

DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Equality Policy

The Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority (DWFRA) is the combined fire and rescue authority for its area as defined within Sections 1 and 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. This document contains the Authority's policy on how it will manage equality, diversity and inclusion activities.

Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority is fully committed to ensuring DWFRS supports diversity and inclusion and delivers equality of opportunity across all functions, including fire, health education and related services, such as; employment, partnerships, volunteering and procurement.

We realise the important role our staff, volunteers and partners have to play to ensure our statutory duties are effectively implemented. This policy demonstrates how determined we are to ensure there is active engagement, so people affected by our work can influence and shape our organisation.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are part of Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service's (DWFRS) values and "how we do business" as a family friendly employer, working with our fire service volunteers and in providing services to the people of our combined communities.

We are committed to creating an inclusive community and a society where:

- people are treated with dignity and respect
- discrimination and prejudice will be challenged
- we anticipate, and respond positively to, different needs and circumstances so that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential.
- we promote flexible and family friendly work opportunities to help staff fulfil their personal responsibilities and interests outside of work.

We are committed to seeking 'excellence' accreditation against the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework, achieving 'two ticks' status and working with Stonewall so we have an inclusive culture.

Part One Purpose, Process & Outcomes

Detailed Info

EDI – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Part Two	Document References	Detailed Info
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Ref No:	EDI	FRS:	DWFRS
Date of Issue:	16/01/2016	Review Due:	16/01/2019
Version No:	V1.0	Review Completed:	DD/MM/YYYY

Part One – Purpose, Process & Outcome

The reason(s) for which something is done, created or exists; individuals involved and what we wish to achieve as an end result.

Purpose
Why is this policy needed?

This policy communicates to all external and internal stakeholders the importance the Authority places on equality, diversity and inclusion. Set out below are our principles relating to how the Authority provides evidence it meets its responsibilities and complies with legal requirements and good practice expectations:

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Principles

- We value diversity and we recognise different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture, and this difference brings great strength.
- We believe discrimination or exclusion based on individual characteristics and circumstances, such as; age, disability, caring or dependency responsibilities, gender or gender identity, marriage and civil partnership status, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, colour, caste, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, trade union membership status or other distinctions, represents a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity for self-fulfilment.
- It's everyone's responsibility to help to achieve an inclusive and supportive environment, and to promote good relations. We will uphold our service Values and challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- Flexible working practices and family-friendly policies play a key role in enabling us to attract and retain the best people. We are a family friendly employer, initiating flexible working, maternity and parenting (including same sex parenting) procedures and opportunities to help staff balance work and home responsibilities.
- We respect the rights of individuals, including the right to hold different views and beliefs. However we don't allow these differences to manifest in a way that is hostile or degrading to others.
- We use equality monitoring data and information to highlight Service-wide trends and will take action where this indicates groups are under-represented or if they risk being disadvantaged.

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- We have a modern, professional and inclusive culture and expect commitment and involvement from our staff, volunteers, members, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our Vision: *Passionate about Saving and Changing Lives.*

Process

How we will meet the above requirements?

Our equality work is supported by legislation set out in the Equality Act 2010 that makes it illegal to discriminate, victimise or harass someone because of a real or perceived difference.

We use the Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRSEF), a nationally accredited equality framework, to support us in delivering this public commitment to meeting our general and specific duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010, as an employer and service provider.

We ensure we scrutinise and evaluate progress towards ED&I objectives through our ED&I Assurance Plan.

The overall aim of the Plan is to set out the way in which DWFRS makes a public commitment to meeting its obligations under equality legislation and how, in doing so, it makes a real and positive difference to those affected by the work of the Service.

The objectives of the Assurance Plan are to:

- develop a sustainable plan for embedding equality and human rights into the work of DWFRS, ensuring the we have in place the systems needed to deliver our objectives for a family friendly, flexible and inclusive workplace
- carry out the Fire Authority's responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality duties detailed in the Equality Act 2010 to encourage equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between different groups
- ensure we comply with our legal responsibilities and publish our Equality Objectives
- monitor progress against objectives and report on achievements in a way which is fair, open and transparent.

Outcome

Success of the Policy? (How will this Policy be assured?)

To monitor the success of this policy and meet our legal responsibilities we will:

- use the ED&I Assurance Plan to achieve 'excellence' against the FRSEF
- publish an Annual Report showing how we meet the Public Sector Equality Duties to encourage equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote good relations between different groups and ensure compliance with legal responsibilities
- monitor the take-up of flexible working and family friendly policies and take action on trends
- submit six monthly Assurances to the Finance & Audit Committee to provide effective Officer and Member scrutiny and evaluation
- use staff monitoring data proactively to help inform workforce policy and support and develop a positive and inclusive culture

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- use the Impact Assessment (IA) process to assess the positive and negative impact of our decisions and services on community groups, volunteers and staff, and to learn and make changes to advance equality, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations.
- review our provision of accessible information and services
- widen participation through engagement with our communities, vulnerable groups and partners.

Review Date:

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or will be brought back to Members if requirements change.

Part Two – Document References, Document Management & Version Control

This Policy is linked to the following:

Document References:

Published Procedures within People & Organisational Design

Supporting Information:

Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRSEF) rev. May 2015

Legislation References:

[Equality Act \(EA\) 2010](#)

Document Management:

Policy Reference: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

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V1.0	Entire document	21/01/2016	Document ready for publication	Jill Warburton & Rex Webb

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