

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**11 NOVEMBER 2019**

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

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

THAT Scrutiny Committee note the ongoing progress made by the Service in relation to Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion, Equality (DICE).

**2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To provide an update to Scrutiny Committee to review and consider the ongoing progress being made by West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) 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 fulfil our legal duties as a public-sector organisation under the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 This report details our continued progress towards achieving our objectives and provides an update in relation to DICE activity.

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

- 4.1 The DICE team, in conjunction with WMFS Staff Engagement Groups (including Affinity, FireOut, Inspire and AFSA) hosted an Inclusion and Development day in June 2019. The event focussed on raising the profile of our staff engagement groups and introduced a range of speakers covering various topics including mental health and wellbeing, positive action and recruitment, a transgender case study and awareness of organ donation specifically within the African Caribbean community. The event was well attended with colleagues from all areas of the organisation participating. Feedback gathered has been positive and will inform future events.
- 4.2 In July 2019 the DICE team launched the buddy scheme and invited applications from employees from across the organisation to be considered to become a workplace buddy. Having a buddy at work can make a huge difference to the speed in which new employees manage to settle into their role, their department and the organisation. A buddy is a friendly face and contact as well as an informal source of information about the organisation, knowing how things work and is prepared to share their experiences.

Around 20 people from all roles within the organisation have applied to become a workplace buddy. Training will be provided during September and buddy profiles will be published.

- 4.3 WMFS continues to develop our approach to coaching and we have an internal coaching and mentoring programme with a range of trained coaches from diverse backgrounds. Internal coaches are now available via a matching site with the potential coachee being able to select from a range of coaches depending upon their needs. The coaching pool has been promoted across the organisation and via our staff engagement groups to reach out to under-represented groups.

- 4.4 The DICE report 2020–2023 has been developed. The purpose of the report is to provide an update in relation to the progress made by WMFS in relation to DICE as well as setting out our equality objectives for the next four years. The publishing of this report assists WMFS in meeting our specific duties by being transparent about how we are responding to the Equality Duty.
- 4.5 The DICE Objectives 2020–2023 have been developed in consultation with departments and functions across the organisation. The objectives show a strong commitment with specific and measurable objectives that help make our organisation fully inclusive.

## **5 COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE AND ENGAGEMENT**

- 5.1 Our specialist deaf team continue to carry out home visits among the deaf community. Over the last 4 years our deaf team have conducted 420 visits. In addition, they have been involved in a range of activities among the deaf community, creating a short video for British Sign Language awareness week and supporting the sign2sign programme, being nationally recognised for their support and involvement. Members of the team are currently working with a group of parents in Walsall and helped set up Funky Kids Deaf Community Group which provides social and recreational activities for families affected by hearing loss.
- 5.2 On 5<sup>th</sup> September WMFS hosted an event for Stonewall the leading Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) rights organisation. This event was for organisations committed to supporting LGBT employees and providing a fully inclusive environment using appropriately trained non-LGBT champions. We hosted guests from a wide variety of public and private organisations across the region who are all Stonewall Diversity champions

## **6 EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY**

- 6.1 WMFS Prevention team have developed a ground-breaking E-learning package for professionals and carers working with people with care and support needs. This was launched in September with a range of events across our Service delivery area. This will ensure we are reaching workers who engage with all our higher risk groups and covers the key messages set out in our Fire Safety Guidance for Professionals and Carers.
- 6.2 The Complex Needs Officer team are working on a project around a Clutter Bus - a project working closely with Clouds End, an expert organisation who work and train organisations to support people with hoarding tendencies and they work closely with hoarders and support them in a variety ways. The project is to look at acquiring a bus and calling it the clutter bus, kitted out so that it can be deployed across Birmingham with relevant experts on board to support people who hoard or those associated with hoarders or anyone who wants to know more. A pilot video has been submitted to Channel 5 to look at producing a series.

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

- 7.1 As at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019 WMFS employed a total of 1889 employees of which:
- 1394 (74%) are uniformed, 435 (23%) non-uniformed and 60 (3%) Fire Control
  - 10% of uniformed staff are female compared to more than half of non-uniformed staff and 88% of Fire Control staff.
  - 12% of all employees are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background.
  - Declaration rates remain high with 95% of all employees having made a declaration regarding disability. 4% have stated that they have a disability.
  - 86% of all employees have made a declaration regarding sexual orientation. It should be noted however that 13% (249) employees have declared that they 'Prefer Not to State.'
  - The average age of our employees is 43 years.

Further information in relation to the profile of the workforce can be found at Appendix 1.

- 7.2 During the reporting period January 2019–June 2019 there were a total of 5 grievances lodged. All 5 were related to working practices.

The number of grievances has decreased from the last reporting period. The previous period showed there was a total of 9 grievances lodged within a 6-month period.

There have been no trends identified in relation to the protected characteristics.

- 7.3 During the reporting period January 2019–June 2019 there were 10 discipline cases. 5 cases investigated under Gross Misconduct and 5 cases investigated under Misconduct. At the time of drafting this report, 4 cases had progressed to Hearing. The outcome for the 4 cases were Final Written Warnings.

There have been no trends identified in relation to the protected characteristics.

WMFS will carry out future benchmarking against both Grievance and Discipline data of other Metropolitan Services and will record in this report for information for Scrutiny Committee.

- 7.4 WMFS Occupational Health team have further developed the approach to Mental Health First Aid. We currently have around 26 employees who have put themselves forward to be a Mental Health (first aider) Employee Advocate. Training and development for our Mental Health Employee Advocates has been developed to ensure that safe and effective implementation of the initiative with structured support is available to the team of advocates. A CPD workshop was delivered in September.

## **8 RECRUITMENT TRAINING AND PROGRESSION**

- 8.1 Since April 2019 WMFS have employed 32 new entrant firefighters. Of these, 14 (44%) are women and 5 (16%) BAME.

- 8.2 In May 2019 a female pre-recruitment programme commenced. Thinkology carried out targeted advertising via social media, inviting women to attend an open evening. The purpose of the evening was to encourage women to consider applying to the Fire Service, dispel myths about the role of a firefighter, provide information about the Service and enrol individuals onto the pre-recruitment programme.

Around 30 women attended the session and 18 subsequently went on to register their interest. 13 women committed to the 6-week programme, of which, to date 6 have successfully completed all selection tests. These women will be recruited to either the October 2019 training course or January 2020 training course.

A further female pre-recruitment programme has commenced in October 2019.

- 8.3 In August 2019 a BAME pre-recruitment programme commenced following further targeted advertising by Thinkology. Around 40 people attended the initial open evening with 20 registering their interest. 12 people have committed to the 6-week programme which commenced in September 2019.

- 8.4 40% of uniformed posts are crew commander and above. 23% of female uniformed staff hold positions of crew commander or above compared to 42% of male uniformed staff. 26% of BAME uniformed employees hold positions of crew commander or above compared to 42% of white uniformed employees.

When considering non-uniformed staff, 59% of posts are above a grade 8. 47% of female non-uniformed staff hold positions above a grade 8 compared to 73% of male staff. 55% of BAME non-uniformed staff hold positions above a grade 8 compared to 60% of white staff.

- 8.5 The female development sessions are being implemented and the first workshop was held in June 2019. The session was well attended by women from across the organisation where input was provided around progression and development, confidence building, coaching and benefits of volunteering.

The second session is scheduled to take place in November where an external provider, Laughology, will provide a fast paced, enlightening session about building resilience and positivity. Laughology have developed a model where they use the science of humour and laughter as a cognitive tool which enables employees to be optimistic, adaptable and flexible.

## 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 regarding all protected characteristics.

## 10. **RISK IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The objectives identified in this report support the organisation in mitigating its risk regarding 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 Ben Brook, Area Commander, Strategic Enabler - Culture, telephone number 07973 810697.

PHIL LOACH  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



## APPENDIX 1

Workforce Profile (1.1.19)				
<p>This information is produced by Workforce Planning and is updated every quarter.            If you need similar information for your area to help you complete your EIAs please give us a ring (380 6193).</p>				
Employees				
Employees	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
	1395	431	63	1889
<p>Three quarters of employees are Uniformed:</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>A 3D pie chart showing the distribution of employees. The largest slice is blue, representing Uniformed staff at 74%. The next largest is red, representing Non Uniformed staff at 23%. The smallest is green, representing Fire Control staff at 3%.</p> </div>				
Gender				
Gender	* Uniformed	Non Uniformed	* Fire Control	Total
Female	113	237	61	411
Male	1275	194	9	1478
<b>Total</b>	<b>1388</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1889</b>
<p>* Former Fire Control staff working in Uniformed posts are reported as Uniformed staff apart from when reporting gender.</p> <p>8% of uniformed staff are female, compared to more than half of non-uniformed staff and 87% of Fire Control staff. 50% of the Working population of the West Midlands are female.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>A grouped bar chart showing the percentage of female and male employees across three categories. The y-axis represents percentage from 0% to 100%. For Uniformed staff, the female bar is 8% and the male bar is 92%. For Non Uniformed staff, the female bar is 55% and the male bar is 45%. For Fire Control staff, the female bar is 87% and the male bar is 13%. A legend indicates red bars for Female and blue bars for Male.</p> </div>				
Age				
Age group	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
17 - 24	37	21		58
25 - 34	219	42	14	275
35 - 44	552	83	21	656
45 - 54	554	156	22	732
55 - 64	33	109	6	148
65+		20		20
<b>Total</b>	<b>1395</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1889</b>
Average age	41.8	47.7	42.9	43.2
<p>The Uniformed workforce is ageing.</p> <p>The average age of Non Uniformed staff is 48. Males and females have a similar average age but different age profiles. A higher proportion of males than females are under 30 and over 60.</p>				

## Female Progression

### Uniformed Staff

Management Band	Female	Male	Total
Foundation (FF)	86	750	836
Supervisory (CC & WC)	19	463	482
Middle (SC & GC)	7	54	61
Strategic	1	8	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>1275</b>	<b>1388</b>

40% of Uniformed posts are Management posts (above FF). 24% of female Uniformed staff, and 41% of male Uniformed staff are in Management posts.

### Non-Uniformed Staff

Management Band	Female	Male	Total
Foundation (G1-8)	123	50	173
Supervisory (G9-14)	92	115	207
Middle (G15-17)	14	18	32
Strategic	8	11	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>431</b>

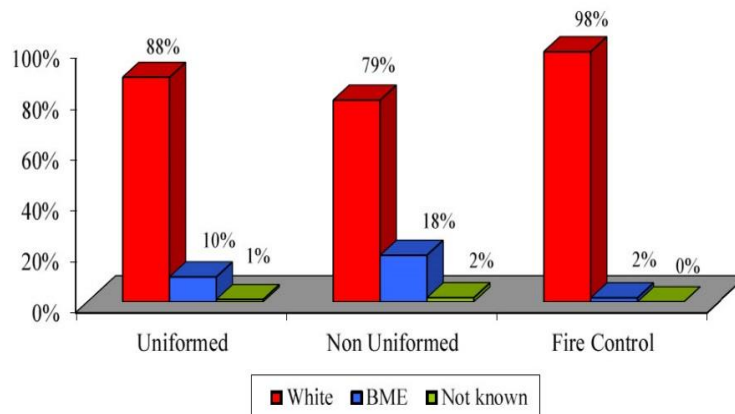
The gender difference in grade is more pronounced amongst Non-Uniformed staff. 60% of Non-Uniformed posts are Management posts (above Grade 8). 48% of female Non-Uniformed staff, and 74% of male Non-Uniformed staff are in Management posts.

47% of Fire Control posts are Management posts (above FF).

## Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
White	1232	342	62	1636
BME	137	79	1	217
Prefer not to state	13	3	0	16
Not declared	13	7	0	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>1395</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1889</b>

11% of employees are from Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. 30% of the working population of the West Midlands are from BME communities.



### BME Progression

40% of Uniformed posts are Management posts (above FF). 27% of BME Uniformed staff, and 42% of White Uniformed staff are in Management posts.

60% of Non-Uniformed posts are Management posts (Grade 9 and above). 53% of BME Non-Uniformed staff, and 61% of White Non-Uniformed staff are in Management posts.

### Religion

Religion	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
Catholic	25	7	1	33
Christian	543	173	28	744
Protestant	1	3		4
Other Christian Denomination	12	4		16
Buddhist	6	1		7
Hindu	3	9		12
Humanist	8			8
Jain	1			1
Jewish	1			1
Muslim	17	9		26
Pagan	6	2		8
Scientologist	1			1
Sikh	8	16		24
Spiritualism	1	1		2
Other	37	9	1	47
None	356	94	26	476
Prefer not to state	176	34	5	215
Not declared	193	69	2	264
<b>Total</b>	<b>1395</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1889</b>

14% of employees have not declared their religion.

### Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
Bisexual	17	1	2	20
Gay/Lesbian	20	4	3	27
Heterosexual	957	301	50	1308
Prefer not to state	204	42	5	251
Not declared	197	83	3	283
<b>Total</b>	<b>1395</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1889</b>

15% of employees have not declared their sexual orientation.

### Declared a Disability

Disabled?	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
Yes	39	33	2	74
No	1194	358	59	1611
Prefer not to state	90	12	1	103
Not declared	72	28	1	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>1395</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1889</b>

5% of employees have not declared whether they are disabled.

