

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 MARCH 2015

**1. DIVERSITY INCLUSION COHESION EQUALITY (DICE) REPORT
COVERING THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 2014 TO MARCH 2015**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the content of the Equality Workforce Profile Report (Appendix A) published on 31 January 2015, as required under the Specific duties of the Equality Act (2010) be noted.
- 1.2 THAT consideration is given to migrating the working arrangements from the old to the new FRS Equality and Diversity Excellence framework.
- 1.3 THAT consideration is given to the performance around our current Equality Objectives and themes of the FRS Equality Excellence Framework, which demonstrate the progress that the Service is making through a specific focus in this report around the gaps identified.
- 1.4 THAT the key performance outcomes for 'positive action' in the recruitment process that was undertaken in December 2014 be considered.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 As a public sector authority the West Midlands Fire Service is required to consider the implementation of the Public Sector General and Specific Equality duties, under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2 In particular, as a public authority we are required to deliver the implementation of the General duty, which involves:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
 - b. to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share

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- a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 2.3 The Workforce Equality Profile report meets the Service's statutory requirement to publish equality data on an annual basis, as set out in the Specific duties of the Equality Act (2010).
- 2.4 The Service has a statutory requirement to publish Equality Objectives and monitor progress against these. These were published in a report *called "Equality and Diversity Report and Objectives 2012-2015"*.
- 2.5 As part of our approach to meet the Equality Objectives and the Public sector duty, the Service is working towards the 'Excellence' level of the FRS Equality Framework.
- 2.6 This report provides an overview of progress towards achieving the above. In particular, focusing on previously identified and current emerging issues; alongside approaches being undertaken to address these.
3. **BACKGROUND: PROGRESS AGAINST THE EXCELLENCE LEVEL OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE SECTOR EQUALITY FRAMEWORK**
- 3.1 West Midlands Fire Service had undertaken a Local Government Association (LGA) peer review in 2009 and was awarded the 'Achieving' level of the Equality Standard. The key themes of the Excellence FRS Equality Framework 2012, as agreed by the local Government Association and the Chief Fire Officers Association are:
- i. knowing your communities.
 - ii. leadership, partnership and service commitment.
 - iii. community engagement and satisfaction.
 - iv. responsive services.
 - v. a skilled and committed workforce.
- 3.2 The Equality Framework uses a simple scoring method to support Services to prepare for the Excellence Peer Assessment by first submitting a self assessment report. The key scoring levels for which are detailed in the table below:

<i>Scoring Criteria</i>	<i>Scoring level</i>
not in place	1
currently being established	2
in place but needs improving	3
in place and effective	4

- 3.3 In order to achieve the Excellence status, the Service needs to aim for a scoring of 4, “in place and effective” strategies that demonstrate ‘equality outcomes’ against the criteria detailed under each of the key themes.
- 3.4 Our current scoring against the Excellence level of the FRS Equality and Diversity framework is unchanged since August 2014, as detailed below:

FRS Equality framework strategic theme	Scoring in January 2014	Scoring in August 2014
‘Knowing your Communities and our Leadership’	3	3
Leadership, partnership and service commitment	3	3
Community engagement and satisfaction	2	2
Responsive services	2	2
A skilled and committed workforce	2	3

- 3.5 As the FRS Equality and Diversity framework has been changed the DICE team will support the Service in migrating from the old to new over the next two quarters of 2015.

4. **KEY STRATEGIC ONGOING AND EMERGING TRENDS
BETWEEN THE PERIOD OF JULY 2007 AND AS AT OCTOBER
2014**

- 4.1 The equality workforce profile statistics below provides trend data that covers the period between July 2007 and October 2014. With the exception of the race equality data due to the more detailed analysis undertaken as at September 2014.
- 4.2 The definitions used for Strategic, Middle and Supervisory managers reflect the National Joint Council role map for Operational staff. For Support staff the analysis is based on pay and grading; therefore it does not reflect the current role of support staff that are part of the Strategic Enabling Team. The report highlights these areas within.

COMMUNITY

- 4.3 A low level of engagement and involvement with communities in *shaping services, consultation and engagement*.
- 4.4 A lack of evidence of engagement that is proportionately representative of our communities.
- 4.5 A lack of evidence of awareness amongst the public of our broader prevention, protection agenda and the value that these areas of work provide to local communities.

DICE OUTCOMES

- 4.6 To move from good to excellence there needs to be an increased review and monitoring of approaches to assess whether equality outcomes are being achieved or are likely to be achieved. As DICE work often relies on changing behaviours and actions, evaluation techniques need to be built in Service planning so that initiatives are contributing effectively to equality outcomes.

GENDER

Operational employees

- 4.7 In the last seven years the number of female firefighters has increased from 4% to 6%. However, this increase is more than likely due to the reduction of male firefighters in the same period, (from

1198 male firefighters in 2007/2008 to 993 in October 2014). It must also be recognised that there was a recruitment freeze during three years of this timeframe.

- 4.8 At supervisory level we have 11 operational females. There has been an increase from 1% to 2% with 2 female firefighters joining supervisory level since 2007 and one Watch Commander leaving. Whilst the level of increase has been low, we need to also consider that the organisation has lost 136 male Crew and Watch managers during this period; with this in mind the retention of female firefighters has been sustainable.
- 4.9 Between 2007 and 2013, we had one operational female at middle manager level, who then moved to Strategic management in 2013. In 2014, we saw two more female middle managers being appointed; this progress can be directly correlated to the organisational change in climate supported by the many positive action initiatives.

Support employees

- 4.10 The gender equality issues in support staff are complex. The number of females in support services has reduced to a more equal level between men and women. Of the 54% of female support staff, 62% are in the lowest paid roles. Of the 46% male staff, only 24% of men are in low paid roles, 76% men are in management positions.
- 4.11 Only 4% of support staff females are in middle or strategic management positions. With reference to 4.2 above, these figures do not include the two support staff female members who are serving on the Strategic Enabling Team. This may suggest that there are barriers for women in both uniform and non-uniformed roles when considering progression.
- 4.12 There are also concerns of retention of women in support services. In the last seven years, there are 122 less women compared to only 4 less male employees in support roles.

DISABILITY

- 4.13 28.9% of all employees have not declared their disability status.
- 4.14 The percentage of employees with a disability has reduced from 3.11% in 2013, to 2.93% in 2014.
- 4.15 On a positive note, of the employees that have declared a disability, they are well represented and even over represented at different levels of management, suggesting the change in climate around declaring a disability.

RACE

- 4.16 The representation of Black Minority Ethnic (BME), within the population across West Midlands is at 34%; of which 18% are Asian, 6% are Black, 4% White other; 3% are Mixed Race and 1% are Other ethnic group (Census 2011).

Operational employees (as at Sept 2014)

- 4.17 Of the 1044 firefighters, we have 102 (9%) that are Black Minority Ethnic. With the recent recruitment, this figure has increased to 13% BME.
- 4.18 As at September 2014, at Crew Commander level, 14 (5.5%) out of 254 employees are from Black minority ethnic background; of which, 1% White Irish, 4% White Other, 2% Mixed Race, 2% Black Caribbean 0.4% B/African and 1% Other. Note that there are no Asian Crew Commanders, despite this being our largest BME community in the West Midlands at 18%, similarly there is a under representation of Black employees, when their representation in the community is 6% of the West Midlands.
- 4.19 At Watch Commander level, we have 12 (5%) out of 250 officers who are BME. These include 1% White Irish, 4% White Other, 2% Mixed White/Black, 1% Asian Indian, 2% Black Caribbean, 1% Black Other, 1% Not stated and 1% Other.
- 4.20 At Station Commander level, we have 1 Black Caribbean out of 42 officers. At Group Commander level, we have 1 Mixed White/Black Caribbean out of 14 White officers.

- 4.21 At Strategic management levels we have no Operational BME officers.

Support employees

- 4.22 Our largest representation of BME staff are in the lowest paid roles, with 39 (19%) out of 202 employees.
- 4.23 At Supervisory level we have 30 (14%) BME employees out of 215. These include 80% White British, 1% White Irish, 3% White Irish, 1% Mixed W/ B Caribbean, 1% Mixed White other, 1% Mixed White/Asian, 6% Asian Indian, 1% Asian Pakistan, 1% Asian Other, 3% Black Caribbean, 1% Other, 1% Not stated.
- 4.24 At Middle Management level 3 (33%) out of 19 managers are BME. This includes 83% White British, 4% Mixed Other, 9% Asian Indian and 4% Not stated.
- 4.25 At Strategic management levels we have 1 out of 12 BME staff, of which 92% White British and 8% Asian Indian. As detailed in 4.2 above, these figures do not reflect the current Strategic Enabling Team ethnicity profile which also includes two BME employees (1 Asian and 1 mixed White/Asian).

MATERNITY AND FAMILY FRIENDLY APPROACHES

- 4.26 The majority of our female employees are between the ages of 20–59; which reflects the age profile of women who can choose to have children. Although we are currently researching this data further, through discussions with female FireFighters childcare has been identified as a key reason for not aspiring towards progression. It is also felt that the current arrangements around maternity are not supporting the retention of female firefighters.

LGBT/TRANSGENDER

- 4.27 LGBT employees have previously not endorsed the Service's campaigns directed through Stonewall. There have also been lukewarm responses to any meetings or gatherings, even when the Service has offered to hold these externally. Therefore the Service needs to look at different ways of engaging with these employees and communities.

OTHER DICE CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.28 Policies and procedures need to be actively implemented for them to have a real impact on culture as stated within the Investors in People Report (2013).
- 4.29 To support this work the DICE team and managers need to work together to develop a more sophisticated understanding of our internal and external DICE issues so that there is confidence in engagement and achieving equality outcomes across all protected characteristics.
- 4.30 The leadership and support of the Scrutiny committee needs to continue to provide the existing level of encouragement and challenge to move the DICE agenda forward.

5. PROGRESS BEING MADE AGAINST THE ABOVE GAPS

COMMUNITY

- 5.1 The DICE team, together with the Communications and Principle Officer Support Teams, has launched a 'Community Members Scheme'. The purpose of the Scheme is to engage, a proportionality representative cross section of our communities, in the work of WMFS. In particular, to encourage participation in consultation, shaping of services and raising awareness the profile of our Prevention and Protection work.
- 5.2 The Service has recently carried out a large public engagement campaign around showcasing our work to reduce health inequalities through the endorsement of the Marmot Principles and *the 'improving lives to save lives'* campaign. A media campaign that includes social media, posters on bus shelters and targeted awareness raising has been undertaken.
- 5.3 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, Noor TV to engage our minority communities. To develop this work further we now intend to develop key community relations with minority business leaders and public and third sector organisations.

DICE OUTCOMES

- 5.4 The Resourcing Manager and DICE manager are currently working together to review the approach towards 'positive action' through developing further a 'Positive Action Strategy'. This strategy will look at the representation of female and minority communities within our workforce but will also seek to address actions around future recruitment and progression based on our workforce planning.
- 5.5 The current *Inclusion and Cohesion* positive action work streams that target females and minority groups include:
- a. Recruitment through Positive Action Officers
 - b. 'Reaching for the Stars' - a personal effectiveness course
 - c. 'Be Effective' – a professional effectiveness course
 - d. The Buddy Scheme
 - e. The development of DICE Champions
 - f. The Leading Excellence Programme
- 5.6 The evaluation of how successful these courses are in targeting, retaining and delivering a positive experience has been provided in the Scrutiny report from DICE in 2014, although some of the above areas need further analysis.
- 5.7 The Service has adopted the principles of the Living Wage and therefore will increase the pay for all those below the living wage as at 1 April 2015. These roles include the cooks and cleaners and administration staff. The profile of many of these employees is female and BME, therefore this will be a positive step towards valuing their contribution on behalf of the Service.

GENDER

- 5.8 The Service's Women's group has recently expanded to be inclusive of men and branded itself from previously, 'We are Women @ WMFS' to '*Affinity*'. The Service is currently supporting the group to develop sustainable structures and working approaches so that the group has greater impact. The group has delivered around a range of positive work in the last year as detailed in the Scrutiny report in September 2014.

DISABILITY

- 5.9 The Dyslexia stakeholder group working with the DICE team produced a Dyslexia Awareness video featuring our employees and their experiences in managing their disability. Since the publishing of the video we have had both a positive response internally and externally with approximately 3500 hits on You Tube and internally we have had a 200% increase in dyslexia referrals. The video is also being used to support an increase in the number of employees declaring their disability.
- 5.10 A disability awareness campaign is being launched in April 2015, which focuses on providing information around how employees with a disability can access support and information to encourage declaration of their status.
- 5.11 We are supplementing the awareness campaigns with Dyslexia champions, who have already started to offer support and advice to fellow dyslexics on an informal basis this will continue to raise awareness and confidence, and a Dyslexia Alfresco page is being set together with a guidance framework for dyslexia and learning difficulties which has been produced and published.
- 5.12 Managers are being targeted to attend disability awareness and reasonable adjustments workshops. The majority of the Operational Training Instructors attended these workshops in January, to ensure any disability issues with new recruits are identified early and appropriately supported.
- 5.13 We will also continue to provide bespoke development sessions around any DICE issue to include disclosure. People Support Services (PSS) will be 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.
- 5.14 The issue of disclosure will also be a key priority of the DICE champions when they become active and start delivering awareness sessions in watches and teams in March 2015. They will also be providing support regarding positive action and behaviours.

- 5.15 Implementation of Read/Write gold dyslexia support software is progressing and has already received much praise for enabling employees with dyslexia to work more effectively.

RACE

- 5.16 Following some internal research around Race Equality issues, the DICE team launched the first WMFS Race Equality Forum in January 2015, with the support of the Chief Fire Officer and ACO Operations as key enablers.
- 5.17 Approximately 100 people attended of whom 90% were from BME backgrounds. The event was positively received and the outcomes of which identified and prioritised the issues impacting BME staff. The DICE Team will now move forward by facilitating four task and finish groups from the race equality forum members. These will focus on progressing issues specific to:
- development and progression
 - enabling and contributing
 - support through line managers
 - involving and engaging communities
- 5.18 Task and finish groups will engage with key stakeholders internally and externally to move the agenda forward; they will engage with the Strategic Enabling Team and will report back through another Race Equality Forum conference in 12 months.
- 5.19 The DICE team are working with other Service teams to provide the understanding around the range of different Black Minority Ethnic communities living within the West Midlands so that this understanding is translated into work streams through a co-ordinated and consistent approach.

MATERNITY AND FAMILY FRIENDLY APPROACHES

- 5.20 Members of Affinity are reviewing the management of maternity issues and will be sharing a report in due course with their findings, which includes comparative data with other Fire and Rescue Services and other public services.

LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL TRANSGENDER (LGBT)/ TRANSSEXUAL

- 5.21 The Service continues to support PRIDE each year through coordinating our involvement with the event. We will address issues of attitudes and behaviours through the work of the DICE champions visiting sections and watches to raise awareness.

OTHER DICE CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.22 The Services DICE strategy provides clarity and a unified approach of the Services commitment and direction to Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality (DICE). To improve our performance against The Plan, in delivering services that meet the needs of our diverse communities. This brings together our various diversity, inclusion, cohesion and equality, strategies and approaches.
- 5.23 The DICE Strategy also provides direction on how best to synergise, simplify and provide leadership in the management of these; in an environment where we are financially challenged and need to demonstrate innovation, creativity, agility and value for money. This strategy clearly outlines the key areas of Service Delivery and Service Support that need to demonstrate DICE outcomes for our communities.
- 5.24 In addition, the DICE team have planned a range of awareness activities to develop the understanding of our staff with regard to the shift from previously Equality and Diversity to now also to include Cohesion and Inclusion. This will be delivered through online awareness alongside working with Authority members, management briefings and the DICE Champions.
- 5.24 The Authorities Scrutiny Committee have played a pivotal role in supporting the DICE agenda by demonstrating leadership through their contribution which has included the Scrutiny meetings and attending DICE events.

6. RECENT RECRUITMENT

- 6.1 The graph below provides the outcomes of the recent recruitment procedure and comparison with the recruitment process in 2013.

- 6.2 The data shows an increase in the number of female applicants at 9.9% in 2013 to 11.2% in 2014.
- 6.3 In 2013 we had 15.2% BME candidates, which slightly increased to 15.4% in 2014.

	2014 Recruitment	2013 Recruitment
Female applications	552 (11.2%)	711 (9.9%)
Females Finished application	364 (9.9%)	
Females invited to physical tests	29 (9.4%)	40 (9.0%)
Females Successful		12 (11.2%)
BME applications	15.4%	15.2%
BME Finished application	15.4%	
BME invited to physical tests	40 (13%)	21 (4.7%)
BME Successful		8 (7.5%)
BME predicted retirements 2015/16	10	

7. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

This report and the equality analysis within it responds directly to the General and Specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 and considers the Equality and Diversity issues that are pertinent to the needs of the Service. In doing so, a range of equality data has been analysed and considered with regard to all the protected characteristics.

8. **RISK IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The Objectives identified within the report support the organisation in mitigating its risk with regard to claims of unlawful discrimination and unfair dismissal.

9. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The report responds to our requirements under the Equality Act 2010; Public Sector Equality Duties 2011. The Equality Objectives 2012 – 2015 further advance our compliance with the General Duty and Specific Duties. The Objectives also support the organisation with better response to employment and service delivery legislative requirements.

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10. **TRADE UNION CONSULTATION**

Consultation is not required.

11. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of producing the Equality and Diversity report and objectives for 2012-2015 would be accommodated within the existing budget provision. The estimated cost of £80k for the adoption of the principles of the Living Wage was incorporated within the Authority's overall 2015/16 budget setting arrangements.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

WMFS 2012, "Equality and Diversity Report and Objectives 2012-2015".

Quick Start Guide: Public Sector Equality Duty

Quick Start Guide: Specific duties

Scrutiny Authority report on Diversity Inclusion Cohesion Equality (DICE) 2014.

WMFS DICE Statement

WMFS DICE Strategy as at December 2014.

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