



MF&RS LGB Policy

This is an unpublished work, the Copyright in which vests in Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service. All rights reserved. The information contained herein is the property of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, and is supplied without liability for errors or omissions. No part may be reproduced or used except as authorised by Contract or other written permission. The Copyright and the foregoing restriction on reproduction and use extend to all media in which information may be embodied ©

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Policy

Aims.

- To create a culture of dignity and respect for all staff regardless of sexual orientation, ensuring that there exists freedom from prejudice, stereotyping, harassment & discrimination.
- To provide support for lesbian, gay & bisexual (LGB) employees, through the establishment of a workplace LGB employee network.
- To raise staff awareness of issues affecting LGB communities, and empower staff to act in a sensitive manner in any dealings with members of this community.
- To establish a clear consultation & communication process to seek interests and views of LGB people.

Sexual Orientation & the workplace

Introduction

Lesbian, gay and bisexual people comprise around 6 per cent of the UK population, according to government estimates. That's roughly 3.6 million people, or 1.7 million in the UK workforce. The arguments for ensuring that organisational diversity policies and practices include lesbian, gay and bisexual people have never been stronger.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MF&RS) recognises that we need to draw on talent from all sections of the population and create a workforce culture that embraces diversity and equality and delivers an excellent service to all the diverse communities on Merseyside. By doing this we will:

- **Enhance our Reputation** — the need to show the right corporate image to an increasingly discerning population of potential staff and members of the public.
- **Improve Recruitment, Retention & Productivity** —the need to become an employer of choice, to retain and motivate the talent necessary for optimal performance.

“People perform better when they can be themselves”
Stonewall Diversity Champions

In order to do this we will ensure that:

- Staff experience fairness and equity of treatment in all employment matters, regardless of their sexual orientation.
- Staff members in a civil partnership receive the same benefits as married members of staff.
- Staff receive awareness training on sexual orientation issues, in terms of employment practice, and delivering an equitable service to LGB communities.
- Any allegation of homophobia will be investigated thoroughly, in a sensitive manner.
- We consult with the LGB communities of Merseyside, and with staff members through an LGB staff network.

MF&RS, as an equal opportunities employer, is committed to ensuring that all individuals whether they are staff, members of the public or other professionals who come into contact with our service, are treated with dignity and respect. We will provide equality of opportunity within the working environment, free from unlawful discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying, based upon sexual orientation.

MF&RS respects the right of any individual to choose whether or not they are open about their sexuality. We support the right of any employee, to do this without fear of discrimination, harassment or bullying and for them to be confident that they will receive fair and equal treatment.

Legal Framework

Over recent years there has been an increasing amount of legislation produced in the area of the protection of employees and consumers/service users, on the grounds of sexual orientation. In particular:

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003.
The Civil Partnership Act 2004.
The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007.

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 relate specifically to sexual orientation and employment issues. These regulations make it unlawful to discriminate in employment or training on grounds of sexual orientation.

The new regulations apply to all aspects of employment and training, including recruitment, promotion, terms and conditions (including pay) and dismissals. It defines two types of discrimination: direct, indirect ; as well as defining harassment and victimisation.

Direct discrimination is where one person is treated less favourably than another person is treated, has been treated or would be treated in a comparable situation on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Indirect discrimination is where a policy or practice is applied equally to all but which disadvantages people of a particular sexual orientation, unless it can be objectively justified. It is defined more broadly in these regulations than in current race discrimination law and there is no requirement to demonstrate the disadvantages through statistics.

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct which takes place with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation occurs when a person has made or intends to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

LGB&T Staff Network.

A critical part of this policy is to establish an LGB&T staff network within MF&RS. Such networks provide an effective consultation mechanism, facilitating communication between organisations and employees from minority groups. They are a point of contact for employers who want to find out about the concerns of their staff and can be a useful resource for policy makers and diversity trainers. Providing a forum for discussion is an important way to build a workforce that feels valued, and LGB&T employees can use a formal network to support each other. The group can also speak up for staff who are experiencing problems at work.”

Document Control

Amendment History

Version / Issue No.	Date	Author	Remarks / Reason for Change
1.5	Jan 2008	S. McKenna	Reviewed by J. Monkhouse and DAG

Sign-Off List

Name	Position
Diversity Action Group	Various

Distribution List

Name	Position	I / R

Equalities Impact Assessment

Initial (Please tick)	Full (Please tick)	Date	Reviewed by	Comments
x		Jan 2008	S. McKenna	No adverse impact

Civil Contingencies Impact Assessment

Date	Reviewed by	Comments

Related Documents

Reference No.	Title	Author	Version & Date
ADM 0086	MF&RS Equality & Diversity Policy	S. McKenna	
Active Date			
Training			
Review Date			
Contact			

Ownership

Has it been agreed with the client that this is a publicly owned document?

YES

If Yes please state URL: www.merseyfire.gov.uk

If No please state reason why:

Unique Reference	<SUBJECT AREA> <AUTOMATED CONSECUTIVE NUMBER > 2008
Title of Policy	MF&RS LGB Policy
Description and purpose	To support Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual (LGB) Employees.
Action(s) to be followed	Policy to be reviewed by the Diversity Action Group (DAG) in 2011
Audience	All members, employees and volunteers of MF&RA; members of the public
Related policies	Equality & Diversity Policy (ADM 0086)
Legislation	Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations, 2003. The Civil Partnership Act 2004. The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007.
Author	S. McKenna
Editor	A. M. Stephens (22/01/08)
Publisher	Date approved by Authority (18/03/08)
Active Date	
Review Date	January 2011

**APPENDIX A
(CFO/61/08)**

Contact	Stuart McKenna. Equality & Diversity Manager. SHQ, Bridle Road. 0151 296 4237. stuartmckenna@merseyfire.gov.uk
Approved by CLT on	<DATE>
Approved by Committee on	<DATE>