



Equality & Diversity Policy.

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**APPENDIX A
(CFO/20/08)**

Unique Reference	Equality & Diversity ADM 0086 2008
Title of Policy	Equality & Diversity Policy
Description and purpose	To replace Equality & Fairness at Work policy (SOP ADM 0086).
Action(s) to be followed	To review every 2 years
Audience	All members, employees, volunteers and partners of MF&RA. Members of the public.
Related policies	Bullying & Harassment Policy. MF&RS Race, Disability & Gender Equality Schemes.
Legislation	The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA); The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005; The Race Relations Act 1976 (RRA); Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) (RRAA); The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003; The Equal Pay Act 1970; Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003; Civil Partnership Act 2004; Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003; The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006; Disability Discrimination Act 1995 ; Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005; Gender Recognition Act 2004; The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999.
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Editor	Approved by CLT on 11 th December 2007 Area Manager Stephens Director of Performance & Values
Publisher	<NAME OF OFFICER THAT HAS PUBLISHED THE DOCUMENT>
Active Date	Immediate effect
Review Date	Every 2 years

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Approved by CLT on	11 th December 2007.
Approved by Authority on	Submitted for consideration 11 th January 2008

MF&RS Equality and Diversity Policy.

Introduction

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service aims to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences and to secure genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of our activities. This applies to job applicants, employees, volunteers and users of the organisation's services.

This policy is influenced by both current legislation and policy, but it also reflects the intention of MF&RS to promote the best practice in this area.

The overall aim of this policy is to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation. In order to achieve this, MF&RS will endeavour to create an environment in which there is respect for every individual and recognition of their needs and aspirations, regardless of gender (including transgender status), married or civil partnership status, race, ethnicity, nationality, colour, religion or belief, disability, age, family status or sexual orientation or any other factor that cannot be justified.

Public Sector Equality Duties.

The public sector equality duties (for race, disability and gender) means that public authorities are now obliged to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and to actively promote equality, as well as carrying out specific duties designed to help achieve this general duty. At the heart of these duties is a requirement that public authorities, in consultation with all stakeholders, adhere to the following measures:

- produce and publish an equality scheme with objectives and targets for action, and provision for monitoring outcomes;
- achieve the objectives of this equality scheme;
- report on its progress;
- review the initiative every three years.

In accordance with these duties, MF&RS has published its corporate equality schemes and action plans, and reviews them on a 3 yearly cycle.

Statement of commitment.

MF&RS is firmly committed to providing equality of opportunity for both current and potential employees and equality of service to the community. To achieve this aim MF&RS is committed to:

- Improving equality of opportunity for all by adhering to the statutory legal requirements and, where possible, by exceeding them.
- Creating a harassment-free working environment for all.
- Continually examining and reviewing procedures for appointment, transfer, promotion and training to ensure non-discrimination in the selection process.
- Providing staff with training and guidance to ensure they understand the Equality and Diversity Policy and their responsibilities under it.
- Regularly monitoring the composition of the workforce and publishing the results.
- Where appropriate, taking positive action to encourage applications from underrepresented groups within the workforce.
- Providing all reasonable facilities and adjustments to maximise access to the services provided by MFRS for people with disabilities.
- Investigating fully and swiftly all complaints of discrimination, victimisation and harassment and taking appropriate action.

Functions covered by the policy

This policy covers all functions of MF&RS, its policies, procedures and services.

Recruitment, selection and management of staff.

MF&RS is committed to becoming an equal opportunity employer. Our policy aims to ensure that no job applicant or employee:

- receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, race, ethnicity, colour, nationality, religion or belief, disability, married or civil partnership status, gender (including gender reassignment) family status or sexual orientation or any other factor that cannot be justified.
- is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable, based on any of the above characteristics.
- is subject to harassment based on any of the above characteristics.
- Is subject to victimisation if they make a complaint or help another complainant under the terms of this policy

Selection criteria and procedures will be frequently reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Positive action to attract applications from underrepresented groups will also take place in appropriate circumstances.

Individuals involved in the recruitment process will be trained on the requirements of this policy and to ensure equality and fairness in all aspects of recruitment and selection.

We will undertake regular reviews of pay and conditions in order to identify and address any gender pay differences

Publicity and documentation

We will endeavour to provide information on key services available in a variety of formats on request, which may include electronic communication, the use of interpreters, fire safety literature in appropriate languages, the use of pictures or diagrams and the use of audio tapes.

Good accessible communication methods will be used throughout MF&RS in written documents, the website and electronic communication, in accordance with the relevant statutory equality duties.

Projects and Service Delivery

All our services are covered by this policy. We will strive to provide quality services to all service users equally and fairly and to ensure that our policies and procedures do not discriminate against any group or individual on the grounds of age, race, ethnicity, colour, nationality, religion or belief, disability, married or civil partnership status, gender (including gender reassignment), family status or sexual orientation or any other factor that cannot be justified.

Training will be provided to staff involved in the delivery of services to provide an appropriate and informed response to all service users without unlawful discrimination.

MF&RS will seek to ensure that services are advertised and promoted in an inclusive way, and if a group or groups are underrepresented in accessing particular services, all appropriate efforts will be made to redress the balance.

All trainers, facilitators, consultants and volunteers contracted to work for MF&RS will be required to support our equality and diversity policy.

What the service will do

To demonstrate the commitment to equality of opportunity, the service undertakes equality impact assessments of all policies, procedures and functions in the areas of employment and service delivery. The outcomes of such impact assessments are used to develop our corporate equality schemes, which include action plans to redress any imbalances, and promote the aims of this equality & diversity policy. These action plans form part of our Service Plan, and progress is reported quarterly.

Resolving issues.

In the event that any member of the Service considers that they have been subject to discrimination, harassment or victimisation, the issue should be resolved using the MF&RS Bullying & Harassment Policy.

In the event that any service user considers that they have been subject to discrimination, harassment or victimisation, the issue should be raised via the complaints procedure, which can be found in SOP ADM 0006.

Advice on any of the issues may be sought from the Diversity department at SHQ, Bridle Road.

Document Control

Amendment History

Version / Issue No.	Date	Author	Remarks / Reason for Change
v2	Nov. 2007	S. McKenna Equality & Diversity Manager	Reviewed by J. Monkhouse Equality & Diversity Consultant

Sign-Off List

Name	Position

Distribution List

Name	Position	I / R
Diversity Action Group (DAG)	Various	

Equalities Impact Assessment

Initial (Please tick)	Full (Please tick)	Date	Reviewed by	Comments
x		Nov 07	S. McKenna Equality & Diversity Manager	No adverse impact

Civil Contingencies Impact Assessment

Date	Reviewed by	Comments

Related Documents

Reference No.	Title	Author	Version & Date
	MF&RS Bullying & Harassment Policy	J. Monkhouse Equality & Diversity Consultant	August 07
	MF&RS Complaints Procedure (SOP ADM 0006)		July 2006
Active Date			
Training			
Review Date			
Contact			

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