

# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	HRMDC/10/4
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>14 JANUARY 2010</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>POSITIVE ACTION STRATEGY – “STAIRWAY”</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Andy Oaker, Equality & Diversity Advisor
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	That the strategy entitled “STAIRWAY” be endorsed.
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>This initial Positive Action Strategy (to be called STAIRWAY) aims to meet the commitment of DSFRS to the following specific recruitment targets;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2013, 18% of new joiners to operational firefighting will be women.</li> <li>• By 2013 7.29% of all new joiners across all operational and non-uniformed posts will be of minority ethnic background.</li> </ul> <p>The title “STAIRWAY” stands for:</p> <p><b>S</b>ubtle  <b>T</b>argeted  <b>A</b>ppropriate  <b>I</b>nformed  <b>R</b>easonable  <b>W</b>orkable  <b>A</b>chievable  <b>Y </b></p>
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Funds of £34,000 are already secured from the CLG grant for this purpose
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<p>A. Positive Action Strategy – Aims &amp; Objectives</p> <p>B. Circular FRS 67/2009 - “Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career” National Campaign</p>
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	None

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets our information for consideration as follows:

- what has informed the production of this strategy;
- the principles underpinning the strategy;
- the aims and objectives of the strategy

1.2 The strategy has been produced in order to meet the commitment of DSFRS in accordance with the following specific recruitment targets;

- By 2013, 18% of new joiners to operational firefighting will be women.
- By 2013 7.29% of all new joiners across all operational and non-uniformed posts will be of minority ethnic background.

1.3 S.T.A.I.R.W.A.Y stands for:

Subtle  
Targeted  
Appropriate  
Informed  
Reasonable  
Workable  
Achievable  
Yields results

## 2. BACKGROUND

2.1 In May 2008, Communities and Local Government (CLG) published the National Equality & Diversity Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service (under cover of Fire & Rescue Service Circular 31/2008) This required fire and rescue services to achieve the following:

- By 2013 recruitment of women into the operational sector to be at least 15%
- By 2013 the percentage of recruits from minority ethnic groups across the whole organisation to reach the same percentage as in the local working age population

2.2 CLG stated that FRS's wishing to go further than these figures (i.e. "stretch targets") could apply for a specific grant of money. The guidance stated:

***"To encourage Fire and Rescue Authorities to strive for more rapid improvement in the diversity of their workforce, Communities and Local Government [CLG] will allocate an additional capital grant payment to those Fire and Rescue Authorities that commit to the achievement of higher recruitment targets. Those higher targets will be 18 per cent for women in the operational sector and between 2 and 5 per cent above the local working age population for minority ethnic staff across all sections of the Service"***

***A minimum of £42,000 in capital grant\* will be allocated in 2009/10 or 2010/11 to those Fire and Rescue Authorities which make a commitment to achieving the following targets:***

- ***By 2013 a minimum of 18% of new entrants to the operational service to be women***
- ***By 2013 recruitment of minority ethnic staff across the whole organisation to be at 2 to 5% above the minority ethnic representation in the local working population.”***

2.3 On 23 October 2008, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority formally agreed to go for these “stretch targets” and subsequently applied to CLG for the grant (Minute DSFRA/52 refers).\*

(\*N.B. the actual figure allocated to DSFRS is £34,482 – see Appendix A for a more in depth discussion of how that grant has been allocated within DSFRS).

2.4 In accordance with CLG guidance, DSFRS used information from the Labour Force Survey to inform its grant application, thus:

- The labour force survey indicated that the local minority ethnic working age population across the two counties of Devon and Somerset is 5.29%;
- To reflect the local statistics, 5.29% would therefore be the basic recruitment target figure for DSFRS;
- a target figure of 2% above the basic recruitment target figure of 5.29% would be 7.29%;

2.5 Detailed information about demographic and other information which has informed this positive action strategy can be found in the associated appendices.

### 3. **THE PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE POSITIVE ACTION STRATEGY**

3.1 The principles underpinning this positive action strategy are:

**Subtle:** We have learnt that some organisations (particularly certain Fire & Rescue Services and Police Constabularies) have occasionally found that well intentioned and lawful positive action activities (e.g. women or BME only recruitment open days) have resulted in unfounded accusations of being exclusionary and discriminatory to other groups. Whilst DSFRS will have a focus on under-represented groups in terms of its ongoing recruitment plans (particularly women and members of our BME communities), it will also ensure that such focus has a benefit for all potential applicants.

Positive action is also about a range of related corporate activities and policies e.g. the image and reputation of DSFRS; how our staff promote DSFRS to our partners; our core values; the high potential scheme; Graduate programmes; recruitment and selection codes of practice.

**Targeted:** In considering a subtle focus, it should therefore be targeted not just in terms of people’s needs– but also where the people are needed.

**Appropriate:** When establishing how best to target positive action work it should be appropriate to the people it is targeted at and appropriate for the needs of the organisation.

**Informed:** Targeting appropriate activities can only be achieved through good information – not just from raw data, but also from our community partners.

**Reasonable:** Positive action activities should be sensible, fair and valid.

**Workable:** By ensuring that our activities are reasonable, we should therefore ensure that such activities are workable in terms of what that quantity and quality of the activity (outputs) and what is achieved (outcomes)

**Achievable:** Reasonable and workable positive action activities should be lead to something that is achievable.

**Yields results:** By making this achievable it should yield results.

#### 4. **THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POSITIVE ACTION STRATEGY.**

##### 4.1 Aims:

- To build a diverse work force made up of the best people from all our communities
- To meet the requirements of the stretch targets

##### 4.2 Objectives:

- Raise awareness across the Service area (particularly with under-represented groups) of the opportunities, realities, processes and requirements of working as an operational firefighter for DSFRS – focusing on retained duty system firefighters
- Equip the next generation (target groups 14 to 16 yr old girls and 16 to 24 year old students) with knowledge about the modern Fire and Rescue Service and encourage and enable them to consider the role of whole time firefighter as a professional career by developing a recruitment programme for schools, colleges and educational establishments.
- Ensure our recruitment and selection processes do not disadvantage any group, ensuring that assessments are job related and fit for purpose
- Raise awareness across the Service area (particularly with under-represented groups) of the non-operational job opportunities within DSFRS.

(A breakdown of the activities to meet the objectives is given as an appendix to this report).

5. **THE CLG “ORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY CAREER” NATIONAL CAMPAIGN**

5.1 This campaign is designed to raise awareness of, and change attitudes to, a career in the Fire and Rescue Service among currently under-represented groups. The campaign focuses on 14-16 year old girls and people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds

5.2 The DSFRS strategy will utilise many elements of this campaign – as appropriate to our local needs. However it is important to note, that as a national campaign it is very generic and would be one to augment and enhance our local activities over the next few years

5.3 The campaign will focus on two key audiences:

- Girls aged 14 to 16 (the age at which the majority of girls formulate strong opinions about future career choices) with the key message that women can be, and are, firefighters, and
- People from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds to encourage them to consider the Fire and Rescue Service as a career choice

5.4 The campaign will also feed into the Firekills campaign where Student Brand Ambassadors are used to promote fire safety messages. This is specifically targeted at college and university students (16 – 24 yrs old).

6. **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES:**

6.1 It must be acknowledged that there are some particular challenges to the successful outcomes of this strategy and the achievement of the targets set. These include

- Possible changes in organisational structure and establishment;
- Low turnover and recruitment levels over the next few years;
- Potential financial constraints from decreased budgets across the organisation;
- Low aspirations and poor perceptions of people from under-represented groups that the fire service is a good choice for a job.

6.2 Whilst acknowledging the challenges above; this should not be a reason for not undertaking or “diluting” any positive action work in the coming years. If anything, this gives us a greater rationale. Information and intelligence data from the analysis of the recent Ff recruitment campaign is being used to target positive action initiatives.

6.3 Irrespective of the future structure and establishment of DSFRS, the organisation must still look to being one that is not just an employer of choice, but one that truly reflects the communities whom we serve.

**JANE SHERLOCK**  
**Head of Human Resources Management & Development**

## ***“S.T.A.I.R.W.A.Y.”***

### **The DSFRS Positive Action Strategy for 2009 to 2013.**

#### **The aims and objectives.**

##### **Aims:**

1. To build a diverse work force made up of the best people from all our communities
2. To meet the requirements of the stretch targets

##### **Objectives**

1. Raise awareness across the Service area (particularly with under-represented groups) of the opportunities, realities, processes and requirements of working as an operational firefighter for DSFRS – focusing on retained duty system firefighters
2. Equip the next generation (target group 16 to 24 year olds) with knowledge about the modern Fire and Rescue Service and encourage and enable them to consider the role of whole time firefighter as a professional career by developing a recruitment programme for schools, colleges and educational establishments.
3. Ensure our recruitment and selection processes do not disadvantage any group, ensuring that assessments are job related and fit for purpose
4. Raise awareness across the Service area (particularly with under-represented groups) of the non-operational job opportunities within DSFRS.

**Objective 1**  
**Raise awareness across the Service area (particularly with under-represented groups) of the opportunities, realities, processes and requirements of working for as an operational firefighter for DSFRS – focusing on retained duty system firefighters**

		<b>Expected completion date</b>	<b>Teams involved</b>
<b>Activity 1</b>	Develop a corporate RDS recruitment toolkit to include		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E &amp; D;</li> <li>• Comms;</li> <li>• Recruitment</li> <li>• RDS Task &amp; Finish group</li> </ul>
	(a) An information leaflet for employers	March/April 10	
	(b) A range of targeted information leaflets for potential employees.	March/April 10	
	(c) Posters	March/April 10	
	(d) Corporate job advertisement template and proforma	March/April 10	
	(e) DSFRS recruitment DVD/internet based video to include the realities and requirements of the role; members of RDS talking about their experiences; tutorial help around interview skills etc for potential applicants.	March/April 10	
(f) A Group support process that will assist from the centre with localised campaigns, to include employers workshops	May 10		
<b>Activity 2</b>	Develop and implement a proactive and targeted corporate media campaign in identified areas of RDS “vacancy hotspots” aimed at: (a) the key under-represented groups in that area (b) the primary employers of RDS areas	Outline by March 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E &amp; D;</li> <li>• Comms</li> <li>• Recruitment</li> <li>• RDS Task &amp; Finish group</li> </ul>
<b>Activity 3</b>	Develop and disseminate a community overview of the Single Equality Scheme (Making the Connections)	January 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E &amp; D</li> <li>• Comms</li> </ul>
<b>Activity 4</b>	Identify and skill a team of “recruitment ambassadors” who will be able to engage with individuals and communities on issues relating to RDS employment in various forums...including face to face recruitment and community events and remotely via social networking (e.g. Twitter)	May/June 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E &amp; D</li> <li>• Comms</li> <li>• Recruitment</li> <li>• Comms</li> <li>• RDS Task &amp; Finish group</li> </ul>

<b>Activity 5</b>	Establish a protocol with statutory and informal partners and stakeholders (e.g. representative bodies) to assist with the dissemination of local recruitment messages	April 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E &amp; D; HR; Group managers; CS</li></ul>
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## Objective 2

Equip the next generation (target groups 14 to 16 yr old girls and 16 to 24 year old students) with knowledge about the modern Fire and Rescue Service and encourage and enable them to consider the role of whole time firefighter as a professional career by developing an awareness programme for schools, colleges and educational establishments.

		Expected completion date	Teams involved
<b>Activity 1</b>	Utilise and link with the national CLG "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Careers" campaign	Commencing Nov 2009 & through 2010 to 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E &amp; D;</li><li>• Comms;</li></ul>
<b>Activity 2</b>	Develop key recruitment messages about the Service for use by those engaged in work with young people (e.g. Community Safety; Young People's projects)	June 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E &amp; D;</li><li>• Comms;</li><li>• CS</li></ul>
<b>Activity 3</b>	Develop a series of local awareness events about the service specifically targeted at young people in the target groups	June 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E &amp; D;</li><li>• Comms;</li><li>• Recruitment</li></ul>

**Objective 3****Ensure our recruitment and selection processes do not disadvantage any group, ensuring that assessments are job related and fit for purpose**

		Expected completion date	Teams involved
<b>Activity 1</b>	Undertake an in-depth and focused review of the Equality Impact Assessment on all elements of these processes to develop an action plan to address any anomalies or potential barriers.	April/May 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E &amp; D;</li><li>• Recruitment</li><li>• RDS Task &amp; Finish group</li><li>• Workforce development</li><li>• Key internal &amp; external stakeholders</li></ul>
<b>Activity 2</b>	Instigate the action plan as highlighted in Activity 1	Commence March 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E &amp; D;</li><li>• Recruitment</li><li>• RDS Task &amp; Finish group</li></ul>
<b>Activity 3</b>	Monitor, evaluate and review the progress of the action plan	Sept 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E &amp; D;</li><li>• Recruitment</li><li>• RDS Task &amp; Finish group</li></ul>

**Objective 4****Raise awareness across the Service area (particularly with under-represented groups) of the non-operational job opportunities within DSFRS.**

		Expected completion date	Teams involved
<b>Activity 1</b>	Develop a series of “listening seminars” for key external agencies/groups who are reflective/representative of minority communities in the Service Area to speak to DSFRS about what is important for THEIR communities in terms of considering a career with DSFRS	April/May 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E &amp; D</li><li>• External stakeholders</li><li>• Comms</li></ul>
<b>Activity 2</b>	Develop a general awareness information pack about the benefits of working for DSFRS (specifically about non-operational/support roles) that can be given at community events, careers fairs etc – utilising the information gained from Activity 1	May/June 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E &amp; D;</li><li>• Comms</li><li>• Recruitment</li><li>• HR</li><li>• Workforce development</li><li>• Key internal &amp; external stakeholders</li></ul>
<b>Activity 3</b>	Make use of local BME and related networks, groups and publications to disseminate our recruitment messages and vacancies as they arise.	ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E &amp; D</li><li>• CS</li><li>• Key internal &amp; external stakeholders</li><li>• Comms</li></ul>