

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