers	June 2007	Absence & Attendance Manager Diversity Manager	Revised policy
4.8 Review Absence & Attendance Policy	Dec 2007	Absence & Attendance Manager Diversity Manager	Revised policy

### **5 Publishing the Results of Assessments, Consultation and Monitoring**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>
5.5 Produce summary report (part of Eq & Diversity Monitoring Report)	Dec 2007 and annually thereafter	Director of Knowledge & Info Management	Report published

### **7 Training**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>
7.10 Develop and set up training packages on the GES for employees and members	Dec 2007	Dir of People & Org Development	Training rolled out
7.11 Update training for all POD staff on all Work-Life balance issues	Dec 2007	Dir of People & Org Development Diversity Manager	Training delivered
7.12 Develop refresher training for managers on Absence & Attendance Policy	Dec 2007	Dir of People & Org Development	Training rolled out
7.13 Produce Update Briefings & Sessions for managers on family friendly Legislation	June 2007	Dir of People & Org Development	Training rolled out

### **8 Specific Duty – monitoring employment**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>
8.7 Analyse the take up of flexible working under our Work Life Balance policy	Dec2007	Absence & Attendance Mgr	Report to DAG