

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17TH AUGUST 2015

1. **POSITIVE ACTION STRATEGY FOR RECRUITMENT, PROGRESSION AND RETENTION**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT Scrutiny Committee notes WMFS Strategic Approach to Positive Action and the current and future proposals for Positive Action initiatives within the scope of our Diversity, Equality Inclusion and Cohesion (DICE) work.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to provide a strategic overview of our strategic approach to positive action (Appendix 1), to outline our continued short to medium term activities and our twelve month evaluation plan.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 **Positive action**

3.1.1 Under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, West Midlands Fire Service has statutory requirements and a Public Sector Equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and promote different groups working together.

3.1.2 We recognise that the Service is currently underrepresented in the following groups: Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), Disabilities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and women in uniformed roles. The demographic profile of the workforce will be monitored and our positive action focus will be reviewed to ensure activity is targeted appropriately and fully aligned to the Equality Objectives for 2016 which are currently being reviewed by the resourcing and DICE teams.

- 3.1.3 The Resourcing Manager and DICE Manager have worked together to review the approach towards 'positive action'. Through developing a 'Strategic Approach to Positive Action' we will continue to look at the representation of minority groups within our workforce but also seek to address actions around future recruitment and progression based on our workforce planning.
- 3.1.4 The law clearly distinguishes positive action from positive discrimination and the policy of West Midlands Fire Service is to consider all individuals based upon their merit.

3.2 **WORKFORCE EQUALITY PROFILE**

- 3.2.1 Personal information of our employees is used to monitor the demographic profile of our workforce. Effective monitoring is an important tool for measuring performance and progress towards equality and diversity goals and in ensuring an inclusive environment. This is currently achieved through monitoring of the people performance indicators.
- 3.2.2 Understanding the composition of our workforce enables the organisation to highlight differences between groups in terms of satisfaction, engagement and representation.
- 3.2.3 West Midlands Fire Service currently (as at 1st June 2015) employs 2094 staff of which 1576 (75%) are in Uniformed roles; 460 (22%) are in Support roles and 58 (3%) are in Fire Control roles.
- 3.2.4 Detailed information regarding the demographic profile of our employees can be found at Appendix 2.

3.3 **Our Current Approach to Positive Action**

- 3.3.1 Our current approach to positive action is used to support the Service in working towards achieving equality outcomes for our diverse communities and our workforce. It has provided a framework to positive action focusing on areas of recruitment, progression and retention. Our performance indicators show that while the number of women in uniformed roles has risen over the past twelve months **5.02% (79 women)** we are still not achieving our planned target of **5.14% (81 women)**. Similarly our target of 12.5% of uniformed staff from black and minority ethnic groups is proving difficult to achieve. It will be very difficult to achieve these targets in the short term due to a restriction on recruitment

activity.

- 3.3.2 The percentage of employees that have disclosed their disability status is currently 82% of the workforce. While this is an improvement we recognise that further work is needed to improve this.
- 3.3.3 We use performance indicators to ensure that we are able to focus our activities effectively. However, in the current climate we recognise that these targets are challenging and that our focus will be based on internal progression and retention. Based on the approach that we have adopted to date, we recognise that working towards a longer term strategy linked to the Equality Framework will also provide a co-ordinated approach.

3.4 **What Has Been Achieved to Date – 2010/2015**

- 3.4.1 We have used Positive Action initiatives to attract and encourage potential applicants from underrepresented groups, to apply for posts on an equal basis. We have strived to seek diversity in our new entrants particularly focusing on ensuring a significant increase in the number of applications for the role of Firefighter, from women and people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds.
- 3.4.2 Through a range of initiatives we have promoted the role of the firefighter to underrepresented groups within our local communities. Throughout our campaigns we have tried to understand the barriers to potential applicants and develop targeted recruitment awareness campaigns to overcome barriers and raise awareness of the opportunities available.
- 3.4.3 A range of positive action initiatives have been implemented during previous recruitment campaigns. These have included:-
- Female fitness sessions to support potential female firefighters in reaching specific fitness levels and upper body strength.
 - Awareness sessions aimed at both women and BME groups to raise awareness of the role of the firefighter and to dispel misconceptions to promote a career in the Fire Service.
 - Sponsorship of Birmingham Women's Football Association and Camp Hill Ladies Rugby Club including

attending events and programme and pitch side advertising to promote a career in the Fire Service.

- Targeting local football clubs and cricket clubs to engage with physically active women.
- Pre recruitment access courses and supporting local Public Service Courses.
- Working with a variety of diverse groups including Black Boys Can, Bordesley Green Girls College and other community groups.
- Working with radio and TV channels including Raj FM community radio station and appearing on the Sikh channel breakfast show.
- Awareness days held at large leisure centres across the West Midlands targeting women's fitness sessions.
- Contact with previously unsuccessful applicants from our target groups to work with them on their development.
- Working alongside Job Centre Plus, providing essential information to job centre staff.

3.4.4 As a result of our positive action initiatives we have seen a small increase in the diversity of applicants for firefighter positions. Between the recruitment campaigns that ran in January 2014 and December 2014 the number of female applicants has risen by 1.2% and the number of BME applicants by 3.4%. This demonstrates that we are able to maintain our current levels of female and BME groups, however, further work will need to be done to increase these numbers.

3.4.5 With the current freeze on recruitment activity our focus is on instilling positive messages of WMFS as an employer of choice for the future.

3.5 Work Experience Programme

- 3.5.1 Our work experience programme allows us to work with schools in our local communities to provide opportunities for students to help them prepare for the challenges of tomorrow. Students familiarise themselves with the skills and attitudes required in the world of work which helps them recognise the demands of working life in organisations that are undergoing rapid and constant change. The programme raises awareness of the wide range of opportunities available for a career in the Fire Service and gives insight into a specific career pathway that they may be considering.
- 3.5.2 The Work Experience programme provides a vital way of engaging and inspiring young people as well as offering hands on exposure to the work of West Midlands Fire Service.
- 3.5.3 During 2015 our programme of work experience has been developing. Our approach for the future will be one of targeted opportunity and collaboration with education specialists to develop a programme which balances educational need, work preparation and raised awareness of the career opportunities available with West Midlands Fire Service.
- 3.5.4 Over the last twelve months 23% of our work experience placements have been taken up by year 11 girls. 23% of all placements were taken up by black and minority ethnic applicants.

3.6 Traineeships and Apprenticeships

- 3.6.1 Traineeships and Apprenticeships will be available to all however to support our agreed strategic equality objectives, residents of the West Midlands will be prioritised and we have encouraged those aged between 16-24 to apply. In addition, apprenticeships are primarily, although not exclusively aimed at young residents not in education, employment or training.
- 3.6.2 There are a range of positive advantages to the organisation in employing trainees and apprentices which include bringing younger people into the workforce to enhance our succession planning and introducing a 'grow your own' approach to recruitment as well as growing talented individuals for career progression. They provide us with the opportunity to increase diversity and ensure greater representation of people from our local communities.

3.6.3 We recently introduced a successful traineeship programme in partnership with West Midlands Police, Birmingham City Council and South and City College. This included 13 students, working with us over a 12 week period. From this pool of students we successfully recruited 2 apprentices.

3.6.4 Of the 13 individuals who completed the Traineeship programme 46% were female and 46% were BME students.

3.7 Internships

3.7.1 Internships are widely associated with graduates entering the labour market and wanting to enter a particular profession. Internships provide interns with a meaningful experience that enhances their employability and skills. West Midlands Fire Service gains a new and motivated member of staff, bringing new skills and perspectives to the organisation.

3.7.2 West Midlands Fire Service has established relationships with a number of Higher Education institutes and interns are offered work placements in a number of functional areas across the Service.

3.8 Future Engagement with Diverse Communities

3.8.1 Our Vulnerable Persons Officers, Partnerships Officers, Community Risk Reduction Officers, Safeside Volunteers and Firefighters work at the heart of our communities. We will work closely with Community Safety and Safeside to ensure that our opportunities for volunteering are maximised and that our volunteers reflect the communities that they serve.

3.8.2 We will continue to use existing capacity within the organisation including our team of recruitment awareness advisors, to consider ways of engaging with both young and older people from diverse communities for future recruitment, placements and volunteering.

3.8.3 The DICE team have developed their external relations work with minority communities and are working with faith organisations and minority media organisations such as Raaj FM, Sikh Channel and Noor TV to engage our minority communities. We continue to work collaboratively with the DICE team and Community Safety to develop these links further and use positive engagement to highlight the employment opportunities that we have to offer and to also gain valuable feedback.

3.9 Youth Work

The Service has a range of safety programmes which target young people where we can build on our positive action messages within these groups:-

- 'Your Choice – How are you getting home?' activity focuses on Year 9 children.
- Sandwell Youth Programme has enabled young people to achieve 30 hours of OCN Level 1 courses in 'Understanding Firefighting' from 18 different secondary schools.
- The F.I.R.E programme is aimed at youth offenders and endeavours to build self esteem change behaviours and encourage young people to develop aspirations.
- 16 branches of the Young Firefighters Association each with approximately 15 people on a 15 week programme that enables young people to gain an OCN accreditation. Three of the branches specifically cater for young people with disabilities and/ or learning difficulties.
- Tipton has 20 young people engaging in a regular fit club aimed at people from deprived backgrounds.

3.10 Progression

- 3.10.1 We use positive action to encourage and support under represented groups to embark upon a journey of progression. The information below provides an insight into the progression of women and BME people within the Service.

| Definitions for Management Tiers | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| | Uniformed | Non Uniformed |
| Directors | CFO, CFO, ACO. | |
| Strategic Managers | Area Manager and above | Manager 1 + SET Member |
| Middle Managers | Group Manager Station Manager | Manager 2 Professional 1 |
| Supervisory Managers | Watch Manager Crew Manager | Manager 3 Professional 2, 3, Technical 2 and 1 Admin 1 |

Gender Equality and Progression

PI 16 The number of Female Uniformed Staff

| <u>2012/2013</u> <u>Actual</u> | <u>2013/2014</u> <u>Actual</u> | <u>2014/2015</u> <u>Actual</u> | <u>2015/2016</u> <u>Target</u> | <u>2015/2016</u> <u>Actual</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 70 | 76 | 79 | 79 | 79 |

| Female Progression | | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| The percentage of:- | April 2015* | | | |
| | Number of Women | Total Number in Role | % of Women | % of women in the workforce |
| Female Uniformed Staff Strategic Management | 1 | 9 | 11% | 5.0% |
| Female Uniformed Staff Middle Management | 2 | 55 | 4% | 5.0% |
| Female Uniformed Staff Supervisory Management | 12 | 484 | 2% | 5.0% |
| Female Uniformed Staff Foundation roles | 64 | 1025 | 6% | 5.0% |
| | | | | |
| Female Non-Uniformed staff Strategic Management | 6 | 15 | 40% | 54.6% |
| Female Non-Uniformed staff Middle Management | 7 | 22 | 32% | 54.6% |
| Female Non-Uniformed staff Supervisory Management | 82 | 218 | 38% | 54.6% |
| Female Non-Uniformed staff Foundation roles | 159 | 210 | 76% | 54.6% |

- There is one woman in a uniformed strategic role and 2 women in middle management roles. This is 11% and 4% respectively and is reflective of the number of women in uniformed roles.
- The percentage of uniformed women in supervisory management is 2% which is disproportionately lower than the 5% of women in the uniformed workforce.
- The percentage of women in the three levels of non-uniformed management ranges from 32% to 40% which is lower than the 55% of women in the non-uniformed workforce.

3.10.2 Through support and mentoring of women firefighters, we have recently seen an increase in women applying for the next role of Crew Commander. Six women have been successful (100% of female applicants) which will increase the percentage of supervisory managers to 4%.

3.10.3 We recognise however that we still have considerable work to do to address the barriers which prevent women from putting themselves forward for consideration. Barriers such as childcare, under estimation of their ability, pressure from male colleagues and perceived low confidence in incident command all appear to contribute to this. We will work closely with internal women's groups such as Affinity to look at ways of removing or lowering these barriers and a consideration of how we can empower Line Managers to recognise and remove perceived barriers and target promotion opportunities for women.

3.10.4 The current positive action work streams that target females and minority groups include:-

- Recruitment through Positive Action Officers.
- 'Reaching for the Stars' - A Personal Effectiveness Course.
- 'Be Effective' – a Professional Effectiveness Course.
- The Buddy Scheme.
- The development of DICE Champions.
- The Leading Excellence programme.
- Excellence Programme.

Race Equality and Progression

PI 17 The percentage of ***all staff*** from ethnic minority communities.

| 2012/2013 Actual | 2013/2014 Actual | 2014/2015 Actual | 2015/2016 Target | 2015/2016 Actual |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 13.1 | 13.6 | 13.6 | 14.0 | 13.7 |

| 2015/Progression of those from BME Communities | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|---|---|
| The percentage of:- | April 2015* | | | |
| | Number of those from ethnic minority communities | Total number in role | % of those from ethnic minority communities | % of ethnic minority communities in the workforce |
| BME - Uniformed Strategic Management | 0 | 9 | 0% | 12.2% |
| BME - Uniformed Middle Management | 6 | 55 | 11% | 12.2% |
| BME - Uniformed Supervisory Management | 51 | 490 | 10% | 12.2% |
| BME - Uniformed Foundation Roles | 135 | 1025 | 13% | 12.2% |
| BME - Non-Uniformed Strategic Management | 3 | 15 | 20% | 19.6% |
| BME - Non-Uniformed Middle Management | 2 | 22 | 9% | 19.6% |
| BME - Non-Uniformed Supervisory Management | 40 | 218 | 18% | 19.6% |
| BME - Non-Uniformed Foundation Roles | 46 | 210 | 22% | 19.6% |

- 12% of uniformed employees and 20% of non uniformed employees have stated that they are from Black and minority ethnic communities (BME).
- BME employees are under represented in uniformed management roles.
- There are 3 non uniformed strategic managers and 40 supervisory managers which equate to 20% and 18% respectively. These levels are representative of the BME workforce.
- Non uniformed middle managers equate to 9% which is lower than the 20% BME representation across the workforce.

3.10.5 During the recent Crew Commander Selection process 9% (19) of applications were from BME employees from a potential group of 135. From this group 36% (7) were successful in gaining a permanent position and 5% (1) achieved a temporary position. 7% of those who took part in the selection process were unsuccessful.

3.10.6 This highlights that we still have work to do with our BME firefighters to ensure that they are in a stronger position to be considered for promotion and that they are fully prepared for inclusion in the selection process. A key element of our approach moving forward will be to engage with these groups to find out why they have chosen not to apply and to remove any barriers that may exist.

3.10.7 The perceived barriers that exist within BME groups include a lack of encouragement and understanding from line managers, lack of role models and representation within management levels and a lack of opportunity for shadowing and networking.

3.11 Disability

The percentage of Employees that have Disclosed their Disabled Status.

| 2012/2013 Actual | 2013/2014 Actual | 2014/2015 Actual | 2015/2016 Target | 2015/2016 Actual |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 74.7 | 75.6 | 76.1 | 100% | 81.7 |

3.11.1 We have set ourselves an ambitious target of 100% disclosure of disability. There has been an increase in the number of individuals who have disclosed their disability status – this has been due to the following areas of activity:

- DICE disability campaign which included a Dyslexia video that has been well received and nationally recognised. This will be developed further with the design of a further video discussing a number of disabilities.
- Managers are being targeted to attend disability awareness and reasonable adjustments workshops. The majority of the operational training instructors are attending these workshops in January to ensure any disability issues with new recruits are identified early and appropriately supported. We will also continue to provide bespoke development sessions around any DICE issue to include disclosure.
- People Support Services (PSS) have been working with managers to increase disclosure with teams, PSS and the DICE team are developing guidance notes for managers to assist them in having the conversation with their teams to encourage disclosure.
- Targeted communication was sent to all individuals and their line managers who had not declared their disability status. This was to encourage the line managers to have a discussion with their team members around the importance of understanding the diverse profile of our workforce.

3.11.2 We acknowledge that there is still further work that we need to do in encouraging individuals to declare their disability. We are continuing to focus in this area through working with departments and command areas through the business partners and DICE champions.

3.12 **Initiatives and Approach to Learning and Development**

3.12.1 We gauge the current attitudes and opinions of employees by considering the responses to employee engagement, for example the feedback from support groups such as Affinity, the Race Equality Forum and Strategic Enabling Team and communication visits.

3.12.2 We also use information gathered from exit questionnaires and feedback questionnaires. By identifying and understanding the perceptions and opinions of all West Midlands Fire Service employees, we can identify common misconceptions and challenge them in order to provide a shift towards an inclusive culture.

3.11.3 To date, the Service has carried out a range of employee engagement activities focussing on learning and development and inspiring people from minority groups to progress. These are as follows:-

3.12. **Personal Effectiveness Programme – ‘Reach for the Stars’**

‘Reach for the Stars’ is a comprehensive personal effectiveness programme which focuses on delivery through experiential learning. The programme has been designed in consultation with both women and BME employees as well as with senior managers. The course targets under represented groups within our workforce.

3.13 **Professional Effectiveness at Work**

The professional effectiveness programme is available to all employees who are looking to develop knowledge and skills, grow in their existing role or looking to take the first step on the career ladder, who are keen to develop confidence and increase their networking opportunities. The programme is targeted and has seen attendance from a diverse mix of candidates.

3.14 **Managing for Excellence**

This is a more tailored six month work based programme which aims to achieve a consistent approach in line with real operational challenges and in response to feedback from Investors in People; Operational Assessment and the Employee Opinion Survey. It offers optional university accreditation. Aimed towards middle and supervisory managers, we have seen a diverse mix of attendees with particularly good representation from women. A further programme will run in September 2015.

3.15 **Leading Excellence Programme**

Leading Excellence is an accredited work based leadership programme which leads to a foundation degree and further study to a BA (Hons) degree after four years. As well as meeting the specific needs of managers, it is also open to anyone in the organisation who is leading a team, project, or new initiative regardless of job role or level. In the last two years, there have been 30 employees (including 6 women and 3 BME delegates) who have attended the programme and whilst existing students' progress to the next year of study, invitations to apply for year one will soon be invited for the September 2015.

3.16 **Buddy Scheme**

The purpose of the buddy scheme is to deliberately place people together to allow both parties the opportunity to appreciate each others perceptions, views and ideas. Many benefits can be had by the Service through the buddy scheme. These include increasing retention rates among minority groups, increasing motivation and reducing absence rates, identifying, developing and nurturing talent, as well as improving organisational resilience.

3.17 **Work Based Coaching**

3.17.1 We have developed our approach to work based coaching and we are introducing an internal coaching pool. There are many benefits for both the Service and individuals by adopting coaching particularly when supporting members of staff with finding creative and innovative solutions to problems. Coaching will also improve working relationships encouraging individual feedback and upward communications. It will allow individuals to have a better understanding of how their role contributes to the organisational objectives, enabling people to be the best that they can be.

- 3.17.2 Through effective coaching individuals will have the opportunity to expand and grow and make the connection between workplace performance, personal development and their aspirations? Through the encouragement of open and meaningful feedback there will be a promotion of continuous development and a people centred approach to learning.

3.18 Employee Forums

The Service is continuing with its range of employee engagement initiatives, particularly targeting under represented groups through:-

- **Affinity** (previously We Are Women at West Midlands Fire Service).

Affinity supports women employees as well as addressing female issues at work. The group aims to provide professional development and progression, personal development and networking, as well as achieving tangible outcomes such as improving policy and facilities.

- **Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA)**

AFSA supports the professional development of AFSA members through engagement with the Service and through partnerships. AFSA offers buddying, networking and mentoring opportunities.

- **Race Equality Forum**

The Race Equality Forum is an employee network specifically aimed at BME groups. The group aims to identify and address race equality issues and focuses on professional development and progression as well as personal development and networking.

Race Equality Forum members are involved in task and finish groups specifically focusing on issues relating to development and progression, enabling and contributing, support through line managers, involving and engaging communities.

- **DICE Champions**

We are currently recruiting DICE Champions who will help influence attitudes and promote understanding of DICE issues across the organisation. DICE Champions will deliver awareness sessions on a range of issues including disability awareness, declaration of equality information and the impact of behaviours on others in the workplace. They will encourage debate, challenge myths and misperceptions and sign post employees to further sources of information.

4. **RETENTION and SUCCESSION PLANNING**

- 4.1 Using leaver data as well as exit questionnaires we can establish why people are leaving the organisation and the impact that employee turnover has on our organisation.
- 4.2 Succession planning is essential to the internal element of talent management and employee retention. Succession planning is essential in an economic downturn when it is more important than ever to know how to develop people to meet short and long term organisational critical issues.
- 4.3 We know that between 2015 and 2017 approximately 120 people are due to leave the service from operational roles around 13% of those will be black or minority ethnic (BME), this represents a significant drop in the number of BME people within our workforce and with no planned recruitment activity, will impact significantly on our ability to achieve our targets of representation. Using workforce planning data in this way will help us to recognise when and how to plan targeted positive action activity to support diversity based succession planning for the future.

5. **NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 In conjunction with the 12 month evaluation we will continue to provide ongoing learning, development programmes open to all employees but specifically targeting under representative groups. Whilst we will continue to engage with all minority groups and continue to create an inclusive and diverse workforce; we will, however, specifically prioritise the following minority groups with a

desire to deliver improved outcomes:-

- Progression of uniformed women to supervisory roles.
- Progression of uniformed BME to Supervisory and Middle Manager roles.
- Progression of non-uniformed BME and Women to Supervisory and Middle Manager roles.
- The percentage of employees who have disclosed their disability status.
- Support provided to employees with a disability within their role and to consider progression.

5.2 Medium term we will carry out on-going evaluation (detailed in Appendix 3) and continue to development of our strategic approach to positive action.

5.3 Long term – refine our approach to positive action based on the evaluation and feedback and ensure an effective delivery of the strategy.

6. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

This report and the equality objectives within it respond directly to the general and specific duties of the Equality Act 2010. The strategy considers the equality and diversity issues that are pertinent to the needs of the Service, prioritising those identified within the report with a view to considering other strands in the longer term.

7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Equality Act 2010.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

9. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Diversity Inclusion Cohesion Equality (Dice Report 2015)

Workforce Equality Profile 2015

An analysis of progress of quarterly performance against The Plan
quarter one 2015/16.

Scrutiny Committee – 15 June 2016

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Phil Loach

CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



People Support Services

Positive Action Strategic Approach

2015 / 16

Background

‘Despite the financial challenges facing the West Midlands Fire Service; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a key priority for us’.

We will ensure that West Midlands Fire Service has effective strategies embedded to support the Service in achieving DICE outcomes for our diverse communities and workforce and to ensure that our workforce is representative of the community that we serve.

Under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, West Midlands Fire Service have a public sector duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and promote different groups working together.

We recognise that the Service is currently underrepresented of Black and Minority Ethnic people, People with Disabilities and women in uniformed roles. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people are also underrepresented in both uniformed and non-uniform roles.

Workforce Equality Profile

Understanding of the make-up of our workforce remains a priority. Our workforce planning systems consistently drive our positive action activity in terms of addressing the balance of our demographic profile and representation at all levels. Our Strategic Outcomes are outlined in the table below

Our Approach and Objectives

Our approach to Positive Action outlines a continuous development approach based on an ongoing 12 monthly evaluation, which will inform our Positive Action Planning and will allow us to focus, then re-focus our priority areas.

Our progress and success will be monitored through our performance framework and intelligence/feedback through internal groups such as Affinity and the Race equality forum and ongoing external engagement with local communities.

| In achieving our Positive action Strategy our priorities are aligned to our DICE Outcomes and Excellence Framework. | |
|---|---|
| 1 | We will ensure that we tackle any barriers to communication development, inclusion and progression. |
| 2 | We will ensure that all of our employees are treated with dignity and respect at all levels regardless of their differences. |
| 3 | We will promote positive action initiatives to specifically engage employees from under representative groups to engage with organisational development as well as their own development. |
| 4 | In a climate of austerity; the Service is taking a longer term approach to recruitment by positively influencing the perceptions of people from under representative communities to consider WMFS as an employer of choice and to consider operational roles as careers through our community engagement. |
| 5 | Objectives will be delivered through future activities coordinated by People Support Services and DICE; building upon an annual plan of action to evaluate past initiatives and create an evidence based approach to delivering outcomes. |

See attached. (Workforce Profile (1.6.5))

APPENDIX 3

| WMFS Positive Action Strategy 2015 – 2016 | | |
|---|-------------------|--|
| Activity | Time Frame | Key Stakeholders |
| Gather evidence and information. | 3 Months | People Support Services, DICE, Workforce Planning Strategic Hub, Learning and Development, external providers. |
| Engage with internal and external partners including Fire Authority Members, gather intelligence and feedback. | 6 Months | People Support Services, Affinity, AFSA, Race Equality Forum, Fire Authority Members and external Community Groups. West Midlands Fire Service staff. |
| Produce a Positive Action Strategy which is linked to our Equality objectives | 12 Months | Feed back to Fire Authority, DICE, Strategic Enabling Team and West Midlands Fire Service Staff. |