

## **CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY ANNUAL VOLUNTARY REPORTING DISABILITY, MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

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 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, procedures and scheduled training to support these outcomes.

At the commencement of the Covid-19 pandemic, our business continuity plans were updated to include additional support services to our employees, which has been continually updated to meet Government guidelines. Part of this support was to take undertake regular individual Wellbeing Conversations with all our staff.

**COUNCILLOR PAUL KIRTON,  
CHAIR OF CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY**

**IAN HAYTON  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

## **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 with over 250 employees to record and voluntarily report 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**

In November 2020, the Brigade were awarded Level 3 Disability Confident Leader status by the Department of Works and Pensions. This is in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy which ensures recruitment is open to everyone and that those with disabilities are not disadvantaged in the workplace. We have a comprehensive Occupational Health Service which supports employees who have, or during their employment, may develop a disability. They provide management with advice around reasonable adjustments to help employees in the workplace.

We have established strong links with other local employers who are 'Disability Confident' to share good practice and we are now in a position to support other organisations who aim to become Disability Confident Leaders.

We continue to promote equality and inclusion in all the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 and have four dedicated staff network groups on Disability, Women, LGBTQ+ and BAME.

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 our 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 Board and its three sub groups to deliver the Inclusion objectives and Improvement Action Plan.
- Our chief officers are actively involved in supporting the National Fire Chiefs Council People Programme and lead on Occupational Health and Wellbeing.
- 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 providing support in the workplace to existing staff. We are committed to doing further work in this area to ensure inclusivity for people with both visible and invisible disabilities.
- Ensuring our policies, strategies and plans are people 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, which enables us to measure changes in relation to diversity within the workforce. In 2019/20, 2.3% of the Brigades workforce shared that they have a disability or long term health problems.

## **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

Our Organisational Document Framework includes a Health and Wellbeing (HWB) Framework underpinned by a 4 year Strategy Improvement Action Plan which is supported by numerous workforce related documents and guidance to support our staff.

The Health and Wellbeing Board has three separate sub groups delivering actions in the areas of; Mental Health, Physical Health and Health Promotion and Nutrition Group. The groups have over 40 volunteer members from all areas and levels of the organisation, including representative bodies. 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 within the workplace.

We are committed to ending the stigma associated with mental health and discrimination within 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. 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 – **P**rotect, **R**espect, **I**nnovation, **D**oing the right thing – being professional and **E**ngagement with others) and complete annual online training
- 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
- Held events during the Mental Health Awareness Week which included daily 10 minute videos for our staff to watch (and join in)
- All staff have undertaken health and wellbeing conversations throughout the pandemic with their manager
- Undertaken staff cultural survey
- Offered Coaching and Challenging Conversation workshops to help build managers capability and confidence in supporting their staff
- Over 70 members of staff have attended various MIND mental health courses
- State of Mind gave live online interactive presentations which were available to all our staff. The viewing for these presentations was very high and the feedback from these presentations was overwhelmingly positive
- Establishing a procedure for Blue Light Champions
- Currently working with United Minds which is a national FRS mental health group
- Continue our collaboration with Cleveland Police regarding mental health training
- Produced a Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance document for Managers and Employees
- Produced Menopause Guidance and training for all staff and supply sanitary products in all our premises

## WHATS NEXT

Cleveland Fire Authority continues to strive to create a culture which 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.

A conference entitled “Being Inclusive = Being Healthy” is being held on 2<sup>nd</sup> and repeated on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021, so that more of our staff can attend or view remotely whilst on duty.

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

- focusing on providing staff with self-help and awareness ‘techniques and tools’ which aim to improve their mental wellbeing and personal resilience through a practised technique referred to as the ‘PERMA’ model.
- following on from this initial session, there are a series of workshops which will explore each part of the PERMA model (Cultivating Positive Emotions/Increasing Engagement/ Developing Relationships/Creating Meaning/Boosting Accomplishment/Building Accomplishment/Building Resilience, which will enable individuals to focus on their own personal wellbeing and resilience
- to continue undertaking Wellbeing Conversations with our staff
- educating staff and raising awareness of hidden disabilities including the promotion of sunflower lanyards
- providing guidance to staff and managers to help them understand Neurodiverse conditions with our Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance
- supporting charities such as Daisy Chain and Crohn’s and Colitis UK

If you require this document in an alternative language, large print or Braille, please do not hesitate to contact [communications@clevelandfire.gov.uk](mailto:communications@clevelandfire.gov.uk)