

ANNUAL VOLUNTARY REPORTING DISABILITY, MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

INTRODUCTION FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KIRTON, CHAIR OF CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY AND CHIEF FIRE OFFICER IAN HAYTON

Cleveland Fire Authority is committed to delivering and supporting a culture of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Health and Wellbeing which ensures the safety and wellbeing of its workforce and communities. As Chair and Chief Fire Officer we passionately believe in supporting our valued workforce and their individuality by providing an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

As visible leaders, we are continually striving towards achieving our strategic goal “A Proud, Passionate, Professional and Inclusive Workforce” and will continue to encourage a culture that supports equal treatment, equal opportunity, inclusion and transparency, where staff can be confident in declaring a disability or their sexuality without fear of discrimination or prejudice.

Our People Strategy 2018–2022 outlines our integrated approach to delivering the Authority’s strategic people outcomes and includes the key themes of Health and Wellbeing; Inclusive Culture and a Values and Behaviours Framework. This strategy is complimented by associated policies and procedures to support these outcomes.

VOLUNTARY REPORTING

The independent [Thriving at Work review](#) conducted by Paul Farmer and Lord Dennis Stevenson, recommended that employers should report more information about their actions on workplace mental health on a voluntary basis. In November 2018, the Government launched a new voluntary framework to support organisations in recording and voluntary reporting on mental health and wellbeing of staff in the workplace.

This statement demonstrates the transparency and accountability of how we are meeting our commitments.

DISABILITY

We continue to promote equality and inclusion in all the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010. We publish three annual reports which evidence our progress and commitment; the Public Sector Equality Duty Report; Gender Pay Gap Report and the Workforce Profile Analysis report.

<https://www.clevelandfire.gov.uk/about/equality-diversity-inclusion/>

We are supporting this by:

- Continuing to develop and support a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion in our workforce and in the planning, design and delivery of its prevention, protection and emergency response services. This is reflected and communicated in our values which link to the core values of the National Fire and Rescue Service.
- Our Equality and Diversity Strategy 2018 - 2022 is driven and progressed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum (EDIF) and its five sub groups to deliver the Inclusion objectives and Improvement Action Plan.
- Our chief officers are involved nationally on the National Fire Chiefs Council People Programme and lead on Occupational Health and Wellbeing.
- Being recognised as a level 2, Disability Confident Employer.
- Ensuring our policies, strategies and plans are equality impact assessed to ensure that equality, social inclusion and community cohesion issues are suitably considered at the formulation and implementation stages
- Monitoring our workforce diversity by the collection of data from application forms, surveys, internal promotion processes, training and discipline or grievance cases, enables us to measure changes in relation to diversity within the workforce. In 2018/19, 2.6% of the Brigades workforce declared having a disability.

MENTAL AND HEALTH WELLBEING

Our Organisational Document Framework includes an Employee Health and Wellbeing (EHWB) Framework and Improvement Action Plan and numerous workforce related documents and guidance to support our staff.

Our Employee Health and Wellbeing Forum have over 40 volunteer members from all areas and levels of the organisation, including representative bodies. The forum has four separate sub groups delivering actions in the areas of; Mental Health, healthy eating, health and fitness and health promotion. We are continuing to make good progress on all our Health and Wellbeing Improvement Actions and are striving to improve our employee experience by making wellbeing more integral to our people policies, to enable our employees to thrive and flourish at work.

We are committed to ending mental health stigma and discrimination in the workplace and have signed the Blue Light Time to Change pledge. As part of our Health and Wellbeing services, our employees have access to an Employee Assistance Programme which provides access to a 24 hour helpline staffed by professional counsellors who can provide impartial and confidential advice on matters which may create anxiety or stress and an extensive Occupational Health Service which includes access to a Physiotherapist, Doctor, Nurse and Counsellor. Operational employees also have access to TRIMS.

Outlined below are some of our recent achievements and actions:

- All staff signed up to abide by our Organisational Values (PRIDE – Protect, Respect, Innovation, Doing the right thing – being professional and Engagement with others)
- Achieved “Ambassador Status” in the North East Better Health at Work Award
- Took part in a Mental Health Torch Relay, Blue Light Walk, “Time to Talk Day”, and other health and wellbeing promotions to raise staff awareness
- Offered Coaching and Challenging Conversation workshops to help build managers capability and confidence in supporting their staff
- Over 70 members of staff attended various MIND mental health courses

WHATS NEXT

Cleveland Fire Authority will continue to strive to create a culture that encourages staff to feel able to talk openly, without fear of discrimination or stigma, about physical disability or mental health. We recognise that our staff can perform at their best if they work in an environment which is built on respect and trust and we will continue to ensure our staff abide by our Organisational Values.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Health and Wellbeing Forums and sub groups will continue to evolve and progress both Improvement Action Plans and the overarching People Strategy which includes:

- Achieving Level 3 Disability Employer Leader status
- Delivering further Mental Health guidance and information to all staff
- Staff undertaking Level 2 “Awareness of Mental Health Problems” qualification

COUNCILLOR PAUL KIRTON
CHAIR OF CLEVEAND FIRE AUTHORITY

IAN HAYTON
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER