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Making Northamptonshire safer

Our aim is to make Northamptonshire safer and we know that supporting equality, valuing diversity and promoting inclusion within our workforce and among the communities we serve are keys to our success.

This strategy is aligned to the aims and objectives within the PFCC Fire Plan for:

- ▼ Keeping our communities safe and well
- ▼ Keeping our staff safe and well
- ▼ Making the best use of our resources

The strategy also aligns to the draft National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) People Strategy, the NFCC EDI Strategy and EDI Position Statement.

This strategy sets out how we will strengthen our ability to provide an excellent service by valuing diversity, promoting inclusion and creating a fair and equal place to work.

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strengthen our ability to provide an excellent service

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Being inclusive, valuing diversity and promoting equality

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are three principles that help to create a fair workplace and a fair society. Equality is about equal opportunities and protecting people from being discriminated against. Diversity is about recognising respecting and valuing differences in people. Meanwhile, inclusion refers to an individual's experience within the workplace and in a wider society, and the extent to which they feel valued and included.

We value diversity and recognise that different people bring different experiences, ideas, knowledge, and culture, and that this difference brings great strength. We want people to bring themselves to work completely. We believe that discrimination or exclusion based on individual characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) or unique difference (e.g. caring responsibilities) represents a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity for a great career in the fire and rescue service.

Decisions we make about our business must consider the needs of everyone. Our staff use Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) to measure the impact of these decisions on our staff or our communities. Projects, decisions and plans cannot be made or completed without such consideration.

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supporting equality, valuing diversity and promoting inclusion within our workforce

Our equality, diversity and inclusion themes

Our strategy has four themes:

3.1 Knowing our Staff

We will:

- ▼ Engage with staff to increase levels of disclosure in relation to equality monitoring data as this will help us to ensure that our processes and policies support the needs of all staff
- ▼ Provide regular, transparent information to support the scrutiny of our performance across the business
- ▼ Facilitate time for staff to dedicate to the work of equality groups and networks
- ▼ Provide opportunity for equality networks, internal and external reference groups to speak directly to our Fire Executive Group (FEG)
- ▼ Support diverse thinking through cross organisational working enabling fire stations to be utilised by all staff groups.

3.2 Inclusive leadership and organisational commitment

At a senior level, visibly inclusive professional and political leaders undoubtedly influence our ability to deliver a workforce that reflects the community we serve. We see leadership as a skill to be developed across our organisation; we therefore actively promote and encourage all staff to have leadership responsibility when it comes to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

We will:

- ▼ Take every opportunity for our Fire Authority and FEG to endorse activity that is inclusive and which promotes the service as an equal opportunities employer
- ▼ Enlist an OPFCC member with portfolio for EDI
- ▼ Record and publish equality data in accordance with the public sector equality duty so that we can actively utilise this data to influence our decision making processes
- ▼ Ensure our senior managers and political leaders visit the workforce and engage with staff about the culture and environment they create and work in
- ▼ Look to further develop our external reference group framework, to help support us with our understanding of under-represented groups and optimise partnership opportunities
- ▼ Foster professionalism and accountability, by encouraging inclusive behaviour, recognising positive role models, supporting managers to manage their teams and challenging behaviours that are contrary to this

3.3 Knowing and Involving our communities

Making every contact count with our communities is essential to our success. In this instance Equality is about ensuring all people living in Northamptonshire have equal access to all our services. Diversity is about valuing the differences in the people in Northamptonshire and ensuring we engage with and listen to as many people as we can. Inclusion is about ensuring members of our communities feel they are involved in decisions made regarding our work.

We will:

- ▼ Develop and deliver inclusion activities with partner organisations
- ▼ Foster good relations across the communities of Northamptonshire, in particular developing our relationships with representatives of minority groups
- ▼ Undertake effective social reconnaissance across the county to ensure that our front line staff are well aware of the support networks and arrangements that exist to support people and ensure that we support those
- ▼ Use data about the communities of Northamptonshire from other sources to increase our understanding of the needs and assets in diverse communities
- ▼ Create regular engagement forums with under-represented communities to seek their views on any proposals for change
- ▼ Ensure that as far as possible our services and premises are equally accessible by everyone in the community
- ▼ Celebrate our equality diversity and inclusion activity across our communities

3.4 Attracting, Maintaining and Developing a Skilled and Committed Workforce

This relates to how we will encourage people from our communities to join our service and how we will encourage and develop our staff to reach for the roles they can undertake and to be the best they can be.

We will:

- ▼ Adopt recruitment practices that remove any unnecessary or perceived barriers to a career in the fire service and that allow anyone who meet the criteria to apply to have a fair chance of joining us.
- ▼ Embrace positive action to support and encourage those from under-represented groups to apply for the service and develop within the service
- ▼ Provide opportunities for staff to access development at all levels and within all areas of the service.
- ▼ Value talent and identified potential. We will be honest about the opportunities offered to these people.
- ▼ Embed NFRS values and behaviours in our training and in our 'business as usual' activities
- ▼ Encourage staff that are leaving us to complete exit interviews, to understand reasons for leaving and identify areas for improvement or change
- ▼ Develop powerful internal and external communications promoting diversity by showcasing personal stories; highlighting positive contributions by role models and celebrating the progression of staff



Compliance

This strategy supports the organisation in compliance with the public sector equality duty and Equalities Act. We will ensure that information about equalities is transparent and publically available on our service website.



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Monitoring and review

This strategy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) and the EDI Manager.

The monitoring of equality, diversity and inclusion activity will be monitored through DPB and through relevant corporate scrutiny groups to ensure both compliance and to support service development.



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**
Making Northamptonshire Safer

