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Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2024

Introduction

Equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded into everything we do as a public service provider; it drives how we treat each other as members of the Fire Service; how we treat our partners; and how we interact with and deliver services for our diverse communities.

Cleveland Fire Authority (CFA) is pleased to share this Public Sector Equality Duty Report which provides data and information about the workforce at Cleveland Fire Brigade and the work they do on a day-to-day basis to meet the differing needs of the diverse communities we serve. The information within this report aims to demonstrate how we are meeting the requirements as set out within the Equality Act 2010 and specifically, the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics
- Foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not

Public Authorities are required to publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty on an annual basis.

Our commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and this duty is central to our culture, behaviours and core values. This is delivered through a number of the Brigade's strategic plans, which are driven through our inclusive leadership 'One Vision-One Team' approach.

The Authority considers the impact of its policies and decisions on staff and the communities who are protected under the Act. The Authority and its employees, strive to positively contribute to advancing and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and are committed to:

- Developing and supporting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion in order to help build stronger communities
- Creating a work environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation for all
- Advancing equality of opportunity for, and foster good relations with; staff, visitors, contractors, service users and members of the public regardless of age, sex, race, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy or maternity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or marital/parental status, or those disadvantaged by unreasonable conditions or requirements

Strategy

Our strategy drives the actions required against our equality objectives to achieve our equality outcomes, and cuts across all aspect of our work.

In terms of service delivery this particularly relates to our risk management, prevention, protection and emergency response strategies. In other areas it is specifically linked with our community and staff engagement and learning and development strategies. There are a number of key documents that underpin our work in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion including:

- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Discipline Policy and Procedure
- Flexible Working Policy and Procedure
- Annualised Hours Policy and Procedure
- Pay Policy Statement

Our EDI strategy is embedded in our Culture and People Plan and is one of four key themes that seeks to maximise performance in realising our corporate goal: 'Professional, Proud, and Passionate People'. It is key in driving the actions required to achieve our equality outcomes, and cuts across all aspects of our work. Our People Objective: 'To diversify our staff, promote inclusion and create a fair, equal and great place to work' drives the work we do to achieve our outcomes of :

- Continuing to ensure compliance with all equality, diversity and inclusion Legislation
- Continuing to have people policies, processes and practices that provide equality of opportunity and are free from discrimination
- Recruiting a workforce that increasingly reflects the communities we serve
- Creating a working environment where our employees feel they can be themselves and where they can grow to be the best they can be

Highlights of our work

These are just some of the activities we have carried out over the year:

- At our last inspection, we were rated 'Good' in all areas by the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, including 'Ensuring Fairness and Promoting Diversity'
- Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board has continued to meet quarterly, chaired by the Chair of Cleveland Fire Authority, and attendees including Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer and our Staff Network Chairs (Women, Cultural Diversity, LGBTQ+ and Disability)

- We celebrated International Women's Day in March and International Men's Day in November, which included showing our support across social media platforms
- In May we flew rainbow flags at our fire stations and headquarters to mark International Day against Homophobia, Bi-phobia and Trans Phobia
- We supported a number of Pride events across Teesside
- We have supported people from different backgrounds through our work experience programme
- We have visited two local Mosques and talked to worshippers about career opportunities within Cleveland Fire Brigade
- We continued to meet with 'Women Can Do It', which is a group for Muslim women based in Middlesbrough and discussed career opportunities within the fire service with them
- We have attended local school and college career fairs to discuss career opportunities and 'bust myths' around working in the fire service
- We continue to share best practice and work actively and collaboratively with other local organisations which includes Tees Valley Inclusion Network and Local Government Equalities Network
- We are actively involved in supporting the EDI agenda of the National Fire Chiefs Council
- We are members of the Asian Fire Service Association and Women in the Fire Service, staff attend events throughout the year and feedback learning
- We maintain our Ambassador Status for the North East Better Health at Work Award
- We are continuing with our leadership role with the Disability Confident Award, by supporting other organisations with their journey to accreditation and sharing Cleveland Fire Brigade best practice

We are only able to highlight the key areas of our work in relation to equality within this document. Further information can be found on our website: www.clevelandfire.gov.uk

Gender Pay Gap

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 came into force in March 2017. The regulations impose a requirement on public authorities to publish gender pay gap information relating to employees. Our gender pay gap information is published on both Cleveland Fire Brigades own external website as well as the dedicated Government website.

The gender pay gap refers to the difference in average pay between men and women working in an organisation. The reporting of the gender pay gap is different from equal pay reporting although they both deal with pay that women receive in the workplace. Equal Pay means that men and women doing the same job must receive equal pay. It is possible to have equality of pay, but still have a gender pay gap. We have a pay grade structure in place to ensure equal pay for those staff carrying out the same job, on the same grade with progression due to competence and not gender.

Gender pay reporting involves carrying out calculations that show the difference between the average earnings of men and women in our organisation. We use the results to assess the levels of gender equality in our workplace, the balance of male and female employees at different levels and how effectively skills are maximised. The gender pay gap is expressed as a percentage of the difference in the hourly rate of pay between males and females. There are two calculations: the mean (average) and the median (the middle point in the sample).

Measuring the gap

The table below shows that there is a gender pay gap of 4.5% (£0.79) across the organisation, meaning that male staff are paid more than female staff on average. This is much lower than last year's figure of 8.4% (£1.43).

Description	Mean Hourly Rate 2024	Mean Hourly Rate 2023
Male	£17.36	£17.05
Female	£16.57	£15.62
Mean Gender Pay Gap	4.5%	8.4%
Pay Gap	£0.79	£1.43

The table below shows that overall, for median hourly pay, there is a negative gender pay gap of 5.0% which is a decrease from last year's figure of 7.6%.

Description	Median Hourly Rate 2024	Median Hourly Rate 2023
Male	£16.54	£16.25
Female	£15.71	£15.01
Median Gender Pay Gap	5.0%	7.6%
Pay Gap	£0.83	£1.24

The Brigade recognises that occupational segregation in the organisation is the primary cause of the pay gaps, arising primarily from societal attitudes that shape employment patterns, particularly in the Fire Service labour market. The Brigade will continue to challenge these societal attitudes through positive action, dispelling myths and barriers surrounding employment and continuously promoting us as an inclusive employer of choice.

The Brigade has an Equality Impact Assessment Policy and Procedure to ensure that equality issues are considered at the formative stages of policy development, and which ensures that each policy supports the Brigade's commitment to equality.

The Brigade considers that occupational segregation can best be addressed by ensuring our recruitment, development and promotion processes are free from discriminatory elements, and encourage applications from all parts of the organisation and the community. To help address under-representation within our workforce we are:

- Further developing our understanding of local community data and creating connections to identify any potential barriers to employment, busting myths and showcasing the Brigade and its work
- Forming partnerships with other organisations to develop benchmarking criteria and identify best practice.
- Forming partnerships with other organisations and charities to develop positive links to under-represented groups to help target positive action.
- Continue to ensure that appropriate provision is provided for both genders, including mental and physical health including the menopause and suitable domestic provisions and they are continuously reviewed.
- Acknowledging the role of those who become primary carers for children and family members. That our policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to be family friendly.
- Continue to enhance our employer brand as an inclusive employer by the words and pictures used on our adverts and social media
- Ensuring where possible we have employees from under-represented groups supporting our positive action team and recruitment activity, such as 'have a go days', point of entry physical tests and interview panels.
- The Recruitment and Selection policy and procedure will be reviewed in 2025 to ensure it remains free from discriminatory elements and actively encourages and supports applicants from all sections of the workforce and wider communities.
- The Job Evaluation process will be reviewed in 2025 to ensure we continue to have a structured and objective system for determining the relative worth of different jobs within the organisation.
- Increase the number of Positive Action campaigns we undertake to encourage applicants from all sections of the community to seek employment with the Brigade. Use data and evaluation to target under-represented groups.
- Working alongside, supporting and empowering our staff networks to identify and address any barriers to careers within the Fire Service and any barriers to staff progression.
- Ensure that there are equality impact assessments attached to all policies, procedures and activities including recruitment, promotion and positive action activity.

By ensuring that equality is at the heart of our pay grading, recruitment, selection, and development, the Brigade will ensure equality of pay and opportunity for all employees, and seek to develop an engaged, high-quality workforce that is representative of our communities in all functions and at all levels of the organisation.

Diversifying our workforce

Cleveland Fire Brigade is committed to achieving a workforce that is representative of the community it serves, and in doing so, encourages individuals from minority groups and communities to engage with recruitment opportunities, as permitted within UK employment equality legislation.

We want to recruit talented people with a diverse range of skills and experiences, who share our values and passion in making a difference to our local communities. Recruiting from the widest pool of people will mean we can employ individuals who understand different cultures and lifestyles and are willing to use those skills to the benefit of the community and the organisation. We use 'Positive Action', which is a lawful approach within the Equality Act 2010, to develop activities which are specifically targeted to encourage applications for employment from those groups who are currently under-represented within our workforce.

Whilst we have had some success, we acknowledge that we are not yet fully representative of our local community in some parts of our workforce and will continue our work to address this imbalance through a variety of actions. Moving forward we will be making improvements to our careers portal on our website so that it is easier to access recruitment details and resources to help all potential applicants in the recruitment processes. We are also committed to continuing our work to identify barriers in all aspects of our recruitment processes as well as working to 'bust myths' that may exist, for example, how a firefighter can still observe their Muslim faith during Ramadan.

Our activities are targeted to encourage applications for employment from those groups who are currently under-represented within our workforce.

Workforce Profile

Our workforce diversity is monitored by the collection of data from application forms for all recruitment and selection processes, surveys, training and discipline, grievance and dignity at work cases. This monitoring enables us to measure performance and changes made over time in relation to diversity within the workforce.

We provide statistics about our workforce to the Government on an annual basis at the end of each financial year.

Note: No data is collected regarding pregnancy, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership

Age

- The highest proportion of CFB staff fit within the 36-45 age group.
- The highest proportion of Firefighters within CFB fall within the 36-45 age group, this is the same as England's F&RS.

Religion

- 26% of all CFB staff identify as being Christian, 26% identify as having no religion, and 47% did not state their religion
- Within the local community, residents identified as being Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and other religion.

Gender

- the % of all females employed within CFB is 20.3%.
- The gender split within the local community shows that 51% of the working population is female
- 6.7% of females, which is an increase from the previous year of 6.4%, are employed as Wholetime Firefighters within CFB which is lower than the English F&RS of 9.3%
- 55.1% of Support staff at CFB are female
- The % of females employed as Fire Control staff within CFB is 78.9% which is slightly lower than the previous year of 82.4% higher than in the English FRS as a whole at 76%

Sexual Orientation

- 3% within the Brigade identified as Lesbian/ Gay/ Bisexual which is a slight increase since last years figure of 2%
- 18% of all CFB staff have not declared their sexuality, however this figure has reduced since last year from 20%
- 2.5% of those living in the Cleveland area classed themselves as Lesbian/ Gay/ Bisexual

Ethnicity

- 95.6% CFB staff identify as White British
- CFB staff who identify as White Other, Mixed background, Asian and Black, make up 3.4% of the workforce which is an increase from previous year
- 1.1% of CFB staff did not declare their ethnicity (which is a decrease from the previous year of 1.61%)

- 7% of the Cleveland area is made up of ethnic minority residents. Within the Cleveland area, Middlesbrough has the highest concentration of ethnic minority communities

Disability

- Across the local community 21.1% are being limited either a little, or a lot, by long-term health problems
- Within CFB 3.5% of staff have shared that they have a disability (which is an increase from previous year of 2.6%).

What does our data tell us

Performance indicators are a good way to monitor and measure progress. Clear data makes it easier to generate relevant, consistent and comparable performance over time.

We are keen to ensure that the monitoring data collated in this report is used to inform our employment practices and service delivery.

In terms of recruitment, we will continue to run positive action initiatives to attract underrepresented groups to careers with Cleveland Fire Brigade. Those groups have been identified currently as women in operational roles, men in fire control roles, members of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups and LGBTQ+ communities across all roles and people in the 17-24 age bracket. Positive action will be used to support and attract applicants to recruitment campaigns.

Active attendance by Crews, Operational Management and Human Resources at taster days, local community events, on-line interactive information sessions and myth busting activities will continue to be used to break down any barriers to recruitment and increase our engagement with those communities. The Brigade also has a Human Resources software system which enables staff to enter and modify their own personal data. We hope by having a clear recording system, it will encourage staff to provide more information which includes diversity data. It is important that we share information about our workforce profile to the public as well as our staff with regards to why monitoring data is collected, what it is used for and why the Brigade uses positive action for recruitment purposes. This will hopefully encourage individuals to provide their data in the knowledge that it will be held securely and used for specific purposes.

As an 'Employer of Choice' we will build upon our success and reputation as a 'Disability Confident Leader' that actively seeks out and hires skilled disabled people and we will continue to provide support in the workplace to existing employees. We are committed to doing further work in this area to ensure inclusivity for people with both visible and hidden disabilities.

A great place to work

Creating an inclusive culture starts with having the right values and ethical behaviours in place.

Our Values and Ethical Behaviours Framework is well-embedded in Cleveland Fire Brigade and is the building block upon which our culture is based.

Together with the Code of Conduct, our Values and Ethical Behaviours Framework sets out those standards that uphold our organisational culture. Strong ethical behaviour will influence how our staff and those that use our services view us, and the way in which we conduct our business.

The achievement of Cleveland Fire Authority's vision, mission and goals is built on having a safe and healthy workforce that is truly motivated and working together for a common and meaningful purpose. Keeping people safe from harm and creating safer, stronger communities is not just about what we do (our technical competence) or what we know (our knowledge and experience), it is all underpinned by our culture (how we do things) which is made up of our systems, structures, working practices; all which centre around our shared values.

Aligned to the Core Code of Ethics for Fire & Rescue Services (England), we believe that by living our values every minute of every day and demonstrating the behaviours set out in this framework, we can all contribute to developing our 'one vision, one team' approach and create a constructive and supportive working culture that makes Cleveland Fire Brigade a great place to work.

Our Staff Networks

We are clear that all staff have a part to play in ensuring we always provide an inclusive environment.

Equally, we understand the important role our staff networks play in helping us to create that inclusive environment, achieve change, and provide support on the employee journey for new and existing staff. As part of our strategy to create a truly inclusive workplace, employees have established staff networks with the aim of bringing people with shared characteristics together, as well as involving those who wish to support and learn about that particular community (known as Allies). We currently have four staff networks, Women, Cultural Diversity, LGBTQ+ and Disability.

Aimed at building upon our achievements within each of these areas, these groups provide an opportunity for staff to connect, share thoughts and ideas, socialise and celebrate their diversities whilst supporting one another in a safe environment. The groups discuss issues of relevance to their communities, identify ways to engage the wider workforce in inclusion activities and ensures the service makes decisions which consider the impact on equality.

Staff Networks are run by the members, with support from the Brigade's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Human Resources Advisor. Each Network has selected their own Chair and established Terms of Reference which govern the remit of the group. The networks meet regularly (at least quarterly) and the Chairs of each network group are members of the Brigade's Equality and Diversity Board. The Board, led by the Chair of the Fire Authority, provides a strategic platform to raise issues and make suggestions for change. The network Chairs also collaborate locally with network Chairs from organisations across the Tees Valley, such as Further Education, Police and the NHS.

This report, in addition to other reports referenced, are published on the Brigade's external website at: <http://www.clevelandfire.gov.uk>

Copies of this report are available to all departments, fire stations, partner agencies, local equality organisations and any interested parties on request.

The report will be made available in other languages, large print, Braille, audio, etc. on request. Please contact our Communications Team using the details below, if you require information about this report in an alternative format.

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