

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

Scrutiny Committee

You are summoned to attend the meeting of Scrutiny Committee to be held on
Monday, 04 June 2018 at 12:30

at Fire Service HQ, 99 Vauxhall Road, Nechells, Birmingham B7 4HW

for the purpose of transacting the following business:

Agenda – Public Session

1	To receive apologies for absence (if any)	
2	Declarations of interests	
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Distribution:

David Barrie - Member, Greg Brackenridge - Member, Peter Hogarth - Member, Peter Male - Member, Catherine Miks - Member, Sybil Spence - Member, Chris Tranter - Chairman, Ann Young - Member

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This agenda and supporting documents are also available electronically on the West Midlands Fire Service website at www.wmfs.net

26 March 2018 at 10:30 p.m.
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Tranter (Chair),
Councillors Barrie, Brackenridge, Hogarth, Male, Miks,
Spence

Apologies:

Councillor Young

Observer:

Nil

05/18 **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

06/18 **Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 26 February 2018**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2018, be approved as a correct record.

07/18 **Update on Data Sharing**

Martina Doolan, Data Manager, Data Management provided an overview of the report:

The report provided an update to Members on the progress made in addressing the recommendations arising from the Data Sharing Review (detailed within the Action Plan – Appendix 1).

The Action Plan had been completed with the exception of one outstanding piece of work. This was the audit which was to be

conducted six months after the implementation of the Management of Information Standing Order.

In answer to Members' questions, the following points were raised:

- The European Union General Data Protection Regulation (EU GDPR) was being absorbed into common law / legislation and there would be a need to abide to the regulations following Brexit.
- In addressing the main actions identified, it had been agreed that a further audit would be conducted to establish if the Management of Information Standing Order was being adhered to. The audit was due to be conducted six months after the implementation of the standing order. However, with the proposed implementation of the EU GDPR, it was considered that to conduct a review currently would be counterproductive as a full review of policies, procedures, advice and guidance would take place during the preparation period prior to the launch of the EU GDPR in May 2018. As a result, monitoring had been put in place in the meantime.
- It was agreed that the Data Sharing Review was to be approved with the caveat that an update be provided to the Committee regarding the outstanding piece of work in the Action Plan.

The Committee noted the direction of travel in implementing the recommendations made following the review of data sharing.

Resolved that the closedown of the Data Sharing Review, but with one outstanding ongoing piece of work be approved.

Resolved that an update on the outstanding piece of work in the Data Sharing Review (the audit of the Management of Information Standing Order) be reported to the Committee at a future meeting (provisionally September 2018).

08/18 **Dispute Resolution Report**

Helen Sherlock, Senior Business Partner, People Support Services, provided an overview of the report:

The report covered the period 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2017. Six grievances had been received, all of which had been appealed and none upheld.

Three grievances were lodged due to the removal of Continued Professional Development (CPD) payment. This was because under the national agreement there was no appeal process regarding the CDP process. Therefore, the grievance procedure was instigated to appeal issues regarding CDP.

There had been eight disciplinary cases during the period. The details of the eight cases were detailed within the report.

The Committee noted the contents of the dispute resolution report for the period 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2017.

Resolved that the contents of the dispute resolution report are submitted to the Joint Consultative Panel.

09/18 **Operational Assessment Improvement Register**

Karen Gowreesunker, Clerk to the Authority and Strategic Enabler of Strategic Hub, provided an overview of the report:

The report represented the second update to the Committee of progress against the areas for consideration (the first update having been submitted to the Committee at the October 2017 meeting).

Of the 36 areas for consideration within the Improvement Register:

- 18 areas for consideration required no further action prior to the October 2017 meeting of the Scrutiny Committee and were classed as complete for the purposes of the Improvement Register.

- Five areas for consideration had been addressed since the October Scrutiny Committee and had been classed as completed, requiring no further action for the purposes of the Improvement Register.
- Work was ongoing against 15 areas for consideration. Progress made in these areas was as expected and on target.
- No areas for consideration had been classed as off target.

The Committee noted the progress made in addressing the areas for consideration detailed within the Operational Assessment Improvement Register.

10/18 **Safeside – Update on Transport Funding**

Gary Taylor, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, provided an overview of the report:

The report provided an update for Members on progress of actions regarding transport funding for schools following the update provided previously to the Committee in February 2017.

The update in February 2017 had reported that schools outside of Birmingham were struggling to cover transport costs to and from Safeside. As a result, the Service had provided funding support for schools. This had been achieved by utilising approximately £30k from an underspend in the prevention budget, resulting in 41 schools visiting Safeside. However, the approach taken was not necessarily sustainable over the long term.

To address this, Safeside had linked in with social value, and restructured its budgets as the number of schools visiting the facility increased, which had led to Safeside being close to self-funding. As a result, the £30k support had decreased to approximately £21k which was kept as a pump priming mechanism.

In answer to members' questions, the following points were raised:

- The Service had held a procurement exercise to identify a transport provider.
- Further communications regarding the Safeside facility within the Coventry area could be of benefit. Local support from Members would be appreciated.

- Safeside targeted schools via a work programme based on deprivation, and did present a number of challenges.
- Primary schools were targeted by Safeside unless there were specific needs raised regarding a school.

Members noted the update on the progress of actions relating to the Safeside update and transport funding.

11/18 **Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2017/18 – March 2018**

Progress against the work programme was noted by the Committee.

Gary Taylor, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, suggested that consideration should be given to forthcoming scrutiny reviews, in particular reviews of policies before they were implemented.

Work on the transitional change to the Reformed Fire Authority was progressing and a review of the committee structures would be submitted at the Annual General Meeting of the Authority in June 2018. A review of the transitional change could take place approximately six months following the implementation of the Reformed Fire Authority and this could be undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee or independently (with the report shared with the Committee).

Councillor Tranter would meet with Stephen Timmington, Support Officer, Strategic Hub, to consider and produce the annual report of the Scrutiny Committee which was due to be submitted at the June meeting of the Committee.

Meeting ended at 13.28 hours

Contact Officer: Stephen Timmington Strategic Hub West Midlands Fire Service 0121 380 6680
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WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JUNE 2018

1. **SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SAFEGUARDING**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

1.1 THAT the Committee considers and approves the attached scoping document for the review of safeguarding (Appendix 1).

1.2 THAT, subject to 1.1 above, the Committee establishes a working group to take forward the review of safeguarding.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The Committee is asked to give consideration to the subject of its next scrutiny review and the attached scoping document (Appendix 1), with a view to initiating a review of safeguarding, and the establishment of a working group.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The terms of reference for Scrutiny Committee state that it will carry out a maximum of two scrutiny reviews per annum. Such reviews will be member-led and evidence based and will produce SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) recommendations to the Fire Authority.

3.2 West Midlands Fire Service has a duty to safeguard our communities during our prevention, protection and response duties. The Service also has a duty to safeguard its employees where relevant. As a provider of services to adults with care and support needs, through the alternatively funded services, the contracts also require the Service to be compliant with the relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance

3.3. Recent self-assessments requested via Safeguarding Adults

and Children's Boards and a multi-agency review following a prohibition of a large premise housing families have highlighted some initial areas for improvement in compliance with policy, process and practice. It has therefore been suggested that the Scrutiny Committee may wish to undertake a review of the appropriate SET member ownership and effectiveness of safeguarding policy, procedures and practice.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. This report is responding directly to the services duty to safeguard children, young people and adults with care and support needs under the Care Act 2014 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The course of action recommended in this report does not raise any issues which should be drawn to the attention of the monitoring officer.

The recommendations outlined in this report will assist the Service under its duties in the Care Act 2014 and in meeting its alternatively funded contractual arrangements.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report. However, if a decision is taken to use an external provider during the course of the review, any financial costs will be met from within existing budgets.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

The contact name for this report is Gary Taylor (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) telephone number 0212 380 6006

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APPENDIX 1

Scrutiny Committee – Review Scoping Document

Review Title:	Scrutiny of Safeguarding
Date of Review:	
Purpose of the Review:	
<p>The purpose of the review is to ensure that: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMFS policy and procedures (Standing Order 1712) is compliant with the legislation, statutory guidance and addresses the learning from recent fire safety prohibition cases. • The whole workforce has the necessary skills and knowledge to identify safeguarding concerns within the context of their role and apply the policy and processes consistently and competently • The policy is owned by the most appropriate SET member so that safeguarding is seen as everyone’s responsibility • There are quality standards and monitoring processes in place so that the organisation can be assured that safeguarding concerns are being identified and managed in accordance with Standing Order 1712. 	
Intended Outcomes:	
<p>The intended outcomes are:-</p> <p>To ensure that the policy: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complies with relevant legislation. • is applied consistently internally in the provision of support for the workforce where relevant. • is applied consistently externally through the delivery prevention, protection, response and other activities where the workforce has contact with the community. • <p>To ensure that: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are appropriate policies, procedures and guidance in place to support safeguarding and that these are appropriately cross referenced 	



- mandatory training and development needs by role are identified and implemented along with the refresh frequency requirements to maintain competency.
- recruitment, selection and induction processes consistently obtain references, obtain DBS checks where relevant for successful candidates and include the requirement to undertake the relevant role related training and to safeguard.

To determine and identify: -

- the extent to which the workforce has been trained and is competent in recognising safeguarding concerns, including the link between safeguarding and fire.
- what governance, quality framework and monitoring arrangements need to be in place to provide assurance that policy and process is being followed.
- which Strategic Enabler is most appropriately placed to own the policy

Lead Member

Lead Officer/Officer Group (including partners):

Links to Strategic Objectives

Links to the level 2 and level 3 objectives:

- The safety, health and well-being of the most vulnerable people in our communities will improve through our interventions delivered to tackle the effects of an increasing demand on health and social care services.
- The number of people killed or seriously injured by fire-related incidents will reduce as we focus, with our partners, on the risks faced by the most vulnerable people in our communities
- We will utilise an evidence-based approach to risk reduction to enable effective engagement with the most vulnerable businesses and members of the community
- At all incidents we attend we will lead and co-ordinate rescue operations whilst working



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- collaboratively with other agencies to deliver an excellent response and meet public expectations
- Give people the knowledge, understanding and freedom to make informed decisions.

Reasons for undertaking the review:

WMFS has a duty to safeguard our communities during our prevention, protection and response activities. Our workforce may also engage the community during other contacts at WMFS premises and by telephone. The organisation is also a commissioned provider of services for adults with care and support needs through the delivery of the non-emergency falls response contracts. These contracts require WMFS to be compliant with relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance

There have been recent changes to legislation and statutory guidance: -

- The introduction of the Care Act 2014 which sets out safeguarding duties for adults with care and support needs.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children which sets out the statutory duty in safeguarding children and young people, has been updated and is currently in a consultation period.

In addition, WMFS has been engaged in a multi-agency review following Fire Safety Prohibitions of a large building that housed children and families. This review made specific recommendations which WMFS need to address and implement.

There has been recent evidence to suggest that there are instances where either safeguarding concerns have not been identified and/or policy and procedure has not been applied.

Scoping undertaken by:

**Chief Officer and/or
Partner/Agency Equivalent:**



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Existing data available for consideration:

- Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board Partner Self-Assessment Tool
- Coventry Safeguarding Adults Board Care Act Compliance Audit
- Latest Working Together to Safeguard Children Section 11 Audits
- Chapter 14 of the Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (currently out for consultation)
- Coventry Safeguarding Adults Board Safeguarding Training Quality Assurance Scheme
- Bournemouth University National Competency Framework for Safeguarding Adults

Review Work Programme:

Task	Method	Lead person(s)	Completion by:
Review Scoping Checklist		Status	

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JUNE 2018

1. **SCRUTINY OF POSITIVE ACTION AND FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

That Scrutiny Committee note the progress made in relation to the review of positive action and firefighter recruitment.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide an update to Scrutiny Committee on current activity in developing our approach to positive action and provided detail of the outcomes of recent firefighter recruitment activity.

3. **BACKGROUND**

Scrutiny Committee has undertaken to review and evaluate our approach to positive action and firefighter recruitment. The scope for the review was to consider our practices in relation to both positive action and recruitment and selection, and make recommendations for improvement.

The approach to recruitment has moved away from campaign based, instead focusing on generating a candidate pool that we will nurture through selection. This will provide us with a sustained approach to positive action that will drive our recruitment activity.

We have maintained our eligibility criteria and continue to use our suite of online psychometric tests that have been developed in partnership with the Fire Service College. Our

behavioural assessments continue to be delivered alongside practical selection at our assessment centres.

3.1 **Workforce Planning**

Our workforce planning assumptions indicate that we need to recruit 481 new entrant firefighters between 2018 to 2024. The diagram at Appendix 1 shows the impact of this when compared to the current establishment figure.

3.2 **Recruitment Targets**

2017/2018	20% of new starters will be women 35% of new starters will be BME
2018/2019	40% of new starters will be women 35% of new starters will be BME
2019/2020	50% of new starters will be women 35% of new starters will be BME
2020/2021 onwards	60% of new starters will be women 35% of new starters will be BME

3.3 **Positive Action Activity**

3.3.1 **Attraction and Marketing**

Our approach to positive action begins at the attraction phase. In partnership with the Fire Service College we have developed number series of adverts that are propagated using Facebook. This allows us to target groups based on ethnicity, interests and gender. For example, an advert seen by a white female will be different to the one seen by a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) male. The adverts are dynamic with both wording and imagery changing over time for each individual audience based on what was most effective. An example of this would mean fitness based adverts resonate better amongst black females whereas community based adverts are more effective at attracting Asian women.

The Fire Service College and their partner Thinkology have helped us understand the data gathered from Facebook analytics with detailed weekly reports that have now moved us into a position where we can predict per pound spent how

many people we are likely to attract to our portal and at what rate they will complete an application.

Further refinements have come from understanding better what times of day candidates are responding to the adverts along with their interests and occupations. This means additional tailoring of wording and imagery can be carried out to break down each target group into smaller sub groups to increase conversion efficiency.

3.3.2 **Pre- Recruitment**

We have developed a suite of pre-recruitment activities that are available for prospective/current candidates to remove some of the traditional barriers in the recruitment process. This includes a female development programme where assessments are delivered during the course. These assessments whilst materially the same as the direct entry route will be delivered modularly within evening and weekend sessions as opposed to during one assessment day. This is to directly address some of the barriers to recruitment we have previously seen amongst women.

After some pilot initiatives were carried out in 2017, and a similar initiative within the recruitment process in 2018 a survey was completed. This showed that all participants felt they had benefited in terms of their confidence with some specifically citing the support provided as being a direct factor that stopped them withdrawing from the process.

The first female development programme concluded at the end of May and analysis of performance is currently being undertaken. It is on track to deliver an increased success rate when compared to direct entry.

3.3.3 **External Scrutiny**

In November 2017, Scrutiny Committee commissioned an external consultancy, Equal Approach to undertake a review of our positive action activity. The report provides external scrutiny of our approach and makes recommendations for further improvement. The review was conducted by reviewing and scrutinising all documents and processes relating to positive action as well as carrying out structured

interviews with the DICE team and wider stakeholders. The outcome of the review includes highlights and themes from the stakeholder interviews, recommendations for enhanced practice regarding positive action initiatives, and suggested updates to policy and process. The recommendations are being considered with a view to the DICE team and stakeholder groups working together to generate an action plan.

The full report from Equal Approach can be found at Appendix 2.

3.4 **RESULTS TO DATE**

Since September 2017, the DICE team have processed 3394 firefighter applications with 2714 going on to the online tests. This pool of candidates includes 787 women (24%) & 827 people from BME backgrounds (25%). We have now seen just over 200 candidates at our newly developed firefighter assessment centre. Since January 2018, we have employed 67 new entrant firefighters, 22 (33%) women and 21 (32%) BME. The next training course is due to commence in August 2018 and it is anticipated that WMFS will see a further increase in representation from target groups.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The activity outlined in this report will require detailed analysis of a range of equality data including all the protected characteristics.

5. **RISK IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The objectives identified in this report support the organisation in mitigating its risk with regard to claims of unlawful discrimination.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The recommendations outlined in this report assists us to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act 2010 particularly to advance equal opportunities and eliminate behaviours that are unlawful under the Act.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Funds to support this work have been identified through the Scrutiny work programme. Early engagement has been had with Equal Approach and costs associated with this work will be identified through their proposal.

8. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

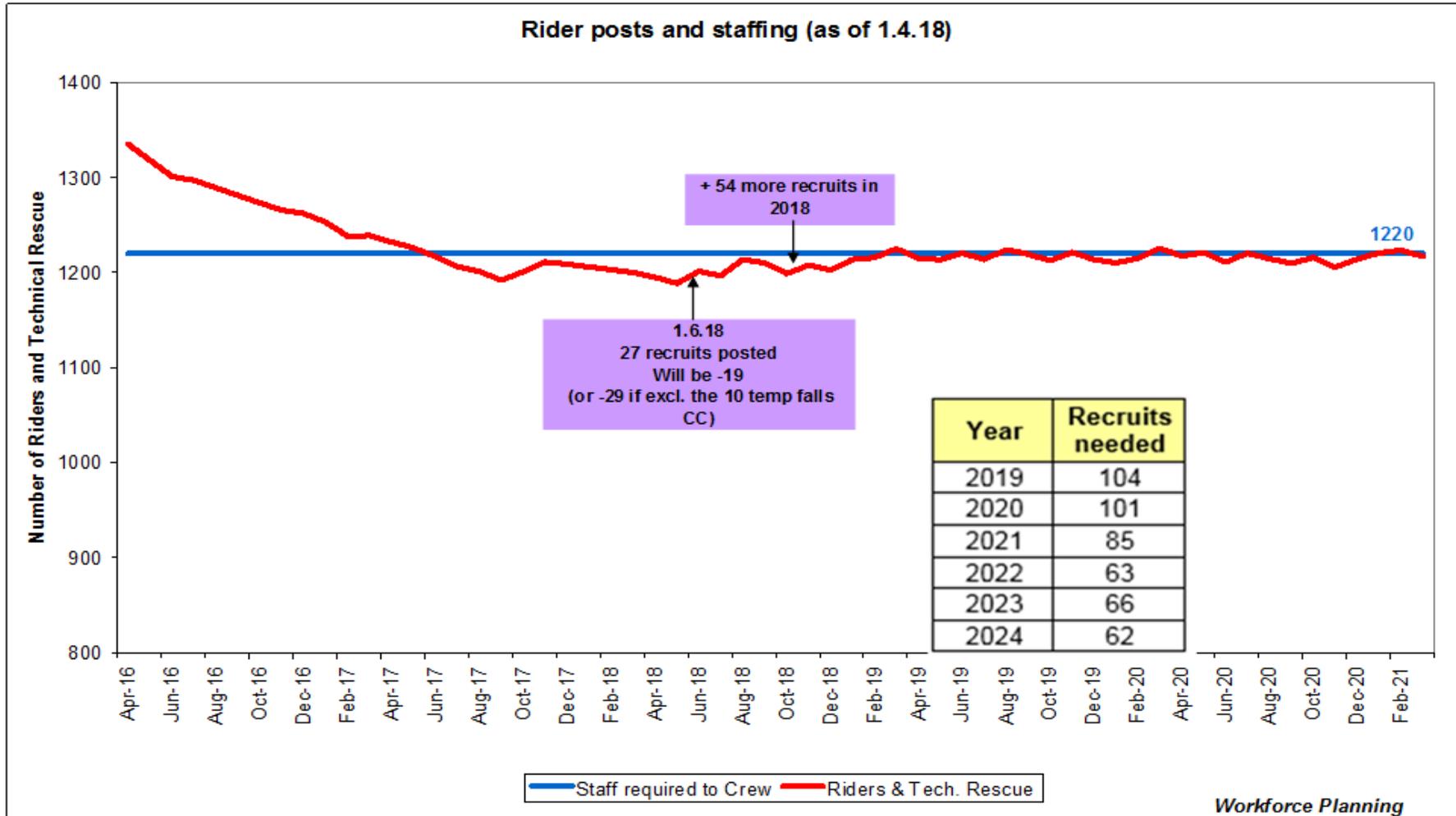
BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Scrutiny Review Scoping Document – Scrutiny of Positive Action and Firefighter Recruitment
- Scrutiny Committee Report of 12 June 2017
- Scrutiny Committee Report of 4 September 2017
- Scrutiny Committee Report of 13 November 2017

The contact name for this report is Sarah Warnes, Strategic Enabler People, contact number 07973 810813.

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APPENDIX 1



West Midlands Fire Service – Positive Action Review

November 2017



Inclusive Talent and Embedding Inclusion



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1. The brief

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service (WMFS) have a planned programme in place to address positive action within their teams.

Currently there is under representation from women and the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community.

There is a Positive Action Manager in place, a Diversity Inclusion Cohesion Equality (DICE) Business Partner and members of the HR team, who are all working on the positive action programmes and wider diversity and inclusion work within the service.

WMFS would like Equal Approach (EA) to review their current initiative, processes and future plans, working in partnership as a 'critical' friend. Through providing advice, guidance and recommendations the objective is to enhance the current Positive Action processes.

The service would like to ensure that an effective and meaningful programme is implemented, facilitating the attraction of high-caliber female and BAME talent, by raising the profile of the organization as a preferred employer.

WMFS would like Equal Approach to review the current positive action process and make recommendations for enhancement by reviewing:

- The processes involved in candidate nurturing.
- What WMFS's requirements are for using positive action; e.g. minimum standards for under-represented groups or widening the net to increase the number of women and BAME candidates entering the positive initiative programmes.
- Identifying how the networks and stakeholders can support the initiative, working more closely together for enhanced results.
- Targets set by WMFS for recruiting under-represented groups.
- Future positive action initiatives to include where they are advertised.
- Content and feedback of taster sessions/pre-recruitment sessions.
- DICE initiatives and how they can support the positive action work.



2. The project

Methodology

The review was carried out by looking at the documents and processes outlined in the brief, in addition to carrying out semi-structured interviews with the DICE team and wider stakeholders. We also researched the websites and social media activity of other fire and rescue services, assessing their promotion of positive action, equality, diversity and inclusion.

Outcomes

A detailed report including:

- Themes and highlights from stakeholder interviews.
- Recommendations for enhanced practice regarding positive action programmes.
- Policy and process reviews with suggested updates e.g. exit interview template

Out of Scope

Direct consultation with the wider senior leadership team (with the exception of some senior stakeholder group members) was out of the scope. As well as community members, prospective applicants or new recruits. The focus was to review existing documents and activities.

Further work could include interviews/focus groups with prospective applicants or applicants who have dropped out of the process. Additional stakeholder members who were not involved in this review such as leaders and community members could also be of further benefit, to get wider feedback which may inform future planning.

Research

There have been several research pieces which have evidenced the recruitment of a diverse team enhances business performance. Some recent research by Erik Larson (Cloverpop) states:

- Inclusive teams make better business decisions up to 87% of the time.
- Teams with inclusive processes enable decisions to be made twice as fast with half the meetings.
- Decisions made and executed by diverse teams delivered 60% better results.

According to the research, teams outperform individual decision makers 66% of the time, and decision making improves as team diversity increases. All male teams make better business decisions 58% of the time, while gender diverse teams do so 73% of the time. Teams that also include a wide range of ages and different geographic locations make better business decisions 87% of the time.

Diversity and Inclusion training can also support the agenda in ensuring that they are effectively managing and supporting teams to reach their potential.



In the report '[An Inclusive service – the twenty first century fire and rescue service](#)' a survey was conducted in England receiving responses from 40 fire and rescue services:

- 80% of respondents said that they planned to put in place recruitment initiatives to encourage diversity, while 15 & said that they were considering it.
- Examples given of recruitment initiatives included; outreach and targeted work to improve diversity, engaging with young people from under-represented groups, running taster sessions for specific under-represented groups, using social media for targeted advertising and offering help with the recruitment process.

The report also highlighted that London Fire Brigade found:

- Women looked for many qualities in a potential role, these often overlapped with the role of a woman firefighter.
- However, there is an overall lack of awareness of the firefighter role which often results in women creating perceived barriers.

Other highlights from the report include Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service's Equality journey. The actions they carried out to increase under-represented groups included:

- Avoiding tokenistic, short term campaigns.
- Utilising technology and the broad spectrum of available media in a timely, relatable and relevant way. Well thought-out targeted penetration through the 'community telegraph', internet and social media to keep people engaged and informed throughout.
- Visible media and publicity resources which directly and genuinely reflected the target community, not relying on generic passive campaigning of 'one size fits all'.
- A closely networked campaign design which utilised skills in the workforce that clearly understood specific community dynamics and matched target audience needs.



3. Document and Process Reviews

The following documents and procedures were reviewed as part of the process:

3.1 Positive Action and Positive Initiation Document

The initiation document states that 'It is the aim of West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) to create a workforce that is reflective of our local working population's current demographic profile (aged 16 – 64)'. The initiation document also provides a good overview of objectives, goals and stakeholders.

The recent Race Disparity Report 2017, stated that the UK unemployment rate (the proportion of the economically active population who are unemployed) was 4.4% in April - June 2017. The unemployment rate was 3.9% for the Caucasian ethnic group, compared to 7.8% for people from a BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) background; although the rate varied between different ethnic minority groups.

There has been a rise in employment generally for women. That said, women who are long-term unemployed face multiple forms of disadvantage. Men have consistently higher employment rates than women above the age of 22. In an effort to achieve maximum gains, it would be beneficial to target the working population, as well as those who are currently unemployed.

The aspirations for recruiting female and BAME firefighters are also high - 20% of new starters to be women and 35% to be BAME for the period 2017 - 2018. The fact WMFS want to address the current gap is positive, and it would be excellent if this was achieved. Given the make-up of the current workforce and results of previous positive action initiatives; the desired quotas are ambitious.

A change to the assessment centre approach has the potential to yield a greater degree of reward in this area. The process is a great opportunity to identify the best person to fulfill the role.

Whilst WMFS have prioritised the need to recruit women and individuals from the BAME community, consideration should also be made to recruiting other under-represented communities, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans + (LGBT+) community and younger people. It could be made clearer within the promotion that it is also important to recruit other under-represented communities/protected characteristics.

An additional focus on the importance of retention would also be beneficial. There are ambitious figures for recruitment, but it would be prudent to have clear actions, initiatives and targets regarding the retention of BAME, women and other underrepresented communities (eg LGBT+).



3.2 DICE Report 2012 - 15/Objectives 2016 - 19

The document reads well and provides a good overview of previous activity as well as future objectives and targets.

There are several plans in place which will support the positive action process, including the race equality forum, a review of female employees' maternity experience and a targeted development of under-represented groups.

Within the 2016 - 19 objectives it states:

- We will promote positive action initiatives to specifically engage with employees from under-represented groups, to engage with organisational development as well as their own development.
- Building a skilled and committed workforce - in a climate of austerity, we will take a long-term approach to recruiting a diverse workforce. We will positively influence the perceptions of people from under-represented groups and enable their engagement with the service.
- Referring to 15 voluntary positive action advisors: It would be beneficial to understand these roles and their responsibilities. If these roles have not yet been created or recruited, defined roles and objectives need to be established with clear communication channels between the DICE team and stakeholders. In addition, time commitments and requirements to attend meetings and forums, training should also be provided to ensure they are effective.

3.3 Sector-specific research

We carried out a review of the activities undertaken by other fire and rescue services, in relation to positive action. These have been summarised as follows:

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service

Lancashire have implemented a buddying scheme to support their positive action initiatives. The scheme provides female, BAME and LGBT with a buddy to act as a first-hand point of contact during the selection process. This scheme is for potential recruits but with a focus on under-represented communities. There is also the provision of events such as 'Have a Go' days, which give people from all communities the opportunity to learn more about the role of a firefighter and the selection process.

They have also created a video which discusses the myths of joining the fire service. The video was developed by West Sussex Fire and Rescue services.

<http://www.lancsfireandrescue.org.uk/Pages/www.lancsfireandrescue.org.uk/positive-action.aspx>



West Yorkshire

There is nothing specific regarding positive action. However, there is an equality, diversity and inclusion page which promotes the importance of diversity within the fire service. Information includes; defining equality, objectives, workforce information and working with communities. There is also a page of case studies regarding how the service has made West Yorkshire safer in terms of its responsibility to its employees, the community, the quality of emergency service and value for money it provides.

<http://www.westyorksfire.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/diversity/>

<http://www.westyorksfire.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/case-studies/>

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

On the recruitment page, there is no reference to positive action. However, there is a range of information available on eligibility, application timetable and selection process. The expected timetable is clear and useful for anyone interested in joining the service. They also have a video called 'What it takes to be a firefighter'. There is a dedicated page on the site for equality and inclusion and what it means for the service, but no reference to DICE on the recruiting page.

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire-emergencies-and-crime/west-sussex-fire-rescue-service/fire-rescue-recruitment/>

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-plans-and-policies/corporate-policies/equality-and-inclusion/>

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Carry out positive action pre-recruitment events. They also clarify the difference between positive action and positive discrimination. In addition, there is a booklet informing people how to prepare for the physical tests involved in becoming a firefighter.

<http://www.twfire.gov.uk/recruitment/firefighters/positive-action-events/#.WfniILp2vIU>

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

This service carries out taster and open days. In previous years they have also held involvement workshops, where the community can feedback on equality plans of the fire service.

They send out a positive message on their website which may be useful to adapt and adopt for West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service:

'All Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service applicants go through the same selection processes, and all employees are appointed solely on merit.'



London Fire Brigade

There is a video on the page on becoming a firefighter which describes the overall role of a firefighter, with a focus on 'protecting' the community -

<https://firefightingcareers.london/firefighter-it-means-so-much-more/>

The website has a quiz which asks questions to establish if individuals have the skills to become a firefighter.

They have presented sound bites from firefighters on the importance of their role and the value of having diverse firefighting teams.

The service also defies myths with phrases regarding the fire service which may encourage people to join.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue

There is promotion of the Positive about Disability and Stonewall logo. Their website contains a 'Join us' page which provides an overview of their work, the service and keeping Greater Manchester people safe. They do have an equality and diversity page with brief information on providing an equitable service, as well as uploading the inclusion strategy and information regarding the Public Sector Equality Duty. There is no reference to positive action.

http://www.manchesterfire.gov.uk/working_for_us/

http://www.manchesterfire.gov.uk/about_us/equality_and_diversity/

Kent Fire and Rescue

No specific reference to positive action but state *'We pride ourselves on having well-trained professional staff, and an open culture which values diversity and equality of opportunity in employment. How we achieve this is set out in Our Equality Vision and Objectives and in Staff pay and conditions'*.

They provide information and frequently asked questions:

- Find out about joining Kent Fire and Rescue Service as a whole-time firefighter.
- Frequently asked questions about working as a whole-time firefighter.
- More information about being an on-call firefighter.
- Frequently asked questions about working as an on-call firefighter.
- Read a case study including interviews with on-call firefighters at Edenbridge fire station.

<http://www.kent.fire-uk.org/jobs/work-for-us/#firefighters>



Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue

Provide an explanation of positive action and the importance of diversity and inclusion within the service. They also have an equality handbook on the site

<http://www.bedsfire.com/EqualityandDiversity/OurCommunity/Pages/PositiveAction.aspx>

<http://www.bedsfire.com/EqualityandDiversity/Pages/default.aspx>

Cambridgeshire

There is no specific reference to positive action. The careers page includes the Disability Confidence and Stonewall logos and Fire and Rescue Equality Framework.

There is an overview regarding the commitment to equality and inclusion and their Equality Pledge.

Interestingly, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue are currently recruiting for a Positive Action Officer

<http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/careers/recruitment-process-1170.aspx>

<http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/search.aspx?q=diversity>

<http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/careers/wholtime-firefighters-1371.aspx>

<http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/careers/meet-our-staff.aspx>

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Service

The information regarding recruitment is right at the bottom of the page under 'quick links' – so not prominent. There is a brief paragraph on the recruitment/employment opportunities page regarding 'Equal Opportunities'. People can express their interest in a role if they are transferees. There is no dedicated equality, diversity and inclusion page but brief information relating to the Equality Objectives and service awards for excellence which includes commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

<http://bucksfire.gov.uk/>



Good practice from review of websites

- Buddying scheme for new recruits to support retention and engagement. The buddying could commence from pre-recruitment at the early stages.
- Development of a video/sound bites to promote the positive aspects of working for the fire service and to defy any myths.
- Involvement workshops where the community can feedback regarding DICE activities.
- Case studies to promote how the service engage effectively within communities. This may encourage individuals from the wider community to become part of WMFS.
- Case studies to support the positive action process could include working in the community, a wide range of individuals discussing how they love being a firefighter and encouraging others to join. This can be adapted in any way to suit the recruitment processes e.g. where possible have a wide a range as possible.
- Clear visual timeline on the recruitment process.

3.4 Curzon Consulting Group - Equality Report

A report was completed in April 2016 regarding the barriers and experiences of black Asian and minority ethnic staff and the perception of positive action within the force.

Highlights

The report highlights the following:

- There are assumptions regarding the term 'positive action' - the perception by some team members was that this was positive discrimination, which is unlawful under the Equality Act. This demonstrates a lack of understanding of what positive action means for WMFS in practice.
- Under representation of applications from women and people from the BAME community.
- Lack of understanding on the requirements and qualifications needed to enter the service.
- Perception of the fire services makeup from the wider community being that of a white male.
- Some females within the service feel their needs are not always addressed, e.g. flexibility regarding working hours.
- Perception of a lack of career progression within the fire service from the wider community and internally.
- Many of WMFS's staff had not undertaken equality, diversity and inclusion training for a considerable time prior to the research taking place.



- Perception by some that the equality, diversity and inclusion training was ‘common sense’.
- Make effective use of social media platforms.
- Attend community events, e.g. Mehlās/Pride
- Advertising more widely.
- The fitness test within the recruitment process should be carried out at the end of cycle, as this gives additional time for applicants to train and perform well.
- Perception by some that women are only promoted due to their gender, which prevents some women within the service applying for roles.
- There is a need for the service to be more flexible in terms of working patterns. If possible, this would benefit both male and female firefighters.

In response to the Curzon Consulting Group report, the Equal Approach review found some similar issues with the positive action process:

- Positive action terminology - there are still misconceptions regarding the term positive action. WMFS should consider how this perception can be changed for those within the service (e.g. training and communications).
- Greater awareness of positive action is required, and this could be carried out by providing awareness sessions within the community and internally.

3.5 Review of Exit Interview Template

The exit interview questionnaire is a good template with opportunities for employees to state why they are leaving the service (or transferring to another service), as well as providing their scores and feedback on their experiences and opportunities whilst in the service:

There are references to equality, diversity and inclusion and giving opportunities for employees to state they are leaving due to:

- Implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy
- Opportunities for training
- Opportunities for personal development
- Promotion and career prospects
- Support from supervisors/managers

It would be beneficial to be more specific in the line of questioning to an equality, diversity and inclusion facet. The implementation of the equality and diversity policy option may not be clear to some employees. Additional questions could be asked under the reason for leaving section to expand the scope of trends being captured.



This could be expanded to say provide options such as due to discrimination/unfair treatment (to make it clearer that a person is stating they are leaving due to a protected characteristic).

There is an ambiguous option for 'other' but if employees are given an opportunity to declare any adverse EDI issues right at the beginning of the form, this could encourage them to provide more information where necessary.

It is recommended that the demographic monitoring on the form needs to be updated to include:

- Gender - to add 'non-binary' and 'other' (please state). In the event someone wishes to self-describe their gender in a different way.
- Sexual orientation categories need to be added.
- Ethnic categories need to match the categories in the 2011 census, e.g. Chinese, Gypsy/Traveler, Arab.

The confidentiality clause on the form is positive; *'The information that you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and is required for monitoring purposes only.'*

To expand on this further, an additional line could be added to state the information allows the service to identify if there are any leaver issues relating to protected characteristics/equality groups.

This additional information from the exit questionnaire could then inform future Positive Action Programmes and the learning could be embedded.

3.6 Firefighting Selection - Briefing Exercise

No major comments – clear document

3.7 Eligibility Criteria

This seems to be appropriate for the:

- Work at height
- Work in enclosed spaces
- Work outdoors
- Carry heavy equipment
- Complete DBS

It is positive that the need to have two GCSEs has been removed, as this could provide barriers and there are other ways to assess skills required for the fire service.



3.8 FF PQA Interview Report Form

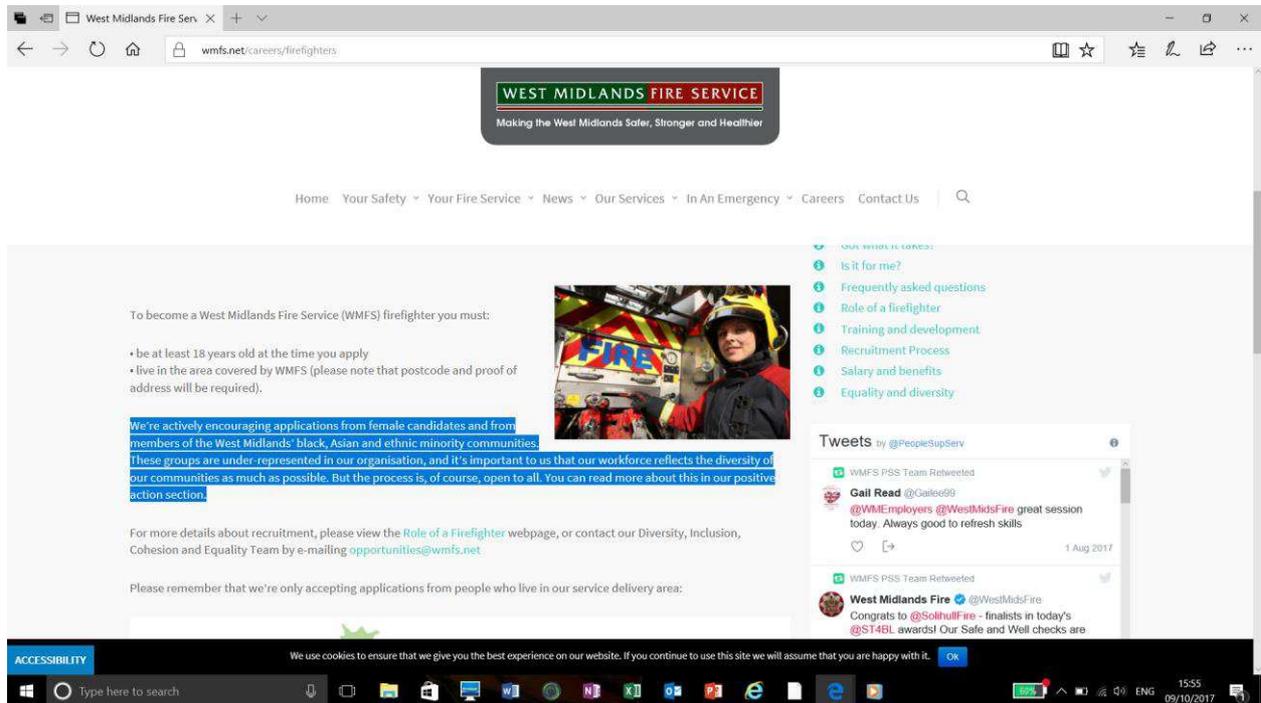
This is a clear document with a good overview of positive and negative indicators for those recruiting and assessing applicants. A few observations:

- Verbal briefing - one of the negative indicators is that the candidate 'Spoke too quickly, communication was confused' this could be a result of nerves therefore perhaps should not be included as a negative indicator.
- Appeared not to listen carefully to the questions asked - this may be seen differently from different individuals (is subjective), reconsider if this should be used as a negative indicator.
- Within the question 'Tell me about a time when you have supported an individual who was vulnerable or distressed'. Re-wording the negative indicator to state 'was not empathetic' instead of sympathetic would be more appropriate concerning vulnerability.

3.9 Website review

The front page of the careers section has no reference to diversity and inclusion, as well as not referring to the range of diverse roles available. It would be beneficial to have some reference to WMFS wanting to recruit a diverse workforce, specifically those that are currently under-represented.

It is positive that in the section regarding 'Firefighters' there is reference to recruiting from under represented communities, e.g. Women, BAME



It is positive that the EDI logos are promoted on the site, e.g. Top 50 employers, Stonewall champion, Disability Confident employer as this highlights that WMFS take DICE issues seriously.

<https://www.wmfs.net/careers/firefighters/equality/>

There is a range of information on the equalities page regarding:

- Explanation of positive action
- Good FAQs - answers some early questions

If an organisation can show it has under-representation of particular groups in its workforce for employment, promotion or training, for a minimum of at least 12 months, the Equality Act 2010 allows it to carry out positive action to encourage applications from people in those groups. They can be targeted, supported and encouraged to apply for jobs, promotion and training.

The law allows us to run training courses, provide support for skills development and to lay on events such as open days. These events are open to all, but we target and encourage under-represented groups to take part.



Although the information above regarding the Equality Act is a true statement. It may put some individuals off applying for roles and they may think they are given 'preferential treatment' or it is tokenistic.

It may be more effective for this page to focus on inclusion and being an inclusive workplace for all communities rather than focus on Equality and protected characteristics.

All applicants go through the same selection processes, and all employees are appointed solely on merit. Our recruitment interview panels are drawn from a diverse range of existing staff, and they're all trained in interview techniques including awareness of unconscious bias.

Again, there may be too much detail for the people viewing the site. The first sentence regarding appointing on merit is sufficient. People who are not from the professional EDI arena, aren't generally aware of issues such as unconscious bias and again this may look like the WMFS is just 'talking the talk'.

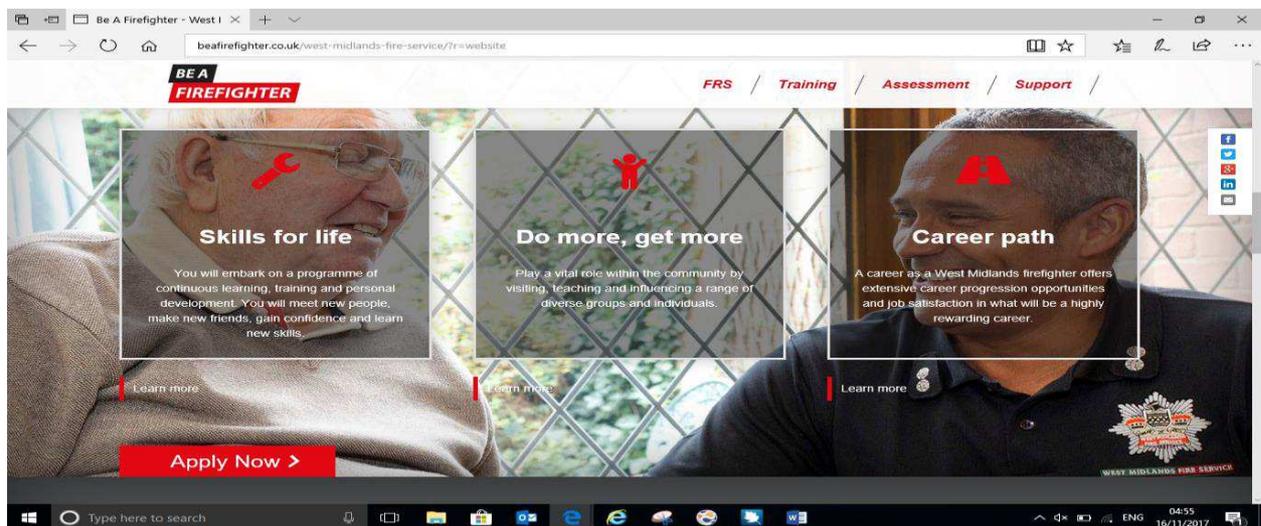
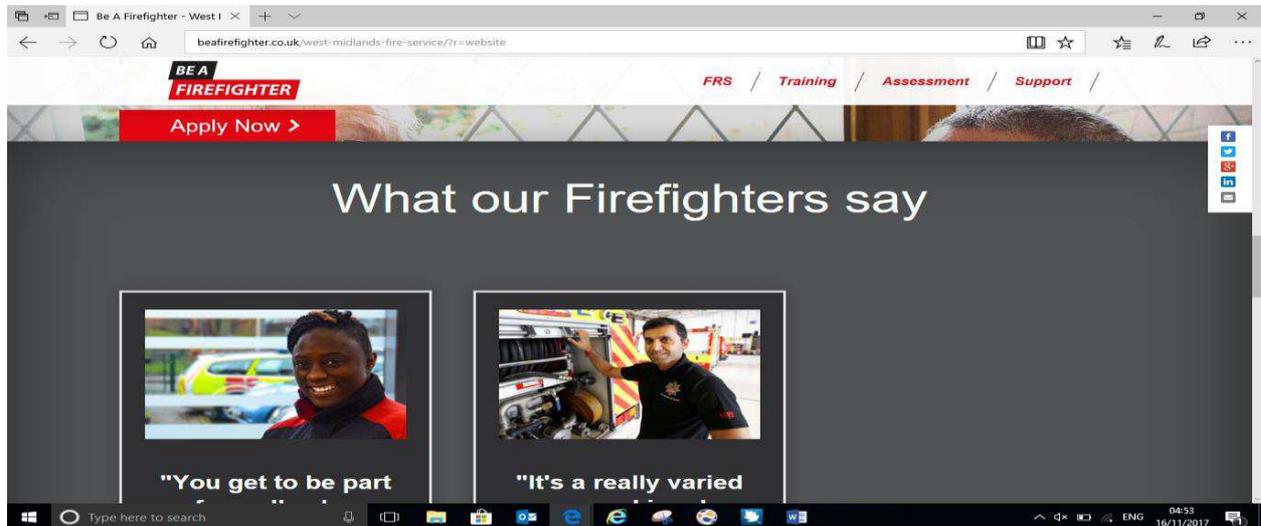
Current recruitment campaign

On the website there is a link to a page which promotes the current opportunities for firefighters. The web pages provide clear advice regarding the requirements to be a firefighter. It also states that the service is looking for firefighters that are underrepresented, as there is a need to ensure that the firefighters represent the diversity of the communities, as much as possible.

The recent campaign worked with the Fire Service College and an assessment tool was procured and with a situational judgement test.

An organisation called Thinkology were also involved in a social media campaign. The information/statistics from the social media activity will be used to assess future targets and recruitment activities. The WMFS website has a link to additional information regarding recruitment for firefighters.

If individuals would like to register their interest this in becoming a Firefighter this allows them to find out more. There is a range of information on the site which includes 'training, information, support and 'what's in it for you'.



There is positive imagery regarding BAME firefighters on the website, but this could be more diverse. Most of the images on the becoming a firefighter page are of BAME firefighters, to normalise this and for visitors to see that there are a wide range of firefighters.

In the 'What our Firefighters say' an individual may visit the site and be given the impression that you are only seeking to recruit BAME firefighters. WMFS want to recruit under-represented groups, but you do not want to deter others from applying. There are only two statements and both from BAME WMFS staff.

There is good explanation regarding what is involved in the training, assessment and a useful booklet on the Fire Fitness Programme, which also provides a good overview of the requirements of the job.

If individuals are interested in becoming a firefighter, you are then directed to a page where you provide your details. It then asks if you have served in the armed forces, then when providing your details individuals are asked further questions regarding fitness.



It would be beneficial on these pages to give a brief overview and explanation of why you are asking these questions, e.g. what is the relevance regarding asking if someone has been in the armed forces.

Regarding fitness, a person needs to have a certain level of fitness, but this could put off potentially good applicants. If the website is collating details for on-going recruitment and the selection process itself was not happening for some time, then it could be stated that fitness is very important, but individuals could work towards the level of fitness applied. Placing such an emphasis on the level of fitness so early in the process could act as a deterrent.

Once you have provided your details it informs you of the taster day event at Ward End. It may be more beneficial to provide information regarding taster days and opening days at an earlier stage. People may not want to officially apply but just to want more information. Applying is a big step and therefore the more informed they are the more likely they will remain within the process.

Engagement - to maintain the interest of potential applicants/firefighters consideration can be given to keep people more engaged. There is currently a high dropout rate from the pre-recruitment days to the fitness test.

WMFS could enhance engagement and ensure they keep in regular contact with the applicants so they have a point of contact.

There could be nominated DICE personal (or stakeholder members) who are available to answer any queries or concerns that they may have. They could also be provided with a buddy or mentor. Other support mechanisms can be a rolling programme of open days/taster days, so people know in advance there are nominated days where they can find out more. Live chat is also increasingly being used as this could be a positive communication method for engagement moving forward.

3.10 Situational Judgement Questionnaire

Some of the questions could be deterring potentially good people to apply. For example, some women may feel that they would struggle with fitness and therefore deterred by the fitness question. Research has also evidenced that women are less likely to apply for roles if they feel they do not meet all the requirements. Men will apply if they feel they meet 60% of the requirements, whereby women feel they must meet 100% of the requirement prior to applying for roles.

It may be beneficial to review the situational judgement/killer questions, to see if the questions could be adjusted so barriers can be reduced for women/BAME/other relevant under-represented communities.



An online tool can be a great way of assessment; however, some issues need to be considered:

- People don't often read questions properly and may not respond to truly reflect their thoughts.
- They may have been 'having a bad day'/not in the best frame of mind to complete the assessment.
- Some people may respond 'how they think they should' respond, rather than how they really feel or how they would really act.

There also isn't an opportunity to change your mind. You may have chosen an answer and clicked 'next' then realise you did this incorrectly. Perhaps an additional button could be added to state 'confirm answer'.

Some questions are asking a lot from applicants, e.g. The below question informs the applicant that they will be expected to conduct talks in schools. Whilst it is positive that this informs there is more to being a firefighter than dealing with emergencies. Talking to people and carrying out presentations can be very daunting, even to those people who are quite confident. This is a skill that can be developed, so I would put less emphasis on this in the early stages.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL apollo.adc.uk.com/Assessments/RealisticJobPreview2/Exercise.aspx. The page header reads "WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE". The question is "Question 6 of 11" and asks: "The ultimate way to save lives is to prevent accidents from occurring in the first place. As a Firefighter, you will therefore be required to spend a significant amount of time working within the community to educate both adults and children in safety, eg conduct talks in schools. You will also need to visit vulnerable people such as drug users or the elderly at their homes and support them, eg by installing smoke detectors. How do you feel about this?". Three response options are provided in blue boxes: "I understand the importance of taking preventative action by working within the community. I would be willing to do this, as long as I can still spend most of my time at a fire station and dealing with emergencies.", "I enjoy talking to people of all ages and backgrounds. I would be motivated to conduct home visits in a sensitive and understanding way.", and "I would not be motivated to speak in front of large groups, or I would not have the patience to speak to vulnerable people about fire safety in their home." At the bottom, there are "Back" and "Next" buttons.

If there are flexible arrangements permitted within the service, it may be worth stating that here. Individuals with caring or parental responsibilities may be deterred from moving forward from this question.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL apollo.adcuk.com/Assessments/RealisticJobPreview2/Exercise.aspx. The page title is "Question 3 of 11". The question text is: "Firefighters work shift patterns - working weekends and public holidays is standard. You may also be asked to cover shifts at other watches or stations where needed. How do you feel about this?". There are four response options in colored boxes: a blue box with "I would need to work during the week rather than at weekends or public holidays. I would not be comfortable working over Christmas for example.", a green box with "I am comfortable working shift patterns, but would prefer to build a strong relationship with a team at one station rather than cover at other locations.", a blue box with "I enjoy adapting to different environments. I am happy to work whatever hours are required.", and a blue box with "Building a strong relationship with your main team is hugely important in the Fire and Rescue Service. However, the Fire and Rescue Service is one big team in itself, so you need to be able to build rapport quickly with other teams, just like you would with any member of the public." Below the options are "Back" and "Next" buttons. At the bottom, there is a copyright notice: "©Copyright a&dc - a PSI business 2017 All Rights Reserved APOLLO v3.6.2".

There are real expectations from the questions asked, where some of the requirements of the role can be developed. People can be taught the best way to respond to dangerous situations.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL apollo.adcuk.com/Assessments/RealisticJobPreview2/Exercise.aspx. The page title is "Question 7 of 11". The question text is: "In emergency situations, especially where lives are in danger (e.g. house fires), Firefighters need to help the Officer in Charge make decisions about the team's actions. At times you would be expected to take the initiative and act quickly. How do you feel about this?". There are three response options in blue boxes: "I would trust my instincts and take action as quickly as possible, rather than wait for instructions from the Officer in Charge.", "I wouldn't feel comfortable taking action or making decisions quickly; that's the Officer in Charge's job.", and "I'd feel comfortable feeding information to the Officer in Charge and waiting for instructions, but I would be willing to take quick action if I could instinctively see a problem that I could fix." Below the options are "Back" and "Next" buttons. At the bottom, there is a copyright notice: "©Copyright a&dc - a PSI business 2017 All Rights Reserved APOLLO v3.6.2".



It would be beneficial to understand how the responses to the situational judgement exercise are scored, and if any potential candidates are prevented from continuing an application due to not answering all the questions as expected.

It would also be beneficial to know the dropout rate and demographics of those completing the situational judgement questionnaire, in addition to monitoring the dropout rate/attendance at taster days.

The questions relating to social media, knowledge of policies and practices, reminding people they will have to respond to fatalities are good.

Perhaps offer one-to-one discussions with participants first, rather than completing the paperwork/situational judgement questionnaire. An individual can get much more from asking relevant questions that relate to themselves prior to application. This could then allow them to work on any areas for development.

3.11 Fire and Rescue Services Role Maps Booklet

Very clear guidance with good overview of roles.

3.12 Pre-Recruitment Course Feedback

There seems to be generally good feedback except for the greasy pole exercise. The pre-recruitment course feedback is an excellent way to see if there are any issues, and where possible to enhance. If this does not currently take place, reviewing the feedback should take place after each course.

Monitoring of each of the tests and success rates v demographics can also support future planning. Also, to assess the 'near misses' where candidates were very close to passing the tests. A fair process should be implemented to ensure standards aren't dropped but whereby people are supported to reach the standard.

3.13 Review of DICE champion stations PowerPoint presentation

The aim of the DICE champion stations is to support the DICE strategy and support the stations to enhance the culture, capture data to inform future planning and support the; Government Inspectorate, Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and Excellence Framework for FRS.

Overview of aims, bronze, silver and gold standard. The ideas and principles of the DICE champions is very positive and a good way to engage stations in diversity, inclusion, cohesion and equality. However, there may be an opportunity for greater awareness of the champion stations, as there is a lack of knowledge within the wider WMFS team.



It is unclear if the stakeholder groups and wider WMFS team were involved in development of the DICE champion stations, and if they were this may have been a more effective way of bringing them on board. From discussions I believe the information was sent to the stations to provide the relevant information for them to commence work on the activities. In addition to visiting all the nominated DICE stations and going through all the detail to ensure that the work is carried out appropriately. E.g. a training/learning and sharing day.

Nominated DICE champion stations:

Area	Station
Birmingham North	Ward End
	Handsworth
	Ladywood
Birmingham South	Highgate
	Hay Mills
Black Country North	Fallings Park
	Alderidge
Black Country South	Oldbury
	Smethwick
Coventry and Solihull	Foleshill
	Solihull
Fire Safety	N/A

3.14 Stakeholder Strategy 2017

The Stakeholder Strategy provides a brief overview of the work of the stakeholder groups. This provides information regarding their roles and how they can support embedding DICE outcomes. There are currently three stakeholder groups, Affinity (gender/women), Inspire (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) and Fireout (LGBT+).

The stakeholder groups can play a critical role in positive action initiatives and currently this is not taking place. The DICE team and stakeholder groups are not joined up appropriately. There is a lack of communication and some members of the stakeholder groups feel that they have not been supported appropriately by DICE members.

Moving forward these relationships need to be built so that all the stakeholder groups and the DICE team are working collaboratively on positive action campaigns and programmes.

Until the relationship is stronger between the two groups, the positive action programme may not be as effective. The interviews carried out highlighted several themes that are described in greater detail on pages 22-27. I would recommend:



- Review of the stakeholder groups and agree a governance structure which would include reporting structure, budget, and responsibilities. The review could also include and clarify the role of Allies, the importance of cross-networking and how the groups could work effectively together. There is a greater focus now within diversity and inclusion to address multi-identities and intersectionality.
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities of senior management/leaders and their role within the stakeholder group.
- Clarification of how the stakeholders can support activities i.e. will they be given time to do this within their working shifts.
- Clarify expectation and role of line managers' support for stakeholders' contributions.
- The groups could then agree their annual action plans which would support the overall DICE strategy in addition to positive action work.
- To widen the remit of the Inspire group as the stakeholder strategy states the group currently focus on Black African Caribbean communities presently. (This would also support the positive action programme as there is under representation from the Asian and other minority ethnic communities).
- In due course to develop additional stakeholder groups i.e. Disability/mental health.

The above points would also then enhance communication between DICE and the stakeholder groups, as well as planning effective and coordinated internal and external communications.

All the DICE and stakeholder members are very passionate and knowledgeable regarding equality, diversity and inclusion. It would be a great achievement to hone this passion and enthusiasm for embedding diversity, and their specific protected characteristic focus for the benefit of WMFS. Building the relationship so the agreed targets can be achieved with all members feeling valued for their contributions.

3.15 Social Media

There is regular activity on social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter. This includes successes, work within the community, firefighter activity, awards and nominations received and information on becoming a firefighter. There are diverse images used and individuals from different backgrounds, which is positive. Social media is a great way to engage with the communities and should be one aspect of the recruitment activity as well as others highlighted in this report.



It would also be beneficial to seek feedback from stakeholders and the community to see how the social media messages and images can be enhanced.

3.16 Interviews with Stakeholder Group Members, DICE and HR

There were many people who were willing to be interviewed as part of this review which is positive. However, nearly all respondents stated that they wanted to see 'action' following the review and this not be a paper exercise, where useful data is collated but no action or next steps are taken.

Pre-project interviews/discussions:

- Joanne Simmonds – as part of the early discussions to agree the project
- Wayne Roe – as part of the early discussions to agree the project

The below issues were discussed with Wayne Roe and Joanne Simmonds as part of the project planning.

There are several activities taking place within the service to move forward to address positive action. Much of the work to date has been campaign based. Initiatives have included:

- Taster days - these have been carried out at five stations which run for around 15 people each session. The session includes a range of activities including challenging the myths regarding working in the fire service.
- Pre-recruitment course - this course is aimed to build confidence and allay any fears that individuals may have, about applying to join the service. Unfortunately to date, more women have 'failed to attend' through the process.
- In the future the recruitment may be left open throughout the year rather than for an agreed period. It is hoped that this would enhance the opportunity for a greater number of underrepresented groups to apply for roles.
- Often when the recruitment does open there is a positive response but not from women or Black, Asian and Minority ethnic (BAME) communities.
- DICE initiative is taking place. There are eight designated fire stations who are given local KPIs regarding DICE issues. The aim of the initiative is to encourage fire teams to engage in DICE activity but also to compete against the other fire stations taking part.
- The Equality Business Partner has been involved in promoting some of the positive action activities such as the DICE initiative and has developed a toolkit. There are currently no diversity champions in place.



- There is currently a women's stakeholder group (Affinity) and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (Inspire) in place. There is a lead for the newly created Fireout LGBT+ stakeholder group in addition to a Stonewall action plan.
- To gauge feedback, there are FBU surveys and 'what's happening' visits. There have not been any 'staff engagement' surveys for a while.
- To date no focus groups have taken place to support a positive action initiative.
- There has been some networking with other fire stations to see how they are working to address positive action.
- There are links with AFSA who are setting up a working group to identify best practice.

Interviews to discuss the stakeholder groups and their involvement in positive action:

- Jason Campbell
- Michael Campbell
- Stephen Riddell
- Tania Hale
- Tristan Dugdale
- Sara Hall
- Rose Berridge

Questions asked:

1. Have you been involved in any positive action programmes, if yes how?
2. What do you see as the challenges of implementing an effective Positive Action Programme at WMFS?
3. Do you think WMFS could enhance what they are currently doing in terms of their positive action processes?
4. Describe your experience of working in the service?
5. Do you think senior management are on board and positive regarding WMFS Positive Action Programmes?
6. Any other feedback you would like to provide?



Themes

Relationship between DICE and stakeholder groups

- There could be a closer working relationship with the DICE team, the stakeholder groups are not always aware of forthcoming positive action campaigns.
- Expectation to support DICE activity in their own time and at times their own monies.
- Lack of communication between the stakeholder groups and DICE.
- Support was provided by the stakeholder groups in previous years, however due to the disconnect between the group and DICE; there is less willingness to support DICE activities.
- Network members have been asked to be involved in recruitment panels, but this has been requested in their own time.
- It may be more beneficial to strategically choose the DICE champion stations and focus on how they engage, type of incidents, community involvement.
- Lack of knowledge of nominated DICE station and objectives, impact, what good looks like.

Perception of terminology - positive action

Positive action can be seen as negative and mistaken for positive discrimination. It can give the message that the fire service is accepting lower standards from women and the BAME community.

Using section 159 of the Equality Act could result in a negative view or misunderstanding of the positive action process.

'People may feel that you are 'making it easier' for Black people and women. It can give the wrong message'.

Positive action initiatives/campaigns carried out

- Some previous positive action activities lacked diversity or images could be perceived as inappropriate.
- Positive action initiatives could be more strategically driven. BAME communities are more likely to have a dwelling fire. Additional work with these communities may provide a positive perception of the fire service by the BAME community, which could support



the recruitment targets.

- Stations need to be more involved in taster days.
- There needs to be greater resources given to positive action. If there are financial cuts, managers may be pitching against each other for funds to support their programmes.
- Standards should not be dropped as there are key tasks and activities where prospective firefighters may not be competent.

Management

- Lack of visible role models, particularly within leadership. It would also be positive to have younger visible role models.
- Senior management are engaged and want to see a more diverse workforce. They are supportive of DICE and positive action activities.
- Lack of BAME and women in senior management.
- Some managers still need to buy into the positive action and DICE programmes - further time is required to change 'hearts and minds'.
- There may be blockages for some BAME/women to gain promotion.
- Managers need to challenge appropriately at all times regarding positive action. If more did this, this would support cultural change and awareness regarding DICE.

'It would be beneficial to have additional management training with a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion - sometimes they are not equipped to deal with issues'.

Community engagement

- There could be greater outreach and community engagement to support positive action processes - to be delivered using a coordinated approach and to take place regularly. To include schools, churches, community venues, shopping centres, clinics/open sessions, working with parents and local radio.
- ASFA are a great organisation to work with, could work more closely. The conference is always really useful with great sessions and information provided.

'We need to always have a visual impact in the community'

Prospective applicants

- There may be perception from prospective female applicants that need to be 'fitter' and



'stronger' than men.

- Lack of visual role models (women/BAME women).
- Lack of confidence from some women regarding the fitness test – they may not feel they are 'strong enough'.
- Pre-recruitment days have had a positive impact.
- Need to quash the stereotypes (for all under-represented communities).

'Being a firefighter is not always seen as an option by some women.'

Culture

- Culture has improved but there is still work to do.
- Previously less awareness regarding the need to recruit and encourage under-represented groups to join the fire service.

Communications team

- There could be clearer messages from the communications team.
- Communications team could be more effective.

4. Recommendations

As part of the review process, there are recommendations highlighted in boxes within this report. Below are the key findings/highlights to support the positive action initiatives moving forward.

1. Review the use of positive action terminology as it can be seen negatively. People may see this as a tick box exercise and that people are recruited from the under-represented communities just because of their protected characteristics; rather than skills (also an underlying misconception between positive discrimination and positive action).

Using terms such as inclusion or accessibility, which are seen more positively than terminology such as equality and diversity. As with the London Fire Service and other fire services, another option would be to remove the phrase 'Positive Action' completely and just focus on the importance of a diverse workforce (this is a more controversial option, so will assumingly need discussion with senior management).

2. The wider community whom WMFS want to attract may not be knowledgeable regarding the Equality Act and the need to recruit firefighters that reflect the



community. Therefore, this may be seen negatively issue with specific individuals being approached to apply due to 'political correctness' or 'ticking a box'. The messages communicated regarding why it is important to recruit from the wider community could be enhanced.

3. Enhanced training for teams so they are clear regarding the following issues:
 - Clarity regarding on positive action and what it means for WMFS.
 - How diversity and inclusion are relevant to all roles within the service.
 - The importance of working within the wider community.
 - Defying myths regarding equality, diversity and inclusion and WMFS
 - The importance of Stakeholder groups and how they can be involved as members or Allies.

This could support the 'Living the Values' training that is already in place. Additional learning for managers could include:

- How to support and manage diverse teams.
- Mentoring and supporting team members.
- Talent management.
- Getting the best out of teams/personal development.

Any training regarding diversity and inclusion is better absorbed and undertaken using a facilitated learning approach. However, due to resources this may not be possible so a blended approach of facilitated, webinars, workbooks or seminars could be used.

4. Building closer working relationships between DICE and the stakeholder groups. During the interview process, many of those interviewed were not aware of the positive action campaigns. There needs to be a much-improved communication channels and linkage between DICE and the stakeholders. There was also lack of clarity regarding the nominated DICE stations.
5. Enhancement of internal development and promotion for employees/managers, to ensure there is a talent pipeline and talent management processes in place. Review the internal recruitment cycle to assess if there are barriers for BAME/female staff. Following this review, (including monitoring data such as demographic of individuals within different grades, monitoring of employers and managers promoted), implement programmes so that BAME/women and other under-represented communities have a fair opportunity to be successful with promotion in the service.

Support including mentoring and being sponsored by senior managers could also have a positive way to ensure a greater number of women/BAME managers move-up through the ranks. This could be developed into an official programme by WMFS, in way of a mentoring programme specifically for under-represented communities. The scheme should be opened to all those who are involved in the positive actions programme including representatives of BAME, women, LGBT+ for example.

6. Role models - more effective use of positive role models who are visible, given autonomy to support positive action activity.



7. Enhanced partnership working with AFSA. The Asian Fire Service Association are a great resource and this partnership could be developed further. A closer working relationship could increase the number of applications from the BAME community.
8. Targeted support of communities e.g. BAME more likely to be at risk of fire - show commitment and support to these communities (ie via campaigns/greater community engagement) and as a result this could encourage more people from the BAME community to apply.
9. Create strong partnerships with organisations such as West Midlands Police who are also carrying out positive action initiatives (as well as other fire services who are carrying out a similar process). By working together organisations can learn from each other in terms of what has worked, (went well) and areas for development. Joint community ventures and recruitment promotion could take place where appropriate.
10. Focus groups/surveys/discussions with those who have dropped out at any stage of the process. The responses received could support future workforce planning.
11. Focus groups with women and BAME people within the community to assess their views on the Fire service and provide feedback on how the perception and recruitment process could be enhanced.
12. Review use of Section 159 of the Equality Act - although this is legal to do so, this may also impact of current firefighters who do not fully understand how this should be used. This could have a negative impact on the positive action process which could result in poor morale or 'buy in' to the positive action agenda at WMFS. Review if there are alternative ways to find the most qualified and appropriate person for a role. If it is agreed to continue to use section 159, agree how and if this will be promoted and described externally in the future.
13. Use the data from the social media activities to assess how and to where BME/women actively use social media. Then use a targeted approach to communicate positive messages regarding WMFS 'being a good place to work' and the benefits of being Firefighter/why it is a great job.
14. Nurturing strategy - the fitness test aspect of the recruitment is where women may drop out. Assess how this could be adapted so women are clear on the requirements, and perhaps apply at a later stage when they know they are more likely to be successful with the necessary fitness tests.
15. Implement a more strategic and coordinated approach to embedding DICE/station/stakeholder engagement with communities. This is being done well by some, but it would be beneficial to ensure that this being carried out effectively by everyone. Community engagement is critical to support both short term and long workforce planning and recruitment. Currently there are communities that are not being reached. Carry out a mapping exercise of community groups/organisations across the West Midlands. This could be part of the Community members scheme referenced in the 2016-19 objectives
16. Implementation of a 'buddy scheme' for individuals who commence the recruitment process to support where there is a high level of 'drop out' within the current recruitment process.



17. What's happening visits - in the future to collate and monitor feedback so this can be used to support future recruitment planning.
18. Enhance use of positive BAME/female role models within WMFS. This has been promoted on the website, but this could also include other activities within the service. For example, a senior manager promoted the use of section 159/being a BME firefighter in a blog and within social media. Assess how these types of activities and additional work could be used to enhance the recruitment process (and not just used a visible picture on the website).
19. Review the communications strategy to see if they could enhance how they support positive action programmes. When working on programmes that address community, positive action and recruitment engage feedback from appropriate sources. This should include the stakeholder groups, communities and other relevant individuals to ensure the right messages are being communicated.

I would like to say a big thank you to all those who contributed to this piece of work. All those who participated were passionate and wanted the positive action initiative to be more effective. They were keen to see the WMFS ensure a more diverse workforce in the future, as well as greater promotional opportunities for current under-represented groups. WMFS have already carried out several initiatives and practices to support the positive action agenda, which is excellent - the next stage is to implement further work to build on current practice.

5. Next Steps and Contact Details

If you do have any questions surrounding this review, or if you would like any more information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

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WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JUNE 2018

1. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - PARTNERSHIPS**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Scrutiny Committee note the content of the Internal Audit Report - Partnerships, Report no FS005, dated 30th April 2018 attached as an Appendix.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to Scrutiny Committee Members to note the content of the Internal Audit Report - Partnerships dated 30th April 2018.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 During 2015 Scrutiny Committee conducted scrutiny of Partnerships activity resulting in a scrutiny report being issued in October 2015.
- 3.2 As a result of the recommendations of the scrutiny report partnerships processes and structures were reviewed during 2016.
- 3.3 The outcome of the partnerships review resulted in a restructure of partnership teams from being based on commands to become a central HQ based team. Recruitment to the new roles took place during the late summer and autumn of 2016.
- 3.4 In May 2017 the Partnerships team published the "Partnerships Governance Framework" that supports

partnerships activity across the organisation

- 3.5 In Feb 2018 Sandwell Audit conducted an audit of the process for managing partnership arrangements.
- 3.6 The audit concluded that there is **satisfactory assurance** over the adequacy of the controls reviewed as part of the process to mitigate risks to an acceptable level.

The audit identified two **significant** issues where improvements could be made, arising from the following:

- The process for completing quality assurance checks has been developed, but the reviews are not currently being undertaken.
 - As a minimum, an Initial Equality Impact Assessment (IEIA) should be undertaken. Currently, no IEIAs are being completed.
- 3.7 The audit identified 3 issues that **Merit Attention** arising from the following
- The quality assurance checklist should be updated to include the following:
 - verify if the IEIA was undertaken
 - verify if an EIA or Privacy Impact Assessment was undertaken (where necessary)
 - The assurance map should be updated to reflect the latest position of the risk.
 - Consideration should be given to including the continued viability of the partnership database in the respective corporate risk.
- 3.8 The appended report provides the findings of the audit and contains the management response to the improvements and recommendations.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required. The matters contained in this report will not lead to a policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix – Internal Audit Report - Partnerships, Report no FS005, dated 30th April 2018

The contact name for this report is Gary Taylor (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), telephone number 0121 380 6006

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Internal Audit Report

Partnerships



Report distribution:

Jason Campbell – Strategic Enabler for Prevention
Peter Wilson – Head of Community Safety
Andrea Simmonds – Partnerships Manager
Michele Pym – Strategic Hub

Report no: FS005

Date issued: 30 April 2018

Contents:

- 1. Executive summary**
- 2. Issues arising**

1 Executive summary

Introduction

An audit of Partnerships was undertaken as part of the approved Internal Audit plan for 2018/19. A key function of the Partnership Team is the provision of strategic support to identify, implement and manage appropriate partnerships.

Partnerships has been identified as a corporate risk:

“3.2 The Fire Authority is unable to establish effective partnership arrangements and deliver community outcomes, resulting in a significant impact upon the organisation's financial standing, reputation and ability to deliver key objectives.”

A previous internal audit report and an internal scrutiny review of Partnerships identified issues that needed to be addressed.

Scope and objectives of audit work

Our audit considered the objectives and the potential risk to the achievement of those objectives.

Objectives Reviewed	Potential Risks
To provide assurance that partnership agreements have effective governance and monitoring arrangements in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The expected outcomes of a partnership agreement are not achieved.
Limitations to scope of audit	To review only the governance and monitoring arrangements for partnership agreements.

Overall conclusion

Our audit provides satisfactory assurance over the adequacy of the controls reviewed as part of the process to mitigate risks to an acceptable level.	Limited	Satisfactory	Substantial
	There is a risk of objectives not being met due to serious control failings.	A framework of controls is in place, but controls need to be strengthened further.	There is a robust framework of controls which are applied continuously.

Key issues identified

We have identified two significant issues where improvements could be made, arising from the following:

- The process for completing quality assurance checks has been developed, but the reviews are not currently being undertaken.
- As a minimum, an Initial Equality Impact Assessment (IEIA) should be undertaken. Currently, no IEIAs are being completed.

Suggested actions for identified issues are shown in the main body of the report. The key issues arising from this report may be included in summary form to the Audit Committee.

Progress since last audit review

The Partnership Team has, over the past 12-18 months, made significant improvements to the process for managing partnership arrangements.

There are now clear and detailed instructions on how partnerships should be evaluated, established, managed and monitored. Individuals involved in the process now have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. All of which is outlined in detailed procedure notes, guidance toolkits, standing orders and template documents.

The requirements for partnerships have been disseminated to relevant individuals through a comprehensive training schedule and a clear structure established to provide on-going support to partnership facilitators.

The latest internal audit report does highlight issues that still need to be addressed, but it is clear there is a strong framework in place to support the continued development of partnership working.

Action is required to avoid exposure to significant risks in achieving objectives Significant		
No	Issue arising	Agreed action/s including responsibility and target date
2.1	<p>The Partnership Team has compiled a “Partnerships Governance Arrangements and Framework” document, which details the key processes to be followed. Within this document is a commitment that the Partnerships Team will undertake quality assurance checks (10% check on a quarterly basis) and provide assurance that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each partnership agreement has clearly defined roles and responsibilities and strong governance arrangements in place. • effective Partnership Monitoring arrangements are in operation <p>Currently, these quality assurance checks have not commenced.</p> <p>Implication:</p> <p>There is a risk that the initial momentum generated by the Partnership Team could stall, resulting in a lack of consistency in approach by partnership facilitators and learning opportunities missed. Thus, undermining a key goal of the authority of establishing effective partnership arrangements.</p>	<p>A date should be set to commence the undertaking of the quality assurance checks.</p> <p>Management response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With effect from April 2018 Commence the quality assurance process for Partnerships. • Diary QA dates <p>Target date:</p> <p>The first QA will take place early July at the end of quarter one and will incorporate a dip sample across the quarter.</p> <p>Diary dates will be agreed by 30.4.18</p> <p>For future consideration:</p> <p>As the quality assurance process becomes embedded and compliance more consistent, the authority may wish to review its approach to selecting partnerships to quality assess and consider using a risk based approach, which may enable a reduction in the number and frequency of the checks, whilst still giving the necessary level of assurance on compliance.</p> <p>Management response:</p> <p>Monitor the quality and consistency of governance compliance over this coming year.</p> <p>Review and implement a risk based approach if the evidence suggests this is appropriate.</p> <p>Target date:</p> <p>1 April 2019</p>
2.2	<p>It is a policy of the authority, that as part of the governance and planning of all partnership arrangements and partnership activity, that as a minimum an Initial Equality Impact Assessment (IEIA) is undertaken. This is to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Currently, no IEIAs are being completed relating to partnership arrangements and activity.</p> <p>Implication:</p> <p>The authority could be in breach of the Equality Act 2010. This could expose the authority to the risk of enforcement action being taken by the Equality and Human Rights Commission or result in a legal challenge.</p>	<p>All relevant persons should be reminded of the need to complete the IEIA and that its completion and where applicable, the undertaking of a full EIA, be evidenced prior to any partnership arrangement being approved.</p> <p>Management response:</p> <p>Issue a permanent routine notice attached to Standing Order 1701 (Prevention Strategy) with the outcome of the audit which includes the requirement for all partnership owners to complete an initial EIA.</p> <p>Target date:</p> <p>Routine notice to be published by 14th May latest so that this action is complete before QPR on 22nd May.</p>

Action is advised to enhance risk control or operational efficiency
Merits Attention

No	Issue arising	Agreed action/s including responsibility and target date
2.3	<p>The authority has a policy to carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) to demonstrate legal compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Data Protection Act. There is an expectation that as part of the governance and planning of all partnership arrangements and activity, that as a minimum an Initial EIA (IEIA) will be undertaken and a decision made whether to undertake a full EIA and similarly a checklist exists to assess whether a PIA is necessary.</p> <p>At present, the quality assurance checklist does not include a check whether these requirements have been met.</p> <p>Implication:</p> <p>The authority could be in breach of the Equality Act 2010 and the Data Protection Act.</p>	<p>The quality assurance checklist should be updated to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verify if the IEIA was undertaken • verify if an EIA or PIA was undertaken (where necessary) <p>Management response:</p> <p>Review and revise the Quality Assurance requirements and documentation to include completing IEIA and PIA.</p> <p>Target date:</p> <p>To be completed by 14th May latest so that this action is complete before QPR on 22nd May</p>
2.4	<p>Partnerships is identified as a corporate risk. A review of the latest assurance map, which details the status of the risk, identified that it needed updating. The assurance map did not fully reflect the work undertaken by the Partnership Team to improve the partnership arrangements. In addition, there was no reference to the risk relating to the partnership database, in terms of whether it still provided the necessary functionality to support the needs of the service and that it was an unsupported system.</p> <p>Implication:</p> <p>The assurance map does not clearly reflect the status of the risk and may have an impact upon the decision-making process moving forward.</p>	<p>The assurance map should be updated to reflect the latest position of the risk.</p> <p>Management response:</p> <p>A report will be presented at QPR to update on the Audit, its findings and actions taken to address issues arising from the Audit. This is where the update of the assurance map against partnerships will be discussed and agreed.</p> <p>Target date:</p> <p>31st May 2018.</p> <p>This date should allow for the 'updating' of the assurance map following QPR.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to including the continued viability of the partnership database in the respective corporate risk.</p> <p>Management response:</p> <p>Will be included in the report for QPR and in the discussions about the update of the assurance map against partnerships risk.</p> <p>Target date:</p> <p>22nd May 2018</p>

Limitations inherent to the internal auditor's work

This report has been prepared solely for the authority in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the terms of reference. Internal audit does not accept or assume any liability of duty of care for any other purpose or to any other party. This report should not be disclosed to any third party, quoted or referred to without prior consent. Internal audit has undertaken this review subject to the limitations outlined below.

Internal control

- Internal control systems, no matter how well designed and operated, are affected by inherent limitations. These include the possibility of poor judgement in decision making, human error, control processes being deliberately circumvented by employees and others, management overriding controls and the occurrence of unforeseeable circumstances.

Responsibilities of management and auditors

- It is management's responsibility to develop and maintain sound systems of risk management, internal control and governance for the prevention and detection of irregularities and fraud. Internal audit work should not be seen as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the design and operation of these systems.
- Internal audit endeavours to plan audit work so that it has a reasonable expectation of detecting significant control weakness and if detected, will carry out additional work directed towards identification of consequent fraud or other irregularities. However, internal audit procedures alone, even when carried out with due professional care, do not guarantee that fraud will be detected.
- Accordingly, these examinations by internal auditors should not be relied upon solely to disclose fraud, defalcations or other irregularities which may exist.

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JUNE 2018

1. **AN ANALYSIS OF PROGRESS OF QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE AGAINST 'THE PLAN' – QUARTER FOUR 2017/2018**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Committee note the status of the Service's key performance indicators in the fourth quarter of 2017/2018 (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 THAT the Committee note the progress made in delivering the three strategic priorities contained in 'The Plan' 2017-2020 (Appendix 1).
- 1.3 THAT the Committee note the update on the performance information system detailed in section 5 of this report.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to provide the Committee with an analysis of the organisation's performance against 'The Plan' for 2017/2018.

3. **BACKGROUND**

The fourth Quarterly Performance Review meeting of 2017/2018 was held on 22 May 2018. This quarterly meeting, attended by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Principal Officers, Strategic Managers and other key stakeholders, provides a joined up method of managing performance and provides assurance around the ongoing performance of 'The Plan'.

4. **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

4.1 The setting of targets against the operational and other performance indicators enables the Service to define in key areas the improvements which contribute to making the West Midlands safer, stronger and healthier, and to manage the resources allocated to this work. The Service continues to improve and meet targets across a range of indicators.

4.2 Appendix 1 details the performance against our:

- Service Delivery Performance Indicators (Response, Prevention and Protection)
- People Support Services Performance Indicators
- Safety, Health and Environment Performance Indicators
- Strategic Objectives as outlined in 'The Plan' and milestones due for completion within the year 2017/2018.

4.3 Service Delivery Performance Indicators

4.3.1 Response:

- PI 1 – the risk based attendance standard; performance continues to be positive, with the targets having been met for all four categories of incident type. The performance is rated as over performance against the tolerance levels (blue).
- Average attendance times for Category 1 incidents (the most critical and important of the four categories) is 4 minutes 53 seconds in Quarter 4, an increase of five seconds compared to the previous quarter. The year-end figure for 2017/18 is 4 minutes 46 seconds.
- Average attendance times for Category 2, 3 and 4 Incident Types remain well within their respective targets:
 - Category 2 Incident Type: 5 minutes 36 seconds (a decrease of one second) – the target is under 7 minutes.
 - Category 3 Incident Type: 5 minutes 01 second (a decrease of eight seconds) – the target is under 10 minutes.
 - Category 4 Incident Type: 6 minutes 38 seconds (an increase of two seconds) – the target is under 20 minutes.

4.3.2 Prevention:

- The performance indicators for the following areas demonstrate performance is within the tolerance levels (green):
 - PI 3 Injuries from accidental fires in dwellings, taken to hospital for treatment.
 - PI 5 The percentage of Safe and Well visits referred by our partners.
 - PI 10 The number of arson vehicle fires.
 - PI 11 The number of arson rubbish fires.
 - PI 12 The number of arson fires in derelict buildings.
- There are four areas where under performance has been demonstrated against the tolerance levels (red):
 - PI 2 The number of accidental dwelling fires.
 - PI 6 The number of Safe and Well points achieved by the Brigade.
 - PI 8 The number of arson fires in dwellings.
 - PI 9 The number of arson fires in non-domestic premises.
- The following two performance indicators do not have a performance rating assigned:
 - PI 4 The number of deaths from accidental fires in dwellings.
 - PI 7 The number of people killed or seriously injured in Road Traffic Collisions.

4.3.3 Protection:

- The performance indicators for the following areas demonstrate performance is within the tolerance levels (green):
 - PI 13 – The number of accidental fires in non-domestic premises.
 - PI 14 – The number of false alarm calls due to fire alarm equipment in dwellings and non-domestic premises.

4.4 People Support Services Performance Indicators

4.4.1 The performance indicators for the following areas demonstrate performance is within the tolerance levels (green):

- PI 15 – The percentage of employees that have disclosed their disabled status.
- PI 16 – The number of female uniformed staff.
- PI 17 – The percentage of all staff from black and ethnic minority (BME) communities.
- PI 17a – The percentage of uniformed staff from BME communities

4.4.2 There are three areas where under performance has been demonstrated against the tolerance levels (red):

- PI 18 – The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness (all staff).
- PI 19 – The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness (uniformed and Fire Control staff).
- PI 20 – The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness (non-uniformed employees).

4.5 Safety, Health and Environment Performance Indicators

4.5.1 The performance indicators for the following areas indicate over performance against the tolerance levels (blue):

- PI 22 – The total number of RIDDOR injuries.
- PI 25 – To reduce the electricity use of Fire Authority premises.

4.5.2 The performance indicator for the following area indicates performance within the tolerance levels (green):

- PI 21 – The total number of injuries
- PI 23 – To reduce the Fire Authority's carbon emissions
- PI 24 – To reduce the gas use of Fire Authority premises.

5. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

- 5.1 The InPhase performance management system has now been implemented and continues to be embedded across the organisation. It is envisaged that InPhase will continue to be further developed where applicable.
- 5.2 Full engagement with staff and departments across the organisation continues with InPhase, ensuring the involvement of all key stakeholders and end users.
- 5.3 3PT is an acronym for a layered approach to portfolio, programme, project, and task management.
- 5.4 Development of the 3PT infrastructure as a project itself has been completed. It is now being embedded across the Service to manage performance in a project environment as workstreams are identified for implementation.

6. **CORPORATE RISK**

- 6.1 Corporate Risks are those risks that, if realised, would seriously affect the Service's ability to carry out its core functions or deliver key objectives.
- 6.2 In accordance with the Corporate Risk Management Strategy, all risks maintained within the Corporate Risk Register have been reviewed by Senior Risk Owners in order to update the relevant triggers, impacts and control measures and determine a relevant risk score, if appropriate, based on assessment of likelihood and impact.
- 6.3 A report of progress against our Corporate Risks is submitted separately to the Audit Committee.

7. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report, an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The matters contained within this report will not lead to a policy change.

8. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The course of action recommended in this report does not raise issues which should be drawn to the attention of the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

9. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The level of response, protection and prevention resources required to achieve the targets for the operational indicators shown in Appendix 1, were considered as part of the Authority's 2017/2018 budget setting process which established a total budget requirement of £94.848million. Based on Best Value Accounting Code of Practice, the estimated cost of staff engaged in prevention work including an element for watch based firefighters for 2017/2018 is £13.2 million. The cost of delivering services which contribute to the performance achievements comprise goods such as smoke alarms and staff time. The staff time includes those who are solely engaged in prevention work and watch based staff that provide emergency response as well as prevention services.

9.2 Expenditure on smoke alarms and other supporting materials in 2017/18 is £330,300.

10. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

'The Plan 2017-20' Strategic Objectives – Level 2 Action Plans.
Corporate Action Plan updates.

Corporate Risk Position Statement Quarter 4 2017/18 (exception report).

The contact name for this report is Gary Taylor (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), telephone number 0121 380 6006.

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Performance Indicator Performance – Quarter Four 2017/18

Key:	
Blue	Over performance against the tolerance levels
Green	Performance is within the tolerance levels
Red	Under performance against the tolerance levels

Response

Our Response Service protects life, properties and the economies of the West Midlands by delivering assertive, safe and effective firefighting through timely response, across a range of emergencies we attend.

To support the delivery of the following Strategic Objective:

- We will deliver an assertive, safe, economic, efficient and effective emergency response service.

PI 1		<p>The Risk Based Attendance Standard Target: under 5 minutes Actual: 4 minutes 53 seconds (Q4) 4 minutes 46 seconds (YTD) Over performance against the tolerance levels</p>
<p>The median attendance time to high-risk (Cat 1) incidents in quarter four was 4 minutes 53 seconds, an increase of five seconds compared to the previous quarter and a three second increase compared to the same quarter in 2016/17. The year to date median attendance time was 4 minutes 46 seconds.</p> <p>Attendance times for Category 2, 3 & 4 incidents remain well within target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category 2: 5 minutes 36 seconds (target is under 7 minutes) • Category 3: 5 minutes 01 seconds (target is under 10 minutes) • Category 4: 6 minutes 38 seconds (target is under 20 minutes) 		

Prevention

Our Prevention Services focus on public involvement and education, engaging with our partners, targeting schools, communities and vulnerable people, with advice and guidance which will give particular attention to social inequalities.

- We will improve the safety of our communities at risk from fire.
- We will improve road safety through targeted action.
- We will improve the quality of life and economic prosperity of local communities.

<p>PI 2</p>		<p>The number of accidental dwelling fires Forecast YTD: 1583 (1504 – 1614) Actual to date: 1631 Under performance against the tolerance levels</p>
<p>There were 404 accidental dwelling fires in quarter four, 12 above target, although the third lowest quarter during 2017/18. The end of year figure of 1631 incidents were 48 incidents (3%) over target. Although this is an increase on 2016/17 (1592 incidents) it is the second lowest annual figure since our records began in 1998/99.</p>		
<p>PI 3</p>		<p>Injuries from accidental fires in dwellings (taken to hospital for treatment) Forecast YTD: 62 (50 – 67) Actual to date: 51 Performance is within the tolerance levels</p>
<p>There were thirteen injuries as a result of accidental dwelling fires in quarter four, compared to a quarterly target of 17.</p> <p>The year-end figure of 51 is 17.7% below target, 14 fewer than 2016/17, and the lowest number since our records began in 2009/10.</p> <p>62.7% of casualties were male. 37.3% of casualties were aged 35 to 54, and 21.6% were aged over 75.</p> <p>Cooking appliances and smoking were the most likely sources of ignition, accounting for 41.2% and 21.6% of injuries respectively.</p> <p>A third of injuries were caused fighting or attempting to fight the fire. 17.6% of injuries were due to immobility.</p>		
<p>PI 4</p>		<p>The number of deaths from accidental dwelling fires Forecast YTD: N/A Actual to date: 9</p>

There were two fatalities at Accidental Dwelling Fires in quarter four.

Of the nine fatalities during 2017/18, smoking related fires accounted for a third (although accounting for just 8.5% of all accidental dwelling fires). Two fatalities were due to fires where a cooking appliance was a source of ignition, two were due to electricity supply, one due to a heater, and due to matches.

Four of the fatalities were aged over 80, five were aged between 40 and 60. Five were male and four were female.

PI 5		The percentage of Safe and Well visits referred by our partners Forecast YTD: 50% (50% - 52.5%) Actual to date: 50.3% Performance is within the tolerance levels
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The percentage of Safe and Well visits referred by our partners during quarter four was 50.8%. The year to date figure increased from 47.1% to 50.3%. Performance had improved following quarter one (35.9%) with performance during the remaining three quarters all above the 50% target (50.2%, 54.6% and 50.8% respectively).

This continued improvement reflects that the joint working, reported in quarter two, between operational crews, the partnerships team and Fire Control continues to be effective and is being embedded.

PI 6		The number of Safe & Well points achieved by the Brigade Forecast YTD: 275,000 Actual to date: 270,395 Under performance against the tolerance levels
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84,516 Safe & Well points were achieved during quarter four, an increase compared to quarter three (63,523), and 15,766 above the quarterly target, representing the highest number of points for any quarter in 2017/18 and the only quarter to exceed the quarterly target of 68,750.

270,395 Safe & Well points were achieved during 2017/18, 4605 points below the target for the year (approximately 98.5% achieved). In comparison, the figures were 20,000 points below target at the end of quarter three.

31,575 Safe & Well visits were carried out during 2017/18. This is the highest number of visits in one year since the Service started delivering Home Safety Checks and Safe & Wells.

The average number of points per visit remained consistent at 8.6.

Breakdown of the total number of Safe & Well (S&W) for quarter four:

	Jan	Feb	Mar
Total S&W visits:	2952	3352	3311
Total S&W per appliance per day:	1.59	2.00	1.78
Total S&W points*:	26457	28900	29049

*Please note that the figures quoted in the table may not tally 100% with end of year figures due to delays in the data systems.

PI 7		<p>The number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions</p> <p>Forecast YTD: Not applicable</p> <p>Actual to date: 726 (not up to date)</p>
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Delays continue in the provision of figures for this performance indicator. At the time of writing, the figure for 2017/18 was 726.

Latest figures suggest a quarter on quarter increase for 2017/18, compared to the opposite trend during 2016/17.

The latest update indicates there were 212 people killed or seriously injured in quarter one (9 killed and 203 seriously injured), 245 in quarter two (15 and 230), and 269 in quarter three (11 and 258).

The number of serious injuries seemed to be on a descending trend after peaking in May 2016, until August 2017 when they started increasing again. Numbers fell again in December 2017, however the figures are not final yet and there is a possibility this will increase.

In November there were 19 people seriously injured in road traffic collisions in Sandwell, the highest monthly figure for the borough in at least 4 years.

PI 8		<p>The number of arson fires in dwellings</p> <p>Forecast YTD: 190 (169 – 196)</p> <p>Actual to date: 220</p> <p>Under performance against the tolerance levels</p>
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The number of arson fires in dwellings remains above target. However, overall performance continues to show signs of improvement, and quarter four was within the tolerance levels (45 incidents against a target of 44). The end of year figure was approximately 16.6% (30 incidents) over target.

Protection

PI 9		The number of arson fires in non-domestic premises Forecast YTD: 158 (143 – 165) Actual to date: 202 Under performance against the tolerance levels
<p>There were 44 incidents during quarter four, more than the quarterly target of 35. 202 incidents during 2017/18 represents 27.5% above target at the end of the year.</p> <p>In Birmingham North, 57 of the 95 incidents (60.0%) were at HMP Birmingham, which is the same number as 2016/17. Quarter one was the highest with 15 incidents, there were 14 in quarter two, and then nine in quarters three and four. Birmingham South experienced 31 incidents, nine over target.</p>		
PI 10		The number of arson vehicle fires Forecast YTD: 904 (816 – 951) Actual to date: 867 Performance is within the tolerance levels
<p>There were 182 incidents during quarter four (below the target of 226). The number of arson vehicle fires remains within the tolerance levels as it had done throughout 2017/18, with the year-end figure 4.1% below target, and 5% below the 2016/17 figure. However, it is the second highest number of incidents in seven years.</p>		
PI 11		The number of arson rubbish fires Forecast YTD: 1908 (1814 – 1946) Actual to date: 1924 Performance is within the tolerance levels
<p>There were 256 incidents during quarter four compared to a target of 339. The number of arson rubbish fires year-end figure of 1924 was just 0.8% above target. This was mainly due to the very low number in March (72 against a target of 152) which was related to the wet and wintry weather experienced at that time.</p>		
PI 12		The number of arson fires in derelict buildings Forecast YTD: 145 (130 – 151) Actual to date: 132 Performance is within the tolerance levels
<p>There were 14 incidents during quarter four, below the target of 26. It was a relatively low number of incidents compared to previous quarters (44, 40 and 34 respectively).</p> <p>The number of arson fires in derelict buildings has remained within the tolerance levels for most of 2017/18 and the year-end figure represents 9.2% below target.</p>		

Our Protection Service prioritises the risks to the business sector, focusing on the provision of advice and importantly the enforcement of legislation with a mind-set of continuing to support the economic wellbeing of the West Midlands.

To support the delivery of the following Strategic Objective:

- We will advise and enforce on fire safety issues across the West Midlands to comply with fire safety legislation.

<p>PI 13</p>		<p>The number of accidental fires in non-domestic premises Forecast YTD: 426 (383 – 447) Actual to date: 437 Performance is within the tolerance levels</p>
<p>There were 129 incidents during quarter four, above the target of 111 but within the tolerance levels for the quarter.</p> <p>The year-end figure of 437 accidental fires in non-domestic premises equates to just 2.5% over the target and remains within the tolerance levels for 2017/18 as it had done all year.</p>		
<p>PI 14</p>		<p>The number of false alarm calls due to fire alarm equipment in dwellings and non-domestic premises Forecast YTD: 5457 (5184 – 5565) Actual to date: 5408 Performance is within the tolerance levels</p>
<p>There were 1266 incidents during quarter four, slightly above the quarterly target of 1210 although remaining within the tolerance levels as per each quarter during 2017/18.</p> <p>The year-end figure of 5408 is 0.9% below target and the year on year reduction in incidents experienced since 2009/10 continues.</p>		

People Support Services

<p>PI 15</p>		<p>The percentage of employees that have disclosed their disabled status Target: 100% (90% - 100%) Actual to date: 92.5% Performance is within the tolerance levels</p>
<p>The percentage of employees disclosing their disability status has remained relatively constant with a slight rise compared to the previous year, to 92.5%. 40 uniformed staff, 33 non-uniformed staff, and 1 member of Fire Control have declared that they have a disability.</p>		
<p>PI 16</p>		<p>The number of female uniformed staff Target: 86 (77.5 – 94.5) Actual to date: 89 Performance is within the tolerance levels</p>
<p>The number of female uniformed staff has increased to 86. 22% (16) of firefighter recruits in 2017/18 were female; the target was 20%. One female member of staff has taken a career break and one is on secondment to another Service.</p> <p>40% of uniformed posts are management roles (Crew Commander and above). 32% of female uniformed staff are in management roles compared to 41% of male uniformed staff.</p> <p>Positive action activity for new entrant firefighters continues and recruitment activity was opened in October 2017, which included taster days and fitness sessions specifically targeted at women. Since September 2017, the DICE team have processed over 3000 firefighter applications with just over 200 applications being assessed via the newly developed firefighter assessment process. 67 new entrant firefighters have been employed since January 2018, 33% (22) of whom are female.</p>		
<p>PI 17</p>		<p>The percentage of all staff from BME communities Target: 10.8% (9.0% – 11.0%) Actual to date: 10.6% Performance is within the tolerance levels</p>
<p>The percentage of all staff from black and ethnic minority (BME) communities has remained relatively constant over time with a slight increase to 10.6% in quarter four (and an increase of 0.6% compared to year 2016/17).</p> <p>When considering the ethnicity profile of crew commanders and above, 26% of BME uniformed staff hold a management position compared to 42% of white uniformed staff. With regard to non-uniformed staff, 47% of BME staff are in a position above a grade eight, compared to 58% of white staff.</p>		

Positive action activity for new entrant firefighters continues and recruitment activity was opened in October 2017, which included taster days and fitness sessions specifically targeted at BME communities. Since September 2017, the DICE team have processed over 3000 firefighter applications with just over 200 applications being assessed via the newly developed firefighter assessment process. 67 new entrant firefighters have been employed since January 2018, 32% (21) of whom are BME.

PI 17a		<p>The percentage of uniformed staff from BME communities Target: 9.4% (7.4% – 9.4%) Actual to date: 9.2% Performance is within the tolerance levels</p>
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9.2% of uniformed staff are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities (just below target). 26% of firefighter recruits in 2017/18 were from BME communities; the target was 35%.

26% of uniformed BME staff are in a management position (Crew Commander and above) compared to 42% of white uniformed staff.

PI 18		<p>The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness – all staff Target: 5.27 (4.21 – 6.32) Actual to date: 6.44 Under performance against the tolerance levels</p>
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An average of 6.44 days/shifts per person were lost due to sickness year to date 2017/18. Although higher than the target of 5.27, performance represents a 4% reduction in sickness in 2017/18. However, the target for 2017/18 was a 24% reduction.

1.64 days/shifts per person were lost due to sickness during quarter four, higher than the quarterly target of 1.30 and above the upper tolerance level.

PI 19		<p>The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness – uniformed and Fire Control staff Target: 5.37 (4.29 – 6.44) Actual to date: 6.48 Under performance against the tolerance levels</p>
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An average of 6.48 days/shifts per person were lost due to sickness year to date 2017/18. Although performance is just above the upper tolerance levels, it represents a 3% reduction in sickness compared to 2016/17. However, the target for 2017/18 was a reduction of 22%.

1.59 days/shifts per person were lost due to sickness during quarter four, above the target (1.30) and the upper tolerance level for the quarter.

8% of Uniformed sickness episodes have no absence reason recorded.

9% of Uniformed back to work interviews have not been recorded on HRMS.

The top 5 causes of sickness are:

- Mental health – Anxiety / Depression
- Post-Operative
- Gastrointestinal
- Respiratory – Colds and Flu
- Musculoskeletal - Back

Long term sickness accounted for 66% of all Uniformed sickness (55% in quarter three).

36 members of staff are on restricted duties (an increase of 16 compared to quarter three 17/18).

PI 20		The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness – non-uniformed staff Target: 4.97 (3.97 – 5.96) Actual: 6.35 Under performance against the tolerance levels
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An average of 6.35 days/shifts per person were lost due to sickness year to date 2017/18. Although performance is just above the upper tolerance levels, it represents a 4.5% reduction in sickness compared to 2016/17. However, the target for 2017/18 was a reduction of 28%.

1.93 days/shifts were lost due to sickness during quarter four, above the quarterly target of 1.30).

21% of non-uniformed sickness episodes have no absence reason recorded.

26% of non-uniformed back to work interviews have not been recorded on HRMS.

The top 5 causes of sickness are:

- Mental Health – Anxiety / Depression
- Post-Operative
- Respiratory – Cold and Flue
- Gastrointestinal
- Musculoskeletal – Back

Long term sickness accounted for 66% of all non-uniformed sickness (56% during quarter three).

Four members of staff were on restricted duties (same as per quarter three).

Safety, Health and Environment

<p>PI 21</p>		<p>The total number of injuries Forecast YTD: 132 (119 – 145) Actual to date: 120 Performance is within the tolerance levels</p>
<p>There were 25 injuries during quarter four which was the lowest quarter for 2017/18 and eight below the quarterly target. There were 120 injuries throughout 2017/18 compared to a target of 132, with performance just above the lower tolerance level. The annual performance was 8% lower than the previous year of 131 injuries and represents the lowest level since our records began.</p> <p>Slips, trips and falls (23) and manual handling (18) were the two main causes of injury.</p> <p>32% of injury reports were incident related, 68% non-incident related.</p> <p>270 near hits were reported during 2017/18, a 32% increase from 204 for the previous year.</p> <p>There were 138 violence reports, an increase of 31%. 91 were related to verbal abuse and 22 involved some form of missile throwing. 121 were incident related and 17 non-incident related.</p>		
<p>PI 22</p>		<p>The total number of RIDDOR injuries Forecast YTD: 18 (16 – 20) Actual to date: 11 Over performance against the tolerance levels</p>
<p>There were three RIDDOR reports during quarter four. Two injuries were training related, the third support related.</p> <p>There were eleven reports during 2017/18, the same as per the previous year and the joint lowest number since our records began. The main category of reports for the year remained slips, trips and falls but there were no significant trends.</p>		
<p>PI 23</p>		<p>To reduce the Fire Authority's carbon emissions Forecast YTD: 5444 Actual to date: 5375 Performance is within the tolerance levels</p>
<p>The total carbon emissions have reduced by 1.3% compared to 2017/18. Reductions in several areas have contributed to the footprint, the largest reductions being in air travel (54%), electricity use (18%), mileage claims for essential and casual car users (4%), and waste collected (3%). Some areas have seen increases such as the use of gas (1%) heating oil (61% - Tettenhall Fire Station only), water use (61%), train journeys (59%), and from diesel use for appliances (15%). There has been a significant increase from fuel card use.</p>		

PI 24		To reduce gas use of Fire Authority premises Forecast YTD: 10178MWh (9160 – 11196) Actual to date: 10075MWh Performance is within the tolerance levels
<p>Slight increase in gas usage but within the tolerance levels. Increase partially attributed to turning on heating earlier than normal due to adverse cold weather. Programme of improvements and upgrades continues. Three boiler replacements were delayed so benefits of the replacements yet to be seen.</p>		
PI 25		To reduce electricity use of Fire Authority premises Forecast YTD: 5461MWh (4915 – 6007) Actual to date: 4344MWh Over performance against the tolerance levels
<p>Slight increase in usage compared to previous quarters, which can be attributed to seasonal trends and adverse winter conditions during quarter four. Electricity usage remains under target and the end of year performance is below the lower tolerance levels. Continued planned works were supported by various lighting LED upgrades, full station re-wires and UPS battery replacements.</p>		

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JUNE 2018

1. **DIVERSITY INCLUSION COHESION EQUALITY (DICE) UPDATE**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

THAT Scrutiny Committee note the progress made by the Service in relation to DICE during the last 6 months.

2. **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To provide an update to Scrutiny Committee to review and consider the ongoing progress being made by the Service in advancing DICE. This activity supports our equality objectives as well as our statutory requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The DICE objectives contained within the DICE report were developed in consultation with functions and departments across the Service. The objectives not only fulfil our legal duties as a public sector organisation under the Equality Act 2010, but also help address areas of development towards achieving excellence in the Equality Framework.

3.2 This report details our continued progress towards achieving our objectives and provides an update in relation to the Equality Framework.

4. **LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT**

- 4.1 With effect from 2017, any organisation that has 250 or more employees are required to publish and report figures regarding their gender pay gap. Figures are calculated using a 'snap shot date' of 31st March. The gender pay gap (mean) for WMFS is 14%. This information has been published on our website alongside the workforce profile data.

WMFS is committed to attracting and recruiting individuals who may be at a disadvantage because of a protected characteristic and / or are underrepresented in the organisation. Through a variety of methods, we encourage, support and nurture candidates through selection as well as provide coaching, mentoring and targeted development for existing employees to progress within the organisation. Our approach to this has proved successful and is particularly evident in operational roles where the number of women is increasing, and we have seen significant increase in the number of women in operational supervisory and middle management roles. The 2% mean gender pay gap for Service Delivery roles is evidence of this success.

When considering support staff, most women are employed in foundation level roles and this is contributing to a larger pay gap for this category of staff. Attention needs to be paid to closing this gap and how we introduce positive action more effectively for support staff roles.

- 4.2 The DICE station initiative was created to help capture best practice across the organisation regarding DICE activity. The programme commenced in September 2017, with reviews in November and April 2018. Eleven stations are DICE stations, as well as Fire Safety. The initial trial of DICE stations has proved useful in capturing good practice and evidence for internal and external audit. Station Peer Assurance now includes questions regarding DICE activity and feedback from this will be shared with the DICE team. This feedback will be evaluated with a view to expanding the DICE station initiative to all stations.

4.3 WMFS have now received feedback from Stonewall following the latest audit. Our overall score has increased as did our position on the index where we have increased by 33 places. We are placed at 352 / 434. An action plan is being developed with the involvement of our Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) support group FireOut. One of the most encouraging aspects of the Stonewall audit was the results from the anonymous survey conducted on our LGBT and non-LGBT staff. In survey we saw some very positive results, in line with some of the most inclusive organisations in the index.

To the statements:

“The workplace culture in my organisation is inclusive of gay men / lesbians” – 96% of non-LGBT employees agreed.
“I consider myself to be an advocate for LGBT equality” – 70% of non-LGBT employees agreed.

4.4 The Top 50 Inclusive UK Employers is an index which provides detail of UK based organisations that promote inclusion across all protected characteristics, throughout each level of employment within their organisation. WMFS continues to improve its rating among the UK’s most inclusive employers, increasing our rank to 28th, with only one other FRS ahead of us. We are confident that we will continue to improve.

5. **COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE AND ENGAGEMENT**

5.1 We currently have 3,232 Community Members and this number continues to increase. The gender split of the community members is relatively even with 45% male, 50% female and 5% not stated. A quarter of the members describe themselves as being from a Black / ethnic minority background. The largest percentage (38%) are in the age range of 25 to 44 years. 4% (113) have declared that they are LGBT, however 34% (1,062) have not declared their sexual orientation.

- 5.2 Community members were actively engaged during the consultation period for the West Midlands Combined Authority. Regular newsletters are distributed and these are now Command based to inform individuals about activity in their local area.
- 5.3 Further evaluation is required to understand the outcome and value of the community member initiative.

6. **EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY**

- 6.1 Fire Safety teams, with support from BEST and the heritage group, are currently working with the Sikh Council to investigate the world-wide issue of fire protection for holy books.
- 6.2 Crews from both Ward End and Sheldon have recently given presentations at South and City College for International Women's Day with female operational staff sharing their story and explaining the role of women in the Fire Service.
- 6.3 Following the introduction of the Ecademy package for Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT), approximately 1,000 employees have undertaken the course within the first month. Our MSHT packages have been shared with both Hereford & Worcester and Warwickshire FRS.
- 6.4 Crews from Oldbury have established a partnership with Sandwell Women's Trust and have delivered fire safety awareness to the local refuge for families who have been victims of domestic violence.
- 6.5 Crews from Smethwick have been working with ASRA (an Asian sheltered housing association) following an increase in false alarm calls. Safe and Well have been delivered to residents and their family members, resulting in further Safe and Well referrals.

- 6.6 Crews from Highgate and Bournbrook are working in partnership with community groups, Attwood Community Enrichment and Unity Street, to improve Safe and Well visits to minority communities in Edgbaston and Sparkbrook. Both community groups support minority communities in deprived areas of the City, from low income backgrounds.
- 6.7 Working alongside St. Basil's Hostel for the Homeless, crews from Highgate are delivering fire safety education to a group of vulnerable 17 – 24-year olds.

7. **EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

- 7.1 As at October 2017, WMFS employed a total of 1,909 staff. 1,401 (74%) are uniformed, 443 (24%) non-uniformed, and 65 (3%) Fire Control. 5% of uniformed staff are female compared to more than half (55%) of non-uniformed staff and 85% of Fire Control.

When considering the age profile of the workforce the average age of all staff is 43 years, with 75% of the workforce aged between 35 and 54 years. Just 2% (40) are under the age of 24.

10% of all employees are from a Black or Minority Ethnic community. 93% of employees have made a declaration, with 4% indicating they have a disability.

81% of employees have declared sexual orientation, however 13% (250) of these have indicated that they would prefer not to state.

40% of uniformed posts are crew commander and above. 32% of all female uniformed staff are in a crew commander position or above compared to 41% of male uniformed staff. In 2012/2013, 14.3% of female uniformed staff were in a crew commander position or above and we have seen a steady increase in representation each year.

When considering non-uniformed staff, 57% of posts are above a grade 8. 43% of all female non-uniformed staff hold a position above a grade 8 compared to 73% of male non-uniformed staff. Again, we have seen a steady increase in representation of women in higher graded roles since 2012/2013 where 35% of all female non-uniformed staff held a position above a grade 8.

A full breakdown of ethnicity can be found at Appendix 1.

7.2 During the reporting period July 2017 – December 2017 there were a total of 6 grievances lodged. All grievances were from operational male employees.

3 grievances lodged due to the removal of Continued Professional Development.

1 grievance in relation to a transfer request

2 grievances were lodged in relation to the behaviours of their line manager.

For the period July 2017 to December 2017 the number of grievances has increased from the previous six months. The previous report showed that there were 2 grievances lodged within a 6-month period.

Protected Characteristic Data (6 grievance cases)

- 6 male employees are all Grey Book
- 4 married, 1 living with partner and 1 single
- 5 heterosexuals and 1 prefer not to state
- 1 Scientology, 1 other religion, 1 Christian, 1 Muslim, 1 prefer not to state and 1 other religion
- 1 has a disability, 4 no disability and 1 has not entered any information
- Age: Under 30 = 1 employee, age 31-45 = 2 employees, age 46-55 = 3 employees.
- 5 employees are White and 1 is Asian

There have not been any grievances lodged during the first quarter of 2018.

7.3 During the period July 2017 – December 2017 there were 8 discipline cases.

1 case was investigated as misconduct.

2 cases were investigated as Gross Misconduct, both were support staff employees.

4 cases relating to one incident were investigated as Gross Misconduct and all went to hearing.

1 case was investigated as Gross Misconduct, this took place due to the employee breaching a previous live warning of 18 months.

Protected Characteristics Data (8 disciplinary cases)

- 8 male employees, 6 Grey Book and 2 Green Book
- 4 single, 1 living together, 3 married
- 5 heterosexuals and 3 prefer not to say
- 3 Asian, 4 White and 1 Black male
- 4 employees prefer not to state their religion, 2 Muslim, 1 Christian and 1 other religion
- 7 employees do not have a disability and 1 employee did disclose that they have a disability.
- Age: under 30 =1 employee, under 40 =3 employees, under 50 = 4 employees

There are currently 10 disciplinary cases under investigation. 8 employees have been suspended relating to one of these disciplinary cases.

Considering the information in points 7.2 and 7.3, there have been no trends identified relating to equality strands.

- 7.4 The DICE team, in consultation with our stakeholder groups (Affinity, AFSA, Inspire, FireOut), have developed Terms of Reference. The terms of reference provide clarity for the stakeholder groups as well as objectives for the groups to achieve. This has been a positive step by the stakeholder groups. It is proposed that they will meet on a 6-monthly basis with the Strategic Enabler People to discuss progress and provide feedback to the organisation, as well as meet annually with SET. The DICE team will support the groups by offering appropriate development opportunities, opportunities for the groups to support organisational objectives and shape the DICE report.

8. **RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND PROGRESSION**

- 8.1 In November 2017, Equal Approach provided a report to WMFS following a review of our positive action activity. The report provides external scrutiny of our approach and makes recommendations for further improvement. The review was conducted by reviewing and scrutinising all documents and processes relating to positive action as well as carrying out structured interviews with the DICE team and wider stakeholders. The outcome of the review includes highlights and themes from the stakeholder interviews, recommendations for enhanced practice regarding positive action initiatives, and suggested updates to policy and process. The recommendations are being considered with a view to the DICE team and stakeholder groups working together to generate an action plan.
- 8.2 Since September 2017 WMFS have been working in partnership with the Fire Service College and Thinkology regarding firefighter recruitment. Our marketing / advertising activity is closely managed and targeted using social media. We have created a range of advertisements which are distributed via Facebook. Our website has been updated and we have developed WMFS specific pages on the national Beafirefighter portal.

Since September 2017, the DICE team have processed in excess of 3000 firefighter applications, with just over 200 being assessed via the newly developed firefighter assessment process. Since January 2018, WMFS have employed 67 new entrant firefighters, 22 (33%) women and 21 (32%) BME. The next training course is due to commence in August 2018 and WMFS is confident that there will be a further increase in representation of target groups.

- 8.3 WMFS have introduced a new pre-recruitment programme exclusively for women. This is a new initiative that has never been delivered in this way before. The programme is designed to take candidates right from the beginning of their application into employment/training and provides the maximum level of support available. The programme will be delivered over several optional sessions with some mandatory assessments. These assessments will mirror

those that candidates would face on the standard application route but will be delivered in a modular way. The aim of the programme is not to coach individuals to pass the assessments, but to ensure they fully understand the Service and can maximise their ability to excel under assessment conditions.

The programme commenced in April 2018 and runs through to August 2018 with a view to running a further course from August following evaluation.

- 8.4 In addition to the pre-recruitment programme detailed at 8.3, we have introduced 'pre-recruitment light' for all underrepresented groups. This programme may be more suitable for some women who are unable to make the commitment to the full programme. This is also available for our BME groups.

Individuals apply through the standard application with support before the assessment centre. Candidates register their interest in the normal way and undertake the online assessments. Once completed, candidates are invited to four short sessions to offer support prior to the assessment centre.

9. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

This report responds directly to the General and Specific Duties of the Equality Act and considers DICE 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 of the protected characteristics.

10. **RISK IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The objectives identified in this report support the organisation in mitigating its risk with regard to claims of unlawful discrimination.

11. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The recommendations outlined in this report assist us to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act 2010 particularly to advance equal opportunities and eliminate behaviours that are unlawful under the Act.

12. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

13. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

The contact officer for this report is Sarah Warnes, Strategic Enabler for People, contact number 07973 810813.

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

APPENDIX 1

Ethnicity Breakdown as at 31st March 2018

Ethnicity	Ethnic Origin	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
White	White - British	1187	333	60	1580
	White - Irish	10	5	2	17
	White British - English / Welsh / Northern Irish / British	25	6	1	32
	White - any other White background	35	7	2	44
	Total	1257	351	65	1673
BME	Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi		2		2
	Asian or Asian British - Indian	10	25		35
	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	8	3		11
	Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	1	9		10
	Black or Black British - African	2	1		3
	Black or Black British - Caribbean	44	14	1	59
	Black or Black British - any other Black background	7	6		13
	Mixed - White and Asian	10	1		11
	Mixed - White and Black African	2	1		3
	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	25	6		31
	Mixed - any other Mixed background	11	2		13
	Chinese		1		1
	Other	9	1		10
Total	129	72	1	202	
Prefer not to state		13	3		16
Not known		11	11	1	23
Total		1410	437	67	1914

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JUNE 2018

1. **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2017/18**

Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDED

That the Committee gives consideration to the content and format of its Annual Report 2017/18 for submission to the next full meeting of the Authority.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to Members to seek approval of the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2017/18.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Scrutiny Committee was established at the Annual General Meeting of the Authority in June 2012. The Committee was to undertake performance management functions and would also scrutinise human resource matters, equality and diversity and health and safety across the Service. Its purpose is to:

- inform policy development
- hold officers and the Service to account
- hold the Authority to account
- conduct reviews into specific issues

3.2 A draft Annual Report for 2017/18 has been prepared by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee and is attached for comments by the Committee in preparation for submission of the report to the next Authority meeting (25 June 2018).

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out because the matters contained in this report do not relate to a policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no particular legal requirements for the Authority to establish a Scrutiny Committee; it is however, considered good practice for authorities to have a vehicle through which monitoring and review of the Authority's policies and practices can be undertaken.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Advice may be provided internally by Officers at no direct cost to the Authority, supporting the Committee in its work. The Scrutiny Committee can, if required, access resources to be able to engage external professional advice where applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Authority and Scrutiny Committee Reports
Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Chris Tranter
Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

**Annual Report of the Scrutiny
Committee
2017/18**

1. Background

The Scrutiny Committee was established by the Fire Authority at its Annual General Meeting in 2012. Its purpose is to:

- inform policy development
- hold officers and the Service to account
- hold the Authority to account
- conduct reviews into specific issues

The key benefits of the Committee can be seen as:

- Complementing the strategic and policy formulation and development work of the Authority and Service.
- Developing the skills of Members to enable them to investigate below the surface of policies, strategies and processes.
- Providing a useful oversight and an element of 'challenge' to performance improvement processes and continuous improvement.
- Encouraging public involvement in the policy process.
- Supporting the development of an environment that stimulates a more reflective, evaluative and evidence based culture within the Authority and Service.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee can be found at Appendix A of this report.

2. Meetings

During 2017/18, the Committee met on the following dates:

• 04 September 2017
• 09 October 2017
• 13 November 2017
• 26 February 2018
• 26 March 2018
• 04 June 2018

3. Members & Attendance Record

	04/09/17	09/10/17	13/11/17	26/02/18	26/03/18	04/06/18
Councillor Barrie	√	√	√	√	√	
Councillor Brackenridge	√	√	√	√	√	
Councillor Hogarth	√	√	X	√	√	
Councillor Male	√	X	√	√	√	
Councillor Miks	√	√	√	√	√	
Councillor Spence	√	√	√	√	√	
Councillor Tranter	√	X	√	√	√	
Councillor Young	√	X	√	√	X	

Senior Officers from the Authority are also present as appropriate.

Working Groups are also appointed to consider scrutiny reviews. The Committee are to undertake a maximum of two such reviews each year. Each Working Group has a minimum of three Members allocated to it.

4. Business

During the year the Committee conducted the following business:

- Quarterly Analysis of Corporate Performance against 'The Plan'
- Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality quarterly updates
- Dispute Resolution Monitoring
- Operational Assessment Improvement Register
- Work programme selection
- Working Group Review of Positive Action and Firefighter Recruitment
- Progress updates on the outcomes of the Review of Data Sharing and the Safe Update regarding Transport Funding

5. The Committee's main achievements

The Committee believes its key achievements during the year included:

- The Committee undertook to review and evaluate the Service's approach to positive action and firefighter recruitment in 2016/17 (original proposal and scoping document submitted to the Committee at the February 2017 meeting). The Scrutiny Review of Positive Action and Firefighter Recruitment includes the examination of the associated protocols and procedures, analysing their effectiveness, and identifying and removing barriers where present. The review remains in progress with regular updates being submitted to the Committee. It is anticipated that, subject to the approval of the Committee, the review will be completed in June 2018 with recommendations put forward to the Fire Authority for consideration.
- Updates were provided on the outcomes of the Data Sharing Review and the outcomes of the review of the transport funding issues at Safeside, allowing the Committee to monitor progress.
- Following the publication of the Service's Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge in June 2017, the Committee has monitored the progress of the work undertaken by the Service in addressing the areas for consideration raised by the Fire Peer Challenge Team via the monitoring of the Operational Assessment Improvement Register.
- The robust monitoring of the Service's performance in the areas of Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality, analysis of Corporate Performance against 'The Plan', workforce profile indicators and dispute resolutions.

Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Committee

To carry out a maximum of two scrutiny reviews per annum selected by the Committee. Such reviews will be member-led and evidence based, and will produce SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) recommendations to the Executive Committee.

To track and monitor the implementation of review recommendations that are accepted by the Executive Committee.

To summon any officer or member of the Authority to give account in respect of reviews or any other relevant matter.

To manage, in consultation with the Strategic Enabler for Finance and Resources, a specific budget for the purpose of buying in any necessary external advice and support in connection with the reviews.

To receive and scrutinise performance information including progress against the Community Safety Strategy and 'The Plan', the Service's objectives and corporate performance indicators and review performance targets.

To have responsibility for scrutiny of Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality and diversity throughout the West Midlands Fire Service and to review policies and monitor performance in relation thereto.

To monitor and scrutinise as appropriate the Authority's HR policies.

To monitor and scrutinise sickness levels, promotion policies and employee exit information.

To receive information and statistics on grievance monitoring and to report outcomes to the Joint Consultative Panel.

To ensure that the Authority is meeting its duties under Health & Safety and environmental and other relevant legislation.

To deal with any matters referred to it by the full Authority, the Policy Planning Forum or Executive Committee, the Chief Fire Officer, Clerk, Monitoring Officer or Treasurer, not within its work programme.

To refer any matter for consideration by the Authority, another Committee or an officer where considered appropriate.

To submit its minutes and an Annual Report to the Authority.

In order to allow for separation of the scrutiny and decision making functions, members of the Scrutiny Committee shall not sit on the Executive Committee.

The Committee will sit in public with minimum exceptions.

In addition to its programmed meetings, the Committee will hold additional meetings, as and when required, in order to efficiently manage its workload.

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18**

Date of Meeting	Item	Responsible Officer	Completed
2017			
04 September 2017	<p>Analysis of Progress of Corporate Performance against The Plan for Quarter 1 2017/2018</p> <p>Update on Review of Data Sharing</p> <p>Operational Assessment Improvement Register – delayed to Oct meeting</p> <p>Consideration of Work Programme</p>	<p>Director of Service Delivery</p> <p>Director of Service Delivery</p> <p>Strategic Enabler Strategic Hub</p> <p>Chair Of Scrutiny Committee</p>	
09 October 2017	<p>Dispute Resolution Monitoring – submitted at Sept meeting</p> <p>Operational Assessment Improvement Register</p>	<p>Strategic Enabler People Support Services</p> <p>Strategic Enabler Strategic Hub</p>	
13 November 2017	Analysis of Progress of Corporate Performance against The Plan for Quarter 2	Director of Service Delivery	

[IL0: UNCLASSIFIED]

	2017/2018		
	Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion & Equality Update	Strategic Enabler People Support Services	
	Update on the Review of Positive Action and Firefighter Recruitment	Strategic Enabler People Support Services	
2018			
Date of Meeting	Item	Responsible Officer	Completed
26 February 2018	Analysis of Progress of Corporate Performance against The Plan for Quarter 3 2017/2018	Director of Service Delivery	
26 March 2018	Dispute Resolution Monitoring Report	Strategic Enabler People Support Services	
	Operational Assessment Improvement Register	Strategic Enabler Strategic Hub	
	Update on Review of Data Sharing	Director of Service Delivery	
	Safeside – Update on Transport Funding	Director of Service	

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June 2018

	Consideration of the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee	Delivery Chair of Scrutiny Committee	
04 June 2018	Analysis of Progress of Corporate Performance against The Plan for Quarter 4 2017/2018 Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion & Equality Update Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee	Director of Service Delivery Strategic Enabler People Support Services Chair of Scrutiny Committee	

To report as appropriate:

- Review of positive action and firefighter recruitment
- Update on the outcomes of the data sharing review

Note: separate meetings of the review working group are to be scheduled if and when required.

Items greyed out indicate that they have been completed / submitted to the Committee.

