

FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of policy/activity/project

Cradley Heath and Halesowen Fire Station project.

Is this a new or an existing policy/activity/project?

This project started in 2008. In 2009 the Fire Authority approved the merger of two fire stations into one at a new facility. The project has been amended so that in addition to the merger the number of fire appliances at the new facility has been reduced from two to one.

Scope/timescales for project or activity (including review date)

1st March 2012.

Department/Directorate

Operations.

Policy/project lead

Chris Martin.

Author of EIA

Chris Martin.

STAGE 1 – AIMS

What are the aims of the activity or policy?

- To merge Cradley Heath and Halesowen Fire Stations.
- To reduce the number of fire appliances from two to one.
- To provide a new facility in the Cradley Heath area.

What are your outcomes (what is it that you hope to achieve)?

- All people residing in the areas of Cradley Heath and Halesowen continue to receive a proportional and appropriate level of service from West Midlands Fire Service.
- All personnel whose jobs are affected by the proposal are fairly selected for Re-organisation, Relocation or Redundancy using the agreed protocols of the Service

STAGE 2 – DATA COLLECTION

For each of the protected characteristics listed below, provide data to evidence that you have researched the possible impact of your policy on WMFS staff and/or the community. (Please refer to guidance notes on sources of data). Your data collection must be **robust**. Further help and advice from the Equality and Diversity team is available:-

Ethnicity (including race, national or ethnic identity)

WMFS Staff*White British = 60**Black or Black British Caribbean = 1**Mixed White and Asian = 1*Halesowen Community*BME average over the five wards is 6.6%*Cradley Heath Community*BME average over the three wards is 8.3%*

Gender (including transgender)

WMFS Staff*Male 56 Female 6*Halesowen Community*Male 29' 817 Female 31'092*Cradley Heath Community*Male 18,275 Female 19,405*

In completing this Equality Impact Assessment we have been unable to identify the numbers of people who are classed as transgender either for our own staff or in the community.

Disability

WMFS Staff*Yes = 3 No = 27 Not stated = 31 Prefer not to say = 1*Long term illness Halesowen*23.9%*Long term illness Cradley Heath*20.4%*

Religion and Belief

WMFS Staff*Christian 8 Other 1 Prefer not to say 2 Not stated 49 None 2*Communities*Halesowen across 5 wards and Cradley Heath across 3 wards*

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Halesowen</u>	<u>Cradley Heath</u>
Christian	46641	26546
Buddhist	82	53
Hindu	199	187
Jewish	14	18
Muslim	2050	1213
Sikh	617	454
Other	95	47
No religion	6995	4228
Not Stated	4237	2967

Age

WMFS Staff Male 16-25 = **3** 26-34 = **14** 35-44 = **21** 45-54 = **18** 55-65 = **0**

Female 16-25 = **0** 26-34 = **1** 35-44 = **1** 45-54 = **0** 55-65 = **4**

Halesowen Community Population across 5 wards is 60,909.

Aged over 60 years old 13,596

Cradley Community Population across 3 wards is 37,681.

Aged over 65 years old 7,644

Sexual Orientation

WMFS Staff Heterosexual = 12 Prefer not to say = 3 Not stated = 47

In completing this Equality Impact Assessment we have been unable to identify the sexual orientation of people in the communities of Halesowen and Cradley Heath.

Maternity/Paternity

There are no employees currently on Maternity or Paternity leave.

STAGE 3 – ASSESS AND ANALYSE IMPACT

Having gathered sufficient data you now need to analyse any potential or real impact.

Who benefits?

- The communities of Cradley Heath and Halesowen will continue to receive an effective and responsive Fire Service.
- These changes will provide help make West Midlands Fire Service more efficient in carrying out its duties.
- The staff that work from the new facility will have the benefit of a new modern working environment that takes into account the needs of all of our staff and members of the community
- The community will benefit from a new facility that will be open and welcoming and will provide a facility the community can use without any of the barriers created by a traditional fire station.

Who doesn't benefit and why not?

There will be an impact on some of the staff who works for west Midlands Fire Service. These people will be treated fairly through the application of the Authority's Re-organisation, Redeployment and Redundancy policy.

Who should be expected to benefit and why don't they?

There are no single groups of people who are expected to benefit from this proposal that will not. The policy decision will maintain an equal standard of service irrespective of any of the protected characteristics.

**Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation by different groups?
(If this is a new function how are you going to gather data on this and when do you plan to review it?)**

Our protected characteristics groups in the Halesowen and Cradley Heath area are as follows:-

- Age
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity (single parents)

These protected characteristic groups are considered High Risk groups in Halesowen and Cradley Heath areas and are therefore pro-actively targeted as part of our PBA work. The plans used (level 3 plans) for crews to deliver "safety in the home" to communities uses close liaison with partner agencies and voluntary sector, to identify elderly and vulnerable people who can then be provided with home safety checks and smoke alarms by the Fire Service when required.

The following protected characteristic groups are **not** considered High Risk groups in Halesowen and Cradley Heath area:-

- Gender Re-assignment
- Marriage and Civil partnership
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Services to these groups are in the following ways:-

- By direct contact with Fire Service by phone or visit.
- By Fire Service liaison with partner agency
- By use of softer resources available to Fire service such as language line, or referral to council departments.

If there is a greater impact on one group, is that appropriate and consistent with the policy's objectives?

The West Midlands Fire Authority will deliver its services effectively and consistently to all members of the community. Care will be taken to ensure that issues such as language barriers, religious beliefs and other issues are considered whilst our services are delivered.

The impact across the communities of Cradley Heath and Halesowen by moving from two appliances to one will be the provision of a better value for money service. There will be a reduction in Fire Service resources in the community. However, there will be no adverse impact on any specific personal characteristic group within the Halesowen and Cradley Heath areas.

Could any part of the activity discriminate unlawfully?

For the communities of Halesowen and Cradley Heath we have a statutory duty to provide Fire Services to those communities. Our attendance time criteria are established to ensure we can meet our emergency responses effectively and efficiently. We are introducing new arrangements into the Halesowen area to ensure that the public have easy access to us for Fire Safety advice and safety education. Internally, all staff affected by this policy will be treated fairly in accordance with the Re-organisation, Redeployment and Redundancy policy.

Does the policy/activity meet the communities varied needs?
(If yes, detail how.)

The Authority will continue to provide a Fire and Rescue Service to the community that is proportional and meets the community's needs. Whilst this response will be provided with fewer resources there will be no adverse impact on any one section of the community. The Authority will continue to target vulnerable people with its prevention based activities in line with its Community Safety Strategy.

Does the policy/activity support WMFS in fulfilling its general or specific duties under the Equality Act 2010?

The implementation of this policy does not compromise the way the Service complies with its specific duties under the above legislation.

STAGE 4 – ADDRESS ISSUES/REDUCE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Prevention Based Activity

The reduction in the total number of appliances from 2 to 1 as a result of this policy will have an impact upon how we deliver our Prevention Based Activities. Last year there were 705 smoke alarms fitted by Halesowen and 824 by Cradley Heath, a total of 1529. There are 11 key stage 2 schools in Cradley Heath and 15 in Halesowen. With a reduction in the number of appliances and crews in the area, alternative methods of carrying out this level of work have been devised. These methods all involve neighbouring fire stations and a possible drop in centre in Halesowen for the public to request a visit. The Authority will continue to target its resources to vulnerable groups.

Emergency Response Times

There will be a slight reduction in emergency response times in some areas, however due to the low risk from fire in the area this reduction is justified. The reduction will not impact adversely on any one of the groups that are classed as having protected characteristics.

Impact on staff whose jobs will be disestablished

All staff affected by these proposals will be treated fairly in accordance with the Service's Re-organisation, Redeployment and Redundancy policy. No one group will be disadvantaged by the implementation of this policy. The Service will take into account:-

- Identifying volunteers who wish to move locations
- Personnel on temp promotions at Halesowen and Cradley Heath to be reverted or repositioned
- Personnel from Cradley Heath and Halesowen who are working at other locations, e.g. performing temporary promotion.
- Actively seeking potential retiring personnel from Halesowen and Cradley Heath stations

STAGE 5 – FINDINGS, COMMUNICATION REVIEW AND MONITORING

You should now be ready to make an **informed** judgement about the impact of your policy/activity. Please select and complete the **single** most appropriate section below:-

No major change needed

How does your analysis support this conclusion?

The analysis of the policy shows that the impact of removing one of the fire appliances from the Cradley Heath and Halesowen areas will not have a direct impact in either operational response, or prevention based activity on any of the groups in the community that have protected characteristics. By consistently applying the Services policy for Re-organisation, Redeployment and Redundancy all staff will be treated equally irrespective of their characteristics.

What are your monitoring/review arrangements?

The policy change will be subject to a specific internal review which will be completed six months after the policy has gone live.

There will be close monitoring of implementation of the Re-organisation, Redeployment and Redundancy process when instigated to ensure full compliance.

The Service will continue to monitor incident data, demographics of the area and mosaic profiles, to ensure any changes are highlighted quickly and effectively. This process is completed for the whole of the area served by the Authority and will inform its current and future plans.

Adjust the policy/activity

What is your evidence for the need to adjust the policy/activity?

There is no evidence that the policy requires adjusting.

How are you planning to adjust the policy to reduce potential impact?
What are your timescales on this?

On the basis of the existing evidence there are no plans to adjust the policy.

What are your monitoring/review arrangements?

As detailed above.

Continue the policy/activity (despite potential or actual adverse impact)

What are your justifications for continuing policy/activity despite potential or actual adverse impacts?

There are no potential adverse impacts. The justifications for the implementation of the policy are set out above.

What are your monitoring/review arrangements?

As detailed above.

Stop and remove the policy/activity

What is your justification for this? What potentially unlawful discrimination has your analysis indicated?

There is no potentially unlawful discrimination through the implementation of this policy. The justifications for the implementation of the policy are set out above.

What is your next step? Is the policy/activity still needed? If still needed what is going to replace it and when?

The policy is needed and the equality impact assessment has not identified any reason to replace it.