

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**  
**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**14 NOVEMBER 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 The organisation's Attraction and Selection Officer has been nominated as the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) national lead for positive action. This position opens a national channel for sharing best practice and driving innovation supported by the AFSA network.  
A national meeting has been held in Derbyshire with the view to another being held in the future at West Midlands Fire Service HQ.
- 4.2 WMFS have been engaging with the Home Office and in particular the Fire Reform Unit since mid-2017. This relationship has put us at the heart of the national awareness campaign which is due to launch in the Autumn of 2018. Having attended several meetings held at the Home Office WMFS have been able to share in detail how we have evolved our approach to attraction and selection. This has led us to be highlighted for best practice in the launch for the Fitness Guide which forms part of the national awareness campaign. WMFS received attention from national and local press having been sighted as the national leaders in this area.
- 4.3 Station and Watch Commander have been interviewed for and included in the national role model guide to support the future release of the national awareness campaign. The plan is to have all the guides on the site, but to highlight particular guides during specific times. For example, female role models on international women's day, role models from a minority group during black history month, LGBT role models for pride etc. More importantly all of the role models together show that firefighters come from all parts of the community and can have a successful career in the fire sector.
- 4.4 WMFS is actively engaging with a number of FRSs to share our approach and best practice with regard to attraction and selection activities. Our prominence in the national awareness campaign as well as AFSA has made us accessible across the sector for organisations that are currently or considering engaging in firefighter recruitment activity.
- 4.5 Our Attraction and Selection Officer has been accepted onto a course with the NHS Employers leadership academy and a Level 6 Diversity and Inclusion course delivered by Inclusive Employers.

The NHS programme fits with the Academy's wider body of powerful positive action work to promote diversity and inclusion throughout the public sector. The ultimate aim is to develop more inclusive leaders at all levels.

The level 6 programme offers significant learning and development opportunities for delegates and space to demonstrate expertise via qualification as well as practice.

- 4.6 WMFS attended the National Fire Congress in May 2018 where two members of staff were amongst 17 experienced speakers and panellists. The Congress was an opportunity to learn more about the current position and future direction of the UK Fire and Rescue Service, from some of the sector's leading experts. It is believed that this Congress helped invigorate the discussion beyond compliance with the law to a more inclusion focused agenda, in order to permanently transform the Fire and Rescue Service for the better.
- 4.7 Work continues on updating DICE policies. The Dignity at Work policy has been updated in line with feedback from Stonewall to ensure it is fully LGBT inclusive, and a more detailed section around sexual harassment is being consulted on by our stakeholder groups to add extra weight to the policy. After guidance from Stonewall, the Transgender policy has now been published. These improvements will allow us to demonstrate that our policies are fully inclusive and reflect best practice. This will be reflected in our score for policy under the Stonewall workplace equality index and ensure we are in a good position for any future inspections.
- 4.8 The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process is being modernised to allow greater analysis around equality impact assessments and accountability.

The introduction of the revised EIA system will be supported by delivery of workshops and an E learning package. The completion of the EIA is now a requirement for any business case at JCC which has seen an increase in EIA completion.

- 4.9 In July 2018 WMFS was accepted to join the NHS Partners' Programme which brings organisations together to share best

practice around Diversity and Inclusion. Acceptance onto the programme was a recognition of the progress WMFS has made in recent years and allows learning from a different sector.

The NHS Partners' Programme brings together Diversity and Inclusion professionals and managers from NHS trusts across England to share best practice and discuss how Diversity and Equality issues can be moved forward. As the only non-NHS partner in this year's cohort membership allows us to share our own best practice and to learn from progress made in a different sector.

4.10 Members of WMFS LGBT group Fire Out facilitated an awareness session regarding the public consultation on the Gender Recognition Act. Several members of SET engaged and supported this session. WMFS continues to be a Stonewall Diversity Champion and has submitted its evidence for the Stonewall Workplace Equality index in September, along with our evidence to the top 50 Inclusive employers.

4.11 Early June 2018, 10 women from a wide variety of roles attended the networking women in the fire service development weekend at the Fire Service College, the attendees took part in a range of activities from personal development to command and control and fire investigation.

The event helps inspire and improve confidence of women in the organisation, after the weekend attendees are encouraged to share their learning and experiences with other women to inspire others and encourage more women to develop themselves and go for promotion.

4.12 The DICE team have developed an unconscious bias workshop which has now been delivered to over 100 employees from a variety of stations and departments. Feedback has been very positive and is currently being further analysed to improve future workshops. Input for managers as part of the Managing Excellence course is currently being developed ready for delivery early 2019.

4.13 The 4 stakeholder groups, Inspire, Fire out, Affinity and AFSA continue to gather momentum. Terms of reference and deliverable objectives are under development.

The stakeholder groups are working together to develop a short video to assist employees when asking monitoring questions connected with sexual orientation, gender identity, faith and ethnicity. This video is due for completion by December 2018.

Fire out has been active across the UK supporting various Pride events and will be supporting Birmingham's first Black Pride in 2019.

Inspire hosted its first guest speaker event on 7<sup>th</sup> September with subject area specialists in youth engagement and child sexual exploitation delivering at the event at headquarters.

Our local AFSA group are continuing to move the agenda forward locally and a variety of local AFSA workshops are planned as well as supporting a good attendance at the AFSA national conference in Manchester in December.

- 4.14 WMFS was proud to host the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) spring conference on 10th/11th May in Sutton Coldfield. The 2-day conference was attended by over 30 employees from a wide variety of roles within WMFS and had delegates from FRS from all over the UK as well as guest speakers and delegates from a wide variety of organisations. The best practice and progress in recruitment of a diverse workforce for WMFS was highlighted with the DICE team presenting one of the key breakout sessions.

WMFS are hosting a regional AFSA workshop in November focused on the AFSA Smoke and Mirrors report and plans are already in place for a good attendance from WMFS at the AFSA national conference in Manchester in November.

- 4.15 WMFS are continually looking to overcome barriers for individuals wishing to join the Fire Service and are monitoring progress in areas such as issues faced by the Sikh community. In 2017 the HSE conducted a consultation exercise reference the extending of the exemption for Sikhs who wear turbans from having to wear safety helmets. Whilst this exemption was extended to some industry, e.g. construction, it was not extended to the Fire and Rescue Service.

For baptised Sikhs it is a requirement for them not to cut their hair, including shaving their beard. Not all Sikhs are baptised and we do have Sikh operational staff who choose to shave their beard. Currently there is no Breathing Apparatus product available that meets UK safety requirements.

Masks used by military special forces, who often wear beards, are suitable for use in smoke grenade situations but not in firefighting situations.

## **5. COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE AND ENGAGEMENT**

- 5.1 In June "Windrush Public Services Community Day" took place at Tally-Ho. This event was attended by over 400 members of our local community including schools and local colleges. The main purpose of this event was to celebrate 70th year anniversary of the Windrush generation as well as collaboration work with WMFS, WMP, NHS, Royal Airforce, RAF, Army and various other public services.

During this event an RTC extrication demonstration was carried out by crews from Highgate, using the casualty simulation group. Multiple workshops were put in place to offer fire safety advice and to gain Safe and Well referrals. Fantastic feedback was given from members of the community as well as other public service organisations.

- 5.2 WMFS involvement in Birmingham Pride in May continues to demonstrate our commitment to LGBT issues. This year's Birmingham Pride saw a good attendance from WMFS with the first use of our community engagement vehicle. The vehicle had been converted from an Incident Response Unit by Transport Engineering Workshops who engaged with the project with great enthusiasm and turned an underutilised vehicle into a great community asset. This vehicle, which is now available for booking for station open days and community events, was formally launched at a pre-Pride event hosted by WMFS and attended by LGBT stakeholder groups from West Midlands Police and West Midlands Ambulance.
- 5.3 WMFS is hosting a regional Stonewall education event at our Headquarters in December and plans to build further on our progress to be one of the top LGBT inclusive employers in the coming 12 months.

## **6. EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY**

- 6.1 Ward End Station has hosted WMFS dyslexia support group meetings as well as several crews receiving child exploitation awareness training focusing on the issues of Birmingham's eastern corridor.
- 6.2 Several crews from Highgate station attended Eid celebrations in June with a potential audience of 140,000. They raised awareness of road safety issues among their target audience of 17-24-year-old Asian males who are shown to have a high risk of accident. Crews from Highgate have also appeared on Unity FM to promote safe and well visits.
- 6.3 Members of WMFS deaf signing team supported the sign2sing project in local schools, the only blue light organisation to support this scheme.
- 6.4 Crews from Fallings Park have been engaged with Wolverhampton Domestic Violence Forum attending training to raise awareness and understanding around the issues of forced marriage and domestic violence.
- 6.5 Foleshill crews hosted a station visit by Coventry Women's Partnership in August and White Watch Foleshill teamed up with members of a local Mosque to hold a fund-raising car wash.

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

- 7.1 As at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018, WMFS employed a total of 1,911 employees of which:

1,405 (74%) are uniformed, 439 (23%) non-uniformed, and 67 (3%) Fire Control.

7% (n=96) of uniformed staff are female, compared to more than half (n=240) of non-uniformed staff and 86% (n=63) of Fire Control staff.

Declaration rates remain high with 93% of all employees have made a declaration regarding disability. 3.8% have stated that they have a disability.

83% of all employees have made a declaration with regard to sexual orientation, however 17% (n=247) have stated that they 'prefer not to say'.

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

- 7.2 During the reporting period January 2018–June 2018 there were a total of 2 grievances lodged. Both grievances were from operational employees.

For this reporting period the number of grievances has decreased from the last reporting period. The previous report showed that there were 6 grievances lodged within a 6-month period.

- 7.3 During the reporting period January 2018 – June 2018 there were 12 discipline cases.

10 cases were investigated as Gross Misconduct, all were grey book employees

There have been no trends identified relating to equality strands.

- 7.4 After losing several strong candidates at medical stage for failing to meet the eyesight standard, a discussion paper has been initiated to see if there is a justification to examine the existing visual standards that apply for new entrant firefighters at point of entry.

Changing the standards midway through the recruitment programme may be problematic and a change in the standards should be objectively assessed and carefully considered. A risk assessment approach involving People Support Services, Health and Safety and Occupational Health is being considered with focus on the likelihood of loss of visual aids, the consequence of this occurring in recruits with poor unaided vision and whether any controls could safely mitigate this. It is also important if WMFS were to amend the standards that we can define what standards we will then implement at new entrance stage, considered alongside the standards for incumbent firefighters.



## **8. RECRUTIMENT, TRAINING AND PROGRESSION**

8.1 Positive action continues to be a focus internally and externally with WMFS supporting and encouraging underrepresented groups in several ways.

8.2 For the financial year 2018/2019 our firefighter recruitment targets are:

- 40% of new starters will be women
- 35% of new starters will be BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic)

Since April 2018 WMFS have employed 54 new entrant firefighters, 25 (46%) women and 15 (28%) BAME.

8.3 Further review of the new entrant firefighter assessment process has recommended a move from paper-based processes to more streamlined digital system. This will see the procurement of 3 tablets and the introduction of a cloud-based data management suite. This change will significantly reduce the amount of time required to administer firefighter analysis.

8.4 WMFS further diversified its pre-recruitment programmes with the introduction of new courses and programmes aimed at supporting under-represented groups within the process. Midterm data analysis showed that BAME men were less likely to perform as well as white men whilst BAME women and White women were most likely to be successful. Having introduced further interventions and support for BAME men there has been a continuous upward trend resulting in BAME Men performing equally as well as White men. Women remain the highest performers.

8.5 40% of all uniformed posts are crew commander or above. 27% of female uniformed staff hold a crew commander position or above, compared to 41% of male uniformed staff. When considering the gender profile of non-uniformed staff who hold positions above a grade 8, the gender difference is more pronounced. 58% of all non-uniformed posts are above a grade 8. 44% of female non-uniformed staff are in positions above a grade 8, compared to 74% of male non-uniformed staff.

When considering the age profile of the workforce the average age of all staff is 43 years, with 74% of the workforce aged between 35 and 54 years. Just 3% (n=59) are under the age of 24. The average age of uniformed staff is 41 years, non-uniformed staff 47 years and Fire Control 42 years.

11% (207) of all employees are from a BAME background (Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic) compared to 30% of the working population of the West Midlands.

27% of BAME uniformed staff hold a crew commander position or above, compared to 42% of White uniformed staff.

51% of BAME non-uniformed staff hold a position above a grade 8, compared to 59% of White non-uniformed staff.

## **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.

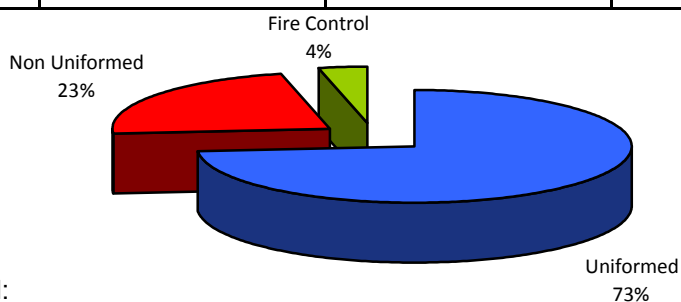
PHIL LOACH  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

### Workforce Profile (1.7.18)

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).

#### Employees

Employees	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
	1405	439	67	1911

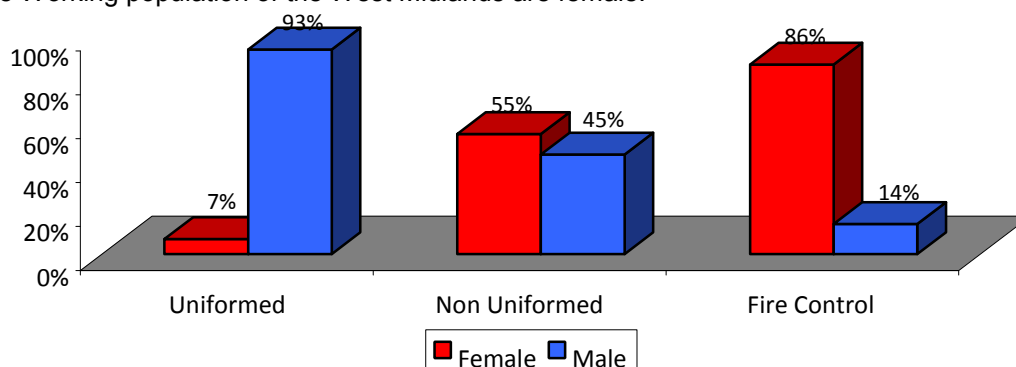


Three quarters of employees are Uniformed:

#### Gender

Gender	* Uniformed	Non Uniformed	* Fire Control	Total
Female	96	240	63	399
Male	1303	199	10	1512
<b>Total</b>	<b>1399</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>1911</b>

\* Former Fire Control staff working in Uniformed posts are reported as Uniformed staff apart from when reporting gender. 7% of uniformed staff are female, compared to more than half of non-uniformed staff and 86% of Fire Control staff. 50% of the Working population of the West Midlands are female.



#### Age

Age group	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
17 - 24	36	21	2	59
25 - 34	214	47	14	275
35 - 44	569	84	21	674
45 - 54	556	161	23	740

55 - 64	29	106	7	<b>142</b>
65+	1	20	0	<b>21</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1405</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1911</b>

<b>Average age</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>43.1</b>
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The Uniformed workforce is ageing.  
The average age of Non Uniformed staff is 47. 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.

### Female Progression

#### Uniformed Staff

Management Band	Female	Male	Total
Foundation (FF)	70	767	<b>837</b>
Supervisory (CC & WC)	18	479	<b>497</b>
Middle (SC & GC)	7	49	<b>56</b>
Strategic	1	8	<b>9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>1303</b>	<b>1399</b>

40% of Uniformed posts are Management posts (above FF). 27% of female Uniformed staff, a Uniformed staff are in Management posts.

#### Non-Uniformed Staff

Management Band	Female	Male	Total
Foundation (G1-8)	134	51	<b>185</b>
Supervisory (G9-14)	86	116	<b>202</b>
Middle (G15-17)	12	20	<b>32</b>
Strategic	8	12	<b>20</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>439</b>

The gender difference in grade is more pronounced amongst Non-Uniformed staff. 58% of Non Management posts (above Grade 8). 44% of female Non-Uniformed staff, and 74% of male No Management posts.  
43% of Fire Control posts are Management posts (above FF).

nd 41% of male

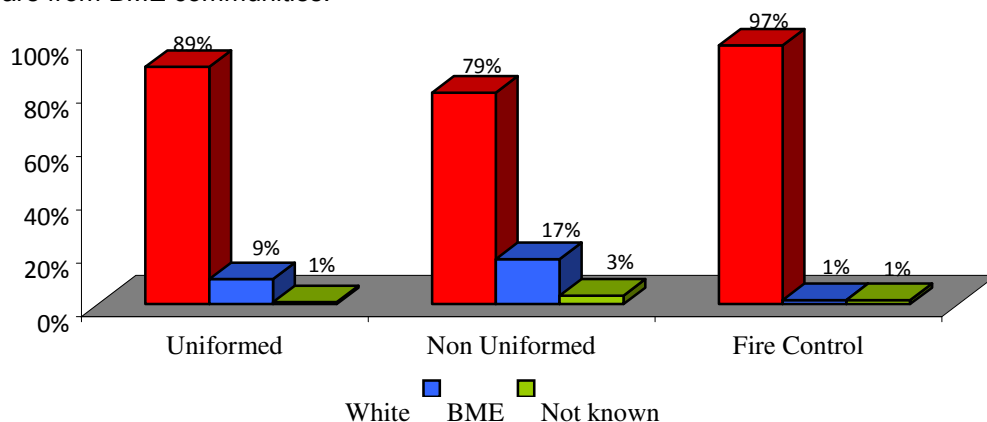
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### Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
White	1250	348	65	<b>1663</b>
BME	132	74	1	<b>207</b>
Prefer not to state	13	3	0	<b>16</b>

Not declared	10	14	1	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>1405</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1911</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.

58% of Non-Uniformed posts are Management posts (Grade 9 and above). 51% of BME Non-Uniformed staff, and 59% of White Non-Uniformed staff are in Management posts.

Religion				
Religion	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
Catholic	21	6	0	27
Christian	542	174	29	745
Protestant	1	3	0	4
Other Christian Denomination	13	4	0	17
Buddhist	5	1	0	6
Hindu	3	7	0	10
Humanist	8	0	0	8
Jain	1	0	0	1
Jewish	1	0	0	1
Muslim	16	9	0	25
Pagan	8	1	0	9
Scientologist	1	0	0	1
Sikh	8	14	0	22
Spiritualism	1	1	0	2
Other	36	8	1	45

None	346	96	27	<b>469</b>
Prefer not to state	169	36	6	<b>211</b>
Not declared	225	79	4	<b>308</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1405</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1911</b>

16% of employees have not declared their religion.

#### Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
Bisexual	17	1	2	<b>20</b>
Gay/Lesbian	19	4	3	<b>26</b>
Heterosexual	943	298	52	<b>1293</b>
Prefer not to state	199	42	6	<b>247</b>
Not declared	227	94	4	<b>325</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1405</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1911</b>

17% of employees have not declared their sexual orientation.

#### Declared a Disability

Disabled?	Uniformed	Non Uniformed	Fire Control	Total
Yes	38	33	2	<b>73</b>
No	1182	355	60	<b>1597</b>
Prefer not to state	87	11	1	<b>99</b>
Not declared	98	40	4	<b>142</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1405</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1911</b>

7% of employees have not declared whether they are disabled.

