

**M. Pearson  
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY**

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**To: The Chair and Members of the  
Human Resources Management and  
Development Committee  
(see below)**

**SERVICE HEADQUARTERS  
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**HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

**14 January 2010**

A meeting of the Human Resources Management and Development Committee will be held on the above date, **commencing at 10.00 hours in Conference Room B in Somerset House, Service Headquarters** to consider the following matters.

M. Pearson  
Clerk to the Authority

**AGENDA**

1. **Apologies**
2. **Minutes** of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 27 October 2009 attached (Page 1).
3. **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

Items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to consider whether they have any **personal/personal and prejudicial interests** in items as set out on the agenda for this meeting and declare any such interests at this time. *Please refer to the Note 2 at the end of this agenda for guidance on interests.*

**PART 1 – OPEN COMMITTEE**

5. **Absence Management**

Report of the Head of Human Resources Management & Development (HRMDC/10/1) attached (Page 4)

6. **Wholetime Recruitment Campaign 2009**

Report of the Head of Human Resources Management & Development (HRMD/10/2) attached (Page 9)

7. **The New Fire and Rescue Service Equalities Framework and the current "Migration" Assessment**

Report of the Head of Human Resources Management & Development (HRMDC/10/2) attached (Page 19)

8. **Positive Action Strategy - "STAIRWAY"**

Report of the Andy Oaker, Equality & Diversity Advisor (HRMDC/10/4) attached (Page 28)

9. **Target Setting For Goal 2 Of The Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority Corporate Plan 2010/11 To 2012/13**

Report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/10/5) TO FOLLOW

**PART 2 – ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Nil

**MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO SIGN THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER**

**Membership:-**

Councillors Wallace (Chair), Boyd, Burridge-Clayton, Cann, Manning, Mrs. Nicholson, Turner, Wallace

**Substitute Members**

Members are reminded that, in accordance with Standing Order 36, the Clerk (or his representative) MUST be advised of any substitution prior to the start of the meeting.

## **NOTES**

### **1. ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Any person wishing to inspect any minutes, reports or lists of background papers relating to any item on this agenda should contact Sam Sharman on the telephone number shown at the top of this agenda.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS**

#### ***What Interests do I need to declare in a meeting?***

As a first step you need to declare any personal interests you have in a matter. You will then need to decide if you have a prejudicial interest in a matter.

#### ***What is a personal interest?***

You have a personal interest in a matter if it relates to any interests which you must register, as defined in Paragraph 8(1) of the Code.

You also have a personal interest in any matter likely to affect the well-being or financial position of:-

- (a) you, members of your family, or people with whom you have a close association;
- (b) any person/body who employs/has employed the persons referred to in (a) above, or any firm in which they are a partner or company of which they are a director;
- (c) any person/body in whom the persons referred to in (a) above have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
- (d) any body of which you are a Member or in a position of general control or management and which:-
  - you have been appointed or nominated to by the Authority; or
  - exercises functions of a public nature (e.g. a constituent authority; a Police Authority); or
  - is directed to charitable purposes; or
  - one of the principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

**more** than it would affect **the majority** of other people in the Authority's area.

Anything that could affect the quality of your life (or that of those persons/bodies listed in (b) to (d) above) either positively or negatively, is likely to affect your/their "well being". If you (or any of those persons/bodies listed in (b) to (d) above) have the potential to gain or lose from a matter under consideration – to a **greater extent** than **the majority** of other people in the Authority's area - you should declare a personal interest.

#### ***What do I need to do if I have a personal interest in a matter?***

Where you are aware of, **or ought reasonably to be aware of**, a personal interest in a matter you must declare it when you get to the item headed "Declarations of Interest" on the agenda, or otherwise as soon as the personal interest becomes apparent to you, **UNLESS** the matter relates to or is likely to affect:-

- (a) any other body to which you were appointed or nominated by the Authority; or
- (b) any other body exercising functions of a public nature (e.g. membership of a constituent authority; other Authority such as a Police Authority);

of which you are a Member or in a position of general control or management. In such cases, provided you do not have a prejudicial interest, you need only declare your personal interest if and when you speak on the matter.

#### ***Can I stay in a meeting if I have a personal interest?***

You can still take part in the meeting and vote on the matter unless your personal interest is also a prejudicial interest.

#### ***What is a prejudicial interest?***

Your personal interest will also be a **prejudicial** interest if **all** of the following conditions are met:-

- (a) the matter is not covered by one of the following exemptions to prejudicial interests in relation to the following functions of the Authority:-
  - statutory sick pay (if you are receiving or entitled to this);
  - an allowance, payment or indemnity for members;
  - any ceremonial honour given to members;

- setting council tax or a precept; **AND**
- (b) the matter affects your financial position (or that of any of the persons/bodies as described in Paragraph 8 of the Code) or concerns a regulatory/licensing matter relating to you or any of the persons/bodies as described in Paragraph 8 of the Code); **AND**
- (c) a member of the public who knows the relevant facts would reasonably think your personal interest is so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

***What do I need to do if I have a prejudicial interest?***

If you have a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting, you must declare that you have a prejudicial interest (and the nature of that interest) as soon as it becomes apparent to you. You should then leave the room unless members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter by statutory right or otherwise. If that is the case, you can also attend the meeting for that purpose.

You must, however, leave the room **immediately after you have finished speaking (or sooner if the meeting so decides)** and you cannot remain in the public gallery to observe the vote on the matter. Additionally, you must not seek to **improperly influence** a decision in which you have a prejudicial interest.

***What do I do if I require further guidance or clarification on declarations of interest?***

If you feel you may have an interest in a matter that will need to be declared but require further guidance on this, please contact the Clerk to the Authority – preferably before the date of the meeting at which you may need to declare the interest. Similarly, please contact the Clerk if you require guidance/advice on any other aspect of the Code of Conduct.

**HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

27 October 2009

Present:-

Councillors Boyd, Burridge-Clayton, Horsfall (vice Mrs Turner), Manning, Mrs. Nicholson and Wallace

Apologies:-

Councillor Cann.

**\*HRMDC/1. Election of Chair**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Wallace be elected Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2010.

**\*HRMDC/2. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2009 be signed as a correct record.

**\*HRMDC/3. Declarations of Interest**

Members of the Committee were invited to consider whether they had any **personal/personal and prejudicial interests** in items as set out on the agenda for this meeting and declare any such interests at this time.

No interests were declared.

**\*HRMDC/4. Election of Vice Chair**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Boyd be elected Vice Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2010.

**\*HRMDC/5. High Potential Leadership Programme**

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/09/10) on the introduction, initially as a pilot, of a new pilot High Potential Leadership Programme (HPLP) within Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) based on a new national "fast track" scheme. The national scheme was intended to provide intensive progression for high potential staff and also sought to attract further high potential individuals into the FRS by offering an opportunity for a challenging and rewarding middle/strategic management career.

The proposed HPLP within DSFRS would have three entry routes for different groups of staff, namely:

- Existing operational staff at Firefighter and Crew Manager level (including RDS);
- Existing non-operational staff;

- New entrants.

DSFRS would be supporting 3 places and the pilot, which was for existing operational staff initially and which would commence in Autumn 2009. The Programme would be evaluated and the results reported back through this Committee in due course.

**\*HRMDC/6. Eligibility for Retained Duty System (RDS) Staff to Apply for Wholetime**

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/09/11) on the establishment of processes to enable “part time” (RDS) staff to be considered for wholetime roles within the Service. The report set out the legislative and national context behind this initiative and gave details of the action being taken within the Service to facilitate eligibility for transfers at firefighter level. The report also set out, amongst other matters, details of the selection process that would be involved, training and role development programmes.

**\*HRMDC/7. Staff Skills Bank**

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/09/12) which advised of work undertaken to set up a Staff Skills Bank as a result of feedback that had been received during the course of the first round of staff seminars. The Skills Bank would capture the additional skills that staff possessed, including hobbies, voluntary work, vocational qualifications, public and charitable appointments, languages, Retained Duty System (RDS) primary employment and any other skills staff may have. This was a voluntary scheme intended to be utilised for small projects and to enhance Area performance and community plans where appropriate.

**\*HRMDC/8. Absence Management**

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/09/13) that updated the Committee on the position in respect of the Service performance on both short- and long-term absence levels.

The corporate target was “to reduce the levels of sickness absence to the regional average of 9.0 days/shifts lost per person by 2010/11”. The target for 2009/10 was 9.6 days and the actual performance to August 2009 was 3.37 days/shifts as compared to 4.34 days/shifts for the same period last year (a 22.4% reduction).

The Head of Human Resources Management and Development advised that the introduction of the new Absence Management Policy had played a key role in reducing the absence levels. The single most important contributory factor had been the return to work interviews which were undertaken now after an absence of only one day. The position was monitored closely by the Service Improvement Group (SIG) and work was being undertaken to drill down into the figures to ascertain whether there were any “hot spots”.

It was noted that the main cause of long term sickness were muscular skeletal and mental health issues. As a result, arrangements had been put into place for staff to be able to self refer to appropriate health practitioners such as a physiotherapist and this had assisted in cutting down on the length of absence. The position would continue to be monitored.

**\*HRMDC/9. Future Workshops for the Human Resources Management and Development Committee**

The Head of Human Resources Management and Development stated that arrangements could be made for Members to participate in workshop sessions relating to the work of this Committee. The suggestions included holding sessions at Severn Park and Service Training Centre to give Members of this Committee a flavour of the training undertaken within the Service and to give a context to decision making in the future. Additional areas of work that could be covered in due course included firefighter safety and the health and safety role for Members.

**\* DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The meeting started at 14.15hours and concluded at 15.35hours.

# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	HRMDC/10/1
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	14 JANUARY 2010
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>ABSENCE MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Head of Human Resources Management &amp; Development</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	The progress with Absence Management has been included as a standing item within the HRMD agenda. This report includes an update of the Service performance for absence levels and also the long term absence levels.
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b>EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b>APPENDICES</b>	None
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	None



**1. INTRODUCTION**

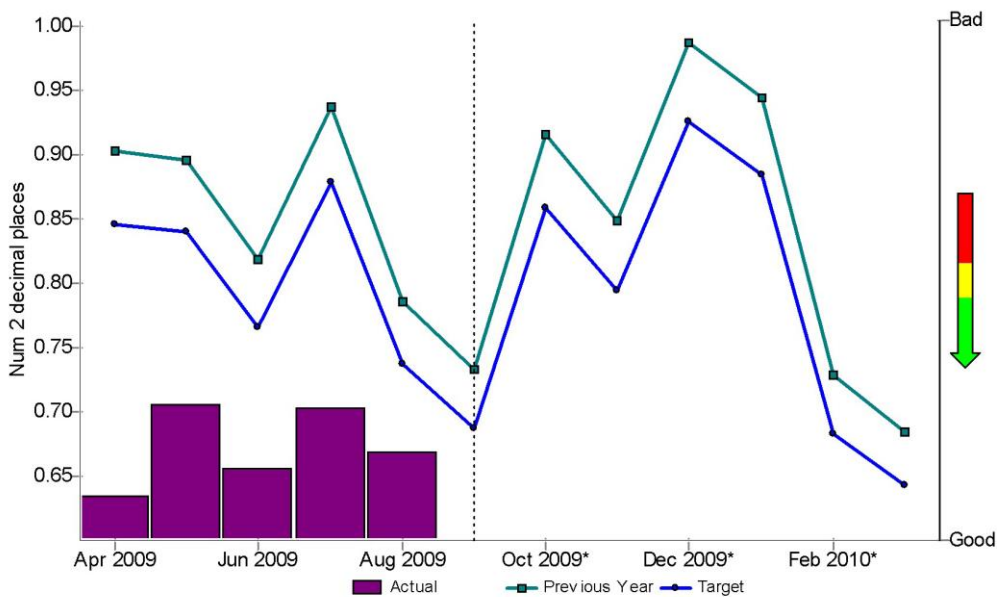
1.1 Absence levels have previously been identified as a key measure that the HRMD Committee will monitor and review as a standing item. Progress towards our target remains good and on target as part of the Service Performance Reporting.

**2. CURRENT PERFORMANCE**

2.1 The Service has a corporate target to reduce the levels of sickness absence to the regional average rate of 9.0 days/shifts lost per person by 2010/11. The target for 2009/10 is 9.6 days per person.

2.2 The absence levels for 2008/9 were lower than the target level and this overall good performance has been maintained into 2009/10. We have seen a 21.9% decrease in absence when compared with the same period last year. At this point in time, the previous year was at an average of 6.84 days absence per person compared with our actual level for 2009/10 of 5.36 days. This is 16.7% better than our target level of 6.41 days per person.

**All Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2009/10**



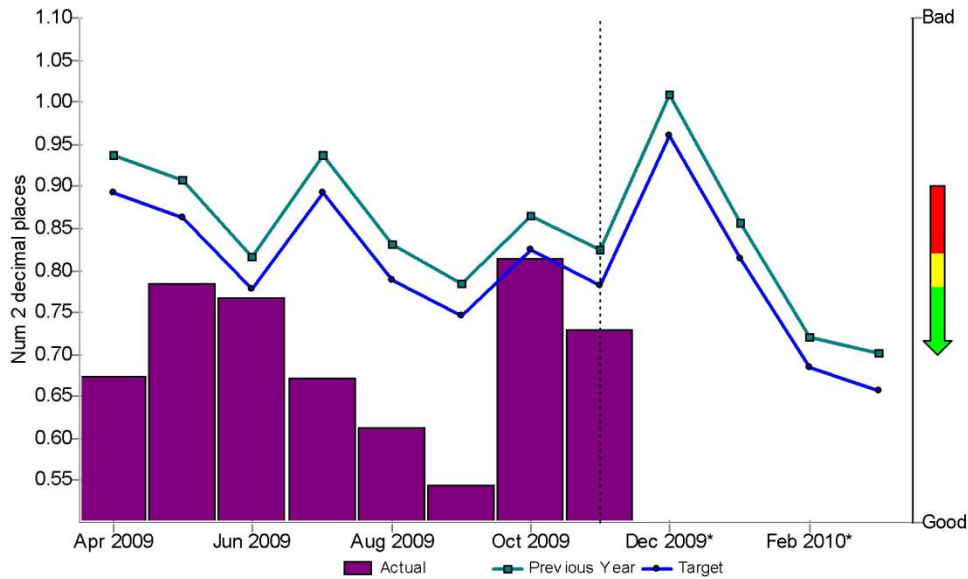
**All Staff – Sickness Rates per Person – by Month**

	<b>Actual 09/10</b>	<b>Previous Year 08/09</b>	<b>% variance on previous year</b>	<b>% variance on target</b>
Apr-09	0.64	0.90	-29.6%	-24.9%
May-09	0.71	0.90	-21.2%	-16.0%
Jun-09	0.66	0.82	-20.0%	-14.5%
Jul-09	0.68	0.94	-27.8%	-23.0%
Aug-09	0.6	0.79	-23.2%	-18.0%
Sept 09	0.57	0.73	-22.7%	-17.5%
Oct 09	0.77	0.92	-16.1%	-10.6%
Nov 09	0.73	0.85	-14.3%	-8.6%
<b>YTD</b>	<b>5.34</b>	<b>6.84</b>	<b>-21.9%</b>	<b>-16.7%</b>

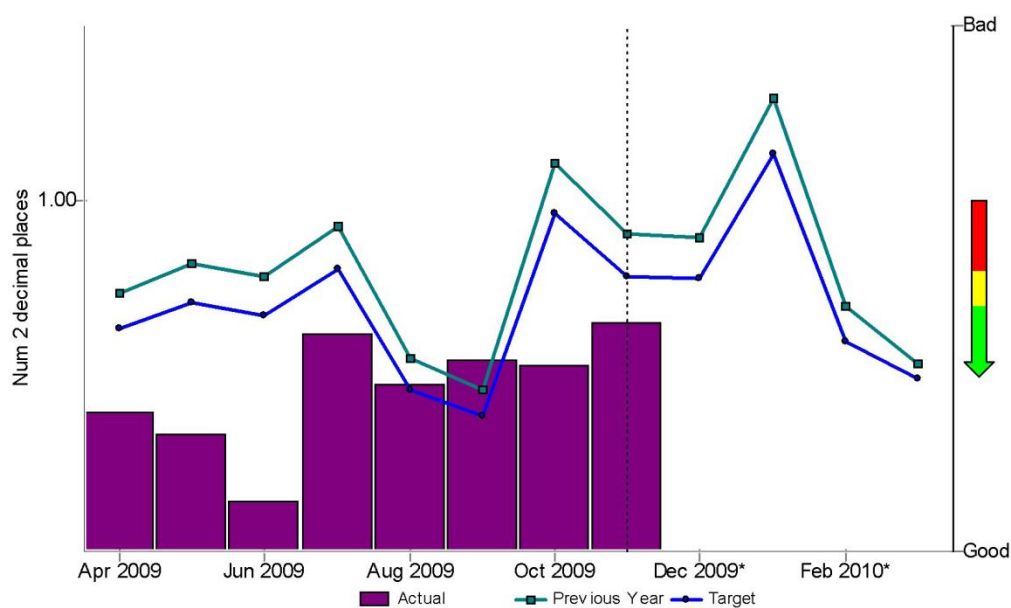
2.3 As usual, we can then break down the figures by staff category and the rates for uniformed, control and non-uniformed are shown below. The uniformed levels have remained below the previous year and below the target level although October saw the highest level of sickness for the year.

2.4 For non-uniformed staff September's sickness levels were higher than last year and above target but subsequently levels have been back on track. For Control, the November sickness levels have been higher than anticipated due mainly to seasonal sickness.

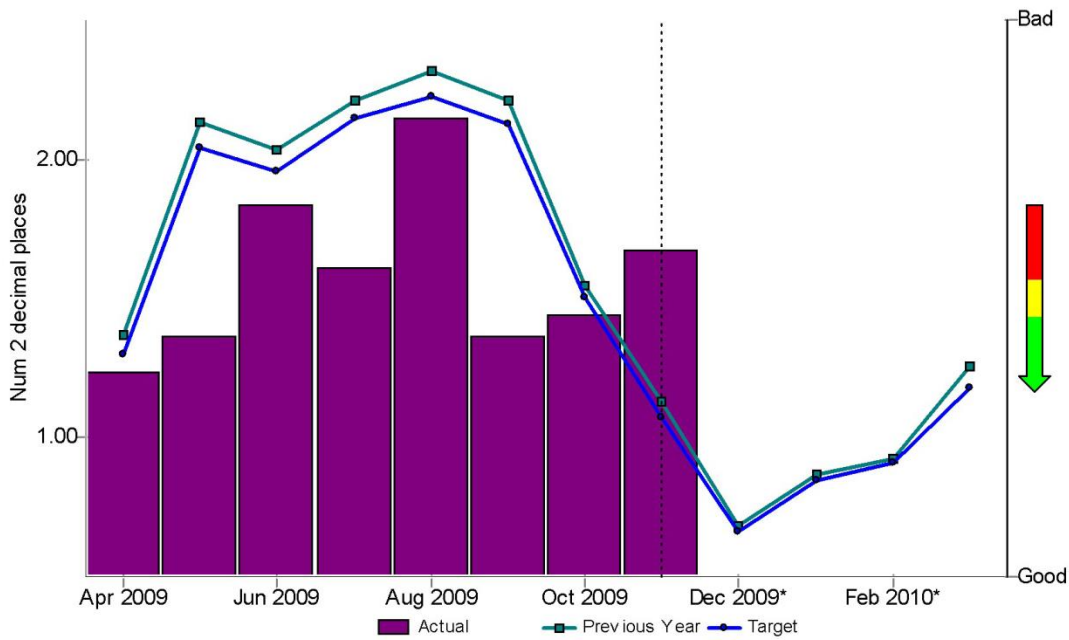
**Uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2009/10**



**Non-uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2009/10**



### Control Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2009/10



### 3. COST OF ABSENCE

- 3.1 The cost of absence is part of the provided data although it is recognised that the Service has a ridership factor applied at station level to account for absences including annual leave, training and sickness. So, when a member of station based staff is absent, it does not necessarily mean that a further cost has been incurred.
- 3.2 The costs that have been calculated relate to direct salary costs only and do not take into account any indirect costs or allowances eg flexi-duty.

Period	Salary Cost
Apr	£86,993
May	£100,411
Jun	£95,683
Jul	£91,801
Aug	£80,177
Sep	£71,937
Oct	£104,417
Nov	£96,745

Of the total:

- 54.4% of this cost is due to long-term sickness
- 17.4% of this cost is due to certified sickness
- 28.1% of this cost is due to uncertified sickness

4. **DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF LONG TERM SICKNESS**

4.1 The monitoring of long term sickness ie those over 28 days is reported on a monthly basis and includes those who are long term sick and those on restricted duties. The number of long term sick since 2008 is shown below.

Number of staff	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Uniformed 2008	31	27	28	23	23	19	19	20	23	17	20	18
Retained	16	14	17	10	10	8	10	8	9	12	14	20
Non-uniformed	6	3	6	6	7	6	2	4	2	3	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>43</b>

Number of staff	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Uniformed 2009	16	18	18	18	22	18	15	14	16	18	12	
Retained	20	20	21	25	18	20	13	17	21	24	19	
Non-uniformed	3	5	1	1	0	2	2	2	3	5	4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>35</b>	

5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1 The Service has seen an overall improvement over the previous year at a level better than targeted for 2009/10.

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



# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	HRMD/10/2
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>14 JANUARY 2010</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>WHOLETIME RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN 2009</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Head of Human Resources Management & Development
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<p>(a) <i>That consideration is given to removing the CDI weightings in the process i.e. all PQA questions are marked (no sift on Q1) and a separate pass mark at interview is not used.</i></p> <p>(b) <i>That all practical tests are reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose, job related and do not have an adverse impact on under-represented groups.</i></p> <p>(c) <i>That a rolling programme be introduced for WT recruitment to run concurrently with the RDS one. This will become feasible with the introduction of the e-recruitment system.</i></p> <p>(d) <i>That targeted action interventions are considered to aid the recruitment of under-represented groups. The organisations has signed up to the governments 'stretch targets' for recruitment and a small working party has been formed to look at suitable strategies.</i></p> <p>(e) <i>That, subject to (a) to (d) above, the report be noted.</i></p>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	This report sets out the work that has been undertaken to date on recruitment leading to the appointment of a total of 31 firefighters in 2009/10.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Practical equipment purchased at a cost of £16,543 and staff time involved in resourcing this process
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	

<b>APPENDICES</b>	A. Statistical analysis of the recruitment campaign.
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	None

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The 2009 recruitment campaign for DSFRS is the first since combination in 2007. Previously, recruitment campaigns for the previous Devon and Somerset Services were carried out in 2003 and 2002 respectively.
- 1.2 Workforce planning projections in February 2009 showed that the wholetime establishment of 750 would be minus 23 by the end of Quarter 4 in 2009. Senior Management Board (SMB) had previously agreed to recruit 10 new recruits in 2009 but economies of scale suggested that it would be more efficient to recruit 20.

## 2. PRE-CAMPAIGN

- 2.1 A working group consisting of representatives from Human Resources (HR), Equality & Diversity, Procurement and Information and Communications was formed with the aim to procure an advertising agency to assist with the campaign. A procurement process was implemented and 13 agencies tendered for the contract. The decision to use a company, TMP, was made by the working group on 18 March 2009 with an initial meeting taking place on 27 March 2009. At this stage, time restrictions were paramount and the decision to make no overt positive action interventions was made, bearing in mind the negative media reaction to Avon's campaign in the previous year.
- 2.2 TMP in a very short turnaround came up with several ideas for an advertising campaign, the working party chose the poster of the child wearing a Fire Helmet with the slogan 'He want's to be a Firefighter, just like his Mum'. Before combination, the selection assessments had been undertaken at Service Training Centre (STC - Devon) and at Severn Park (Somerset). Since combination, practical assessments for Retained Duty System (RDS) recruitment had been undertaken at Severn Park, but this resulted in logistical problems of transporting candidates and assessors to the centre and fitting in with the timetable of Severn Park. The decision was made by SMB to buy the practical equipment needed at a cost of £16,453 and to place it at SHQ for the wholetime (WT) recruitment campaign and for the future use of RDS recruitment. SMB had previously supported bringing in an additional Watch Manager (WM) into the HR department on a temporary basis and this post was advertised in March 2009, the successful candidate being appointed from the RDS. The main tasks for the WM were the risk assessments and siting of the practical equipment and the sourcing of Preventative Protective Equipment (PPE) and the assessors needed for the practical assessments.
- 2.3 During the pre-campaign phase, the working group also made the decision to drop the questionnaire from the written assessments. As part of the written assessments, there is a questionnaire with unlimited time for completion. It was anticipated that this would be dropped from the National Firefighter Selection (NFS) tools as the Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQA's) for a Firefighter were being tested 3 times with the Application Form sift, questionnaire and interview. It had been reported at a national level that the questionnaire gave 'no additional value' to the NFS process. Avon and Cornwall were running concurrent campaigns and Avon also dropped the questionnaire.

- 2.4 Previously the working party had discussed ways of limiting the number of applications received, traditionally the Fire Service receives 1000's of applications for wholetime positions and since the Service had not advertised for several years it was unclear how many applications would be received. The intention was not to have a waiting list as in previous campaigns, within the former DFRS the Service had been using candidates from a waiting list since 2002 with no opportunity for new applicants to be considered or the ability to undertake targeted advertising to encourage under represented groups to apply, the waiting list consisted of all white males. It was also thought that due to the economic downturn the number of potential applicants was likely to be increased.
- 2.5 Avon and Cornwall were also running simultaneous campaigns, Cornwall had kept an 'Expressions of Interest' list and only supplied applications to these people (approx 750), and they did not undertake an advertising campaign. Avon also did not advertise in the normal way, application forms were only available from their website over a 48 hour period (964 applications received). Due to the short timescales faced by the Service, it was impossible to achieve any positive action within the DSFRS campaign and therefore, the decision was made to advertise in the local press and specialist sites using TMP and not to limit the number of applications in any way. A subgroup of the working group also updated the website with information for the campaign including downloadable application forms and practice leaflets for the written and interview stages. TMP were also asked to provide details of their service for shortlisting in the event that DSFRS was inundated with applications, although this did not prove to be necessary as all shortlisting was carried out in-house.

### 3. **THE CAMPAIGN**

- 3.1 The campaign was launched on 17 April 2009 with a closing date of 1 May 2009. Adverts were placed in the local newspapers throughout Devon & Somerset and health clubs and gymnasiums were targeted with the poster with the aim of appealing to women members. Specialist sites such as PinkPaper.com and youreable.com were also targeted.
- 3.2 An administrative team with support from HR and Corporate Support Departments was formed to deal with the applications as they arrived. 2198 applications were received, each of which was given a personal identification number and was separated from the 6 PQA based questions which formed the basis of the sift. 13 applications were received without the Equal Opportunities monitoring form and consequently, all statistics are based on 2185 applications. All application details were logged onto a spreadsheet and an agency worker was brought in for a few days to assist with this.
- 3.3 The PQA's assessed for a Firefighter are:-
- Working with others
  - Commitment to development
  - Commitment to excellence
  - Commitment to diversity and integrity
  - Openness to change
  - Confidence and resilience
  - Problem solving
  - Situational awareness
  - Effective communication



3.4 A maximum score of 4 for each of the questions is awarded following the NFS sifting guidelines. Question 1 is related to commitment to diversity and integrity and is weighted, unless the candidate scores a minimum of 2 for this question the application is not progressed further. The sifting team consisted of HR professionals and uniformed staff (WT, RDS and Control) who had been specifically trained to do the sift. 1981 people were sifted out at this stage. Pass marks were then moderated in line with workforce planning requirements to ensure that adequate numbers were passed through to the written assessment stage.

#### 4. **WRITTEN ASSESSMENTS**

4.1 There are 3 written assessments

- Understanding information
- Working with numbers
- Problem solving and situational awareness

4.2 All 3 assessments are job related and designed around Fire Service scenarios

4.3 The assessments take approximately 3 hours and 6 sessions were held at Service Headquarters over a number of weekends. Several candidates declared they were dyslexic and special arrangements were made for them (extra time and readers were supplied). Pass marks were then moderated in line with workforce planning requirements to ensure that adequate numbers were passed through to the next stage. The Lead Assessor at this stage was the HR Officer (Firefighter Recruitment) who is BPS Level A qualified, feedback was offered to all candidates.

#### 5. **PRACTICAL ASSESSMENTS**

5.1 There are six practical assessments, all are job related.

##### Ladder Climb

This test is designed to assess confidence at heights. Applicants in full PPE must wear a safety harness and practice a leg lock at ground level. The applicant then has to ascend two thirds of the way up the ladder (indicated by a mark on the ladder) and then take a leg lock. They will then be asked to lean backwards and outstretch their arms to the sides and whilst looking over their shoulder say out loud what symbol is being shown by an assessor at ground level.

##### Casualty Evacuation

This is a test designed to assess upper and lower body strength and co-ordination. Applicants wearing full PPE are asked to drag a 55kg dummy backwards around a 30M course by a carrying handle fixed to the dummy.

##### Confined Space

This test is designed to assess confidence, agility and stamina. Applicants in full PPE are to put on a facemask and with un-obscured vision make their way through a crawl and walkway. Once inside the crawl/walkway they have their vision obscured and have to make their way back to the start.

### Ladder Lift Simulator

This test is designed to assess upper body strength and co-ordination. Applicants wearing full PPE are to raise the bar of a ladder lift simulator to the required height with a 15 kg weight placed on the simulator cradle, which gives a total lift of 24 kg.

### Equipment Assembly

This is a test designed to assess manual dexterity. Applicants will be given a demonstration of the test before having to assemble and disassemble a number of components to make an item of equipment.

### Equipment Carry

This is a test to assess upper and lower body strength and co-ordination. Applicants are to carry items of equipment up and down a course between two cones placed 25 M apart. They will be given brief demonstrations of correct lifting techniques and permitted to practice picking up the various items.

- 5.2 The Lead Assessors for this stage were the HR Officer (Firefighter Recruitment) and a WT Station Manager. All assessors were operational staff (both WT and retained) and were experienced/trained in administering the assessments.
- 5.3 In addition to the NFS tests the Multistage Fitness Test (Bleep Test) was also included. Other Services who had previously used the NFS tests had reported that when commencing the training course, many recruits exhibited poor fitness levels and this had also been observed by STC staff when training recruits from other Services. The test was not used as a pass/fail assessment but was used as an indicator to assess current fitness levels. It was explained to candidates that if they could not reach level 8.4 they would struggle with the course content and may also fail the fitness test included in the medical examination. At this stage, if the candidate was not at the required level of fitness they still had time to improve.
- 5.4 It can be seen from the statistical results that the female candidates had problems with two of the tests, namely the equipment carry and in particular the Ladder Lift Simulator, this is a national trend and a draft report issued by the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) recommends that the ladder 'extension test' previously used be revisited.
- 5.5 These tests are also used to recruit RDS staff and sessions are run monthly at SHQ. The trend for women to fail these two assessments does continue. However, those who do not reach the standard are given advice on how to improve their upper body strength and invited to attend a future assessment day. Those who choose to put in some work to improve their upper body strength invariably pass the assessments at a second attempt. It may mean that some targeted action is required for future wholetime campaigns if these particular tests remain in the NFS toolkit.
- 5.6 All candidates who failed the assessments were given full feedback on their performance by the lead assessors on the day, 93 people went forward to the interview stage.

## 6. **INTERVIEW STAGE**

- 6.1 Each interview panel consisted of an HR Officer (who were all female) and a uniformed Officer (who were all male and had been trained in PQA based interviewing). Each interview lasts for up to one hour and can take up to an hour to mark. The HR Officer (Firefighter Recruitment) was the lead assessor and all interview report forms were scrutinised and some scores were moderated.
- 6.2 Again, the Commitment to Diversity and Integrity PQA is weighted, there are three questions for this PQA and if candidates score less than 3 on two questions they will have failed the interview even if they score highly for the other PQA's. All candidates' received a practice leaflet to help them prepare for the interview.
- 6.3 In line with workforce planning requirements, the top scoring candidates progressed to the interview stage.

## 7. **FINAL DECISIONS**

- 7.1 10 Successful candidates were taken on for the September course and graduate from the Joint Training Centre at Severn Park in December 2009.
- 7.2 10 successful candidates (including 2 women) will commence their training in January 2010 at STC.
- 7.3 267 applications were received from RDS staff (178 from DSFRS) and 9 were successful and started their WT duties in September 2009 after completing an integration course. This included one candidate from an under-represented group.
- 7.4 39 applications were received from WT Firefighters in other Services, 2 were successful and were also taken on in September 2009. This also included one candidate from an under-represented group.

## 8. **SUMMARY**

- 8.1 This is the first time that DSFRS has used the NFS process to recruit WT Firefighters and although not used to the exact standard (questionnaire dropped and pass marks amended slightly), it has been a resounding success. Considering the short time frame available and the logistic and resourcing problems faced, it was a successful exercise due to the dedication of all the staff involved.
- 8.2 The process is expensive and it may be possible to run a WT recruitment rolling programme in conjunction with the RDS one (the assessments other than the application sift are the same).
- 8.3 It is disappointing not to see more under-represented groups in the final stages and more work needs to be done regarding positive action.
- 8.4 Nationally, there seems to be little lead from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) regarding the NFS process. The team, based at Fire Service College Moreton-in-Marsh, has been disbanded and the National Forum has not met since May 2009.

8.5 Regionally, a Working group (both lead assessors represent DSFRS) is looking to introduce an e-recruitment system for future campaigns with the ability to use initial PQA testing on line to replace the huge initial sift. Invitations to tender will be requested in the New Year. This group is also looking at alternative written and practical tests but this work is still in its infancy.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 It is important not to be complacent and to constantly review the recruitment processes utilised by the Service. As a result of this campaign, the following recommendations are made.

- (a) That consideration is given to removing the CDI weightings in the process i.e. all PQA questions are marked (no sift on Q1) and a separate pass mark at interview is not used;
- (b) That all practical tests are reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose, job related and do not have an adverse impact on under-represented groups.
- (c) That a rolling programme be introduced for WT recruitment to run concurrently with the RDS one. This will become feasible with the introduction of the e-recruitment system;
- (d) That targeted action interventions are considered to aid the recruitment of under-represented groups. The organisations has signed up to the governments 'stretch targets' for recruitment and a small working party has been formed to look at suitable strategies.

**JANE SHERLOCK**

**Head of Human Resources Management and Development**



# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>HRMDC/10/2</b>
<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>THE NEW FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK: AN OVERVIEW AND THE CURRENT “MIGRATED” ASSESSMENT</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Head of Human Resources Management &amp; Development</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	To endorse and adopt the Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework (“ <i>The Journey to Excellence</i> ”) as the framework against which the Authority will measure its equality & diversity outcomes.
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>The Fire &amp; Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRS EF) was launched on 7 December 2009 entitled “<i>The Journey to Excellence</i>”. This framework supersedes the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG). It recognises and addresses equality and diversity objectives that are a priority for the fire and rescue service. It is outcome-focused and based upon the same principles as the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG), including the use of three achievement levels: ‘<i>developing</i>’, ‘<i>achieving</i>’ and ‘<i>excellent</i>’.</p> <p>Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) has reached Level 2 of the Equality Standard, therefore achievement will be migrated across to the ‘<i>developing</i>’ level of the FRS EF</p> <p>The single equality scheme, <i>Making the Connections</i> will go some way towards achieving the desired “<i>excellent status</i>” by 2012. An initial self assessment exercise against the requirements of each level will be carried out within DSFRS early in 2010 to identify further actions required against the criteria set.</p> <p>In early 2010, IDeA plans to launch the ‘<i>Efect</i>’ web based software. It is an assessment tool that will allow upload evidence, links and data against each performance area. DSFRS will be adopting this method of assessment, which will enable auditors to view all the evidence against the framework in one place.</p>
<b>RESOURCE</b>	There is a significant project to be scoped around the implementation

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>	and monitoring of this tool (the “Efect” software), to enable evidence to be collected across the organisation
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	
<b>APPENDICES</b>	None
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	None

## 1. **A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING FRS EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PERFORMANCE**

1.1 The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) has now superseded the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG). The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), in partnership with the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA), has produced the new Fire and Rescue Services Equality Framework (FRS EF). The FRS EF recognises and addresses equality and diversity objectives that are a priority for the fire and rescue service. The FRS EF is outcome-focused and based upon the same principles as the EFLG, including the use of three achievement levels:

'developing'  
'achieving'  
'excellent'.

1.2 It has also been cross-mapped with the national 'Fire and Rescue Service: Equality and diversity strategy 2008 to 2018' to incorporate the same five priority areas stated in that document. This should greatly assist FRSs in preparing their annual report to Communities and Local Government. The priority areas of performance are:

- leadership and promoting inclusion
- accountability
- effective service delivery and community engagement
- employment and training
- evaluation and sharing good practice.

## 2. **LINKS AND DRIVERS**

2.1 The FRS EF complements and supports the services' national core values of:

- service to the community
- people
- diversity
- improvement.

2.2 The FRS EF also has a strong correlation with relevant statutory duties and external assessment methodologies. Using the 'COUNT' principle – count once and use numerous times – it should be possible to provide evidence that will be relevant to:

- statutory duties
- the 'Fire and Rescue Service: Equality and diversity strategy 2008 to 2018'
- comprehensive area assessment (CAA)
- operational assurance
- the managing performance element of organisational assessments.

- 2.3 Communities and Local Government and the Audit Commission have recognised the FRS EF as an appropriate means to measure and accredit the performance of individual FRSs with respect to equality and diversity. The FRS EF has been cross-mapped against the EFLG to identify common areas. Matters that tend to be led by local authorities – such as commissioned or procured services, equality mapping and sustainable community strategies – have been presented in an FRS context.
- 2.4 Cross-mapping with the ‘Fire and Rescue Service: Equality and diversity strategy 2008 to 2018’ has ensured the inclusion of a number of areas that are particularly important to the FRS. These include integrated risk management planning (IRMP), workplace facilities, recruitment and dealing with bullying and harassment. Importantly, it has also been constructed to provide scope for the different governance arrangements that services operate within, be it metropolitan, combined or county based.

### **3. THE FIVE PERFORMANCE AREAS**

- 3.1 These are:
- leadership and promoting inclusion
  - accountability
  - effective service delivery and community engagement
  - employment and training
  - evaluation and sharing good practice
- 3.2 These five areas are explored further in the paragraphs below.

### **4. LEADERSHIP AND PROMOTING INCLUSION.**

- 4.1 Positive political and managerial leadership at all levels is essential to drive change, maintain commitment and create improvement. Senior service leaders and members need to demonstrate their commitment through personal impact and by making resources available to deliver improvements.
- 4.2 Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) Members have a central role in ensuring that equality improvements are integral to the Authority’s strategic aims and performance. They often have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of their local communities, which should be used to inform service activities. High performing FRAs will be led by Members and officers or managers who have a reputation for championing equality issues, ensuring that objectives and activities are relevant to community needs.
- 4.4 They will have ensured employees are clear about their role in making the service a fair and inclusive organisation. Leaders will also be promoting good community relations and ensuring that the service achieves equality outcomes.
- 4.5 An Equality action plan (DSFRS’s ‘Making the Connections’) is an important mechanism to identify appropriate equality objectives and achieve significant progress. ‘Making the Connections,’ is to be communicated to communities via an overview publication, ‘Considering Needs’ early in 2010.



- 4.6 To attain excellent status, FRSs should be able to demonstrate monitoring and reviewing of their equality action plans and the achievement of significant outcomes. They should be able to demonstrate that procurement is contributing to its equality and diversity objectives, including arrangements for regularly monitoring and reviewing processes. The Efect software will support evidence collection across the organisation.
- 4.7 Partnership between employers and representative bodies will be essential to provide effective support in achieving the desired continuous improvement in performance. Representative bodies should have the opportunity and actively encouraged to contribute. Where that is the case, representative bodies are expected to reciprocate by making a positive and constructive contribution to delivering equality and diversity improvements.

## **5. ACCOUNTABILITY**

- 5.1 Driving change and developing confidence among employees and communities requires everyone in the organisation to accept a degree of accountability. The extent of such accountability will vary depending upon an individual's specific role and responsibilities. For instance, the chief fire officer is expected to have a strong strategic influence on the whole service, whereas an individual firefighter's impact will be as a work colleague alongside their peers, delivering a range of services to diverse local communities.
- 5.2 The framework places considerable emphasis upon the demonstrable delivery of improvements across a wide range of equality and diversity matters. Such progress should be regularly reported, reviewed and updated in accordance with a cycle of continuous improvement. Both the FRS EF and the 'Fire and Rescue Service: Equality and diversity strategy 2008 to 2018' place considerable emphasis upon addressing bullying and harassment. Accordingly, everyone in the service is accountable for establishing and maintaining appropriate behaviours.

## **6. EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 6.1 Effective planning and engagement are key to improving the quality and effectiveness of service delivery to all communities. FRS plans, strategies, policies and procedures should therefore take full account of the needs of local communities. The CAA framework places emphasis upon the importance of involving groups who may experience disadvantage or inequality. In the FRS EF, it states:

*"We expect local services to be effective at giving a voice to people who are vulnerable or at greater risk of disadvantage and inequality, identifying their potential and supporting them to achieve the levels of choice, autonomy and improved outcomes that other citizens enjoy. This will vary according to the local context but will include the groups previously identified [see section on understanding equality] and will include groups which local partners have a requirement to consult and engage with under equality legislation."*

- 6.2 The FRS EF places emphasis upon the importance of working in partnership with the community and key partners. Narrowing equality gaps and improving the life chances of different groups will require a pooling of evidence, resources and action planning. While, for example, local authorities have the overall responsibility to lead on equality mapping across a wide range of subjects, such as education, health and community safety, FRSs are expected to contribute. They will do this by sharing information on matters such as fires, road traffic collisions and anti-social behaviour.

- 6.3 Similarly, there are a number of examples where notable outcomes have been achieved for vulnerable people where FRSs have worked in partnership with other organisations to share resources and expertise. These include innovative youth engagement programmes and multi-agency home safety referrals.
- 6.4 As an example from within DSFRS, South Hams Community Safety partnership produced a resource pack for people with learning difficulties, making use of service user focus group feedback and a wider spectrum of agencies to enhance the information. DSFRS has been represented on the steering group since 2005 to assist in the development of a fire safety booklet. The project is now delivering 10 x A5 information booklets in an easy to read format as part of the Keeping Safe Scheme. Service users have been involved at all stages of development and production.
- 6.5 The over-riding priority of effective service delivery and community engagement is to achieve outcomes which improve the quality of life for local people and reduce inequalities. This must be evidence based, demonstrable and sustainable.

## **7. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING**

- 7.1 The ability of the FRS to deliver effective services that meet the diverse needs of local people largely depends upon the composition, quality, skills, understanding and commitment of its employees. It is therefore vitally important that FRSs make every effort to employ, develop and support a wide range of high-quality employees.
- 7.2 Actively engaging with an increasingly diverse society helps to enhance an organisation's reputation and enables it to attract and retain employees and to further develop appropriate services.
- 7.3 Having a good reputation as an employer means FRSs will be able to attract talent from a range of communities, choose the best people for jobs, and meet recruitment and retention needs.
- 7.4 Providing a service based on understanding the differing needs of users is a lot easier if the organisation has a workforce trained in good diversity practice that reflects people it serves. An 'employer of choice' recruits from the widest and most diverse pool. These recruits offer knowledge and insights on providing the best service and this should, in turn, contribute to organisational improvement that ultimately saves more lives and property.
- 7.5 The 'Fire and Rescue Service: Equality and diversity strategy 2008 to 2018' has set challenging recruitment targets for women in the operational sector, and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) employees across the whole organisation. DSFRS has set even more demanding locally based stretch targets.
- 7.6 FRSs must ensure that this ambition is supported by effective employment, retention and development processes. They must, for instance, be able to demonstrate open, transparent and fair selection and progression processes. They must promote employee understanding of equality and diversity and take robust action to eradicate bullying, harassment and unacceptable behaviour. Similarly, issues affecting culture, working practices, facilities, equipment and clothing must all be addressed so that employees can work in a safe and supportive environment.

## **8. EVALUATION AND SHARING GOOD PRACTICE**

- 8.1 Monitoring, evaluation and recognition of good practice are essential to ensure continuous improvement and to make the best use of resources. FRSs should collect and analyse evidence of improved performance and good practice, share it with others, celebrate success and address areas for improvement.
- 8.2 The FRS EF and the 'Fire and Rescue Service: Equality and diversity strategy 2008 to 2018' both place emphasis upon the importance of monitoring, evaluating and reviewing plans, policies and procedures in order to create a cycle of continuous improvement. This should be supported by both community and employee consultation in order to ensure that improved outcomes are being achieved and recognised.
- 8.3 Through their achievements, FRSs should become exemplars of good practice for other organisations to follow, sharing their experiences and working with others to assist with improved outcomes for local communities. National organisations, such as the Communities and Local Government, CFA, the IDeA, representative bodies and employee stakeholder groups, all have a responsibility to contribute to the development and sharing of good practice. This can be achieved through joint working, sharing knowledge and resources and communicating examples of notable practice.

## **9. THE THREE LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE**

- 9.1 The FRS EF is designed to enable FRAs to benchmark their performance against three distinct levels.
- 9.2 The characteristics of an FRS at each of the levels are detailed within the five performance areas, together with a number of accompanying questions indicating the range of evidence that will be required to confirm the performance level.
- 9.3 As the FRS EF is intended to be outcome-focused rather than process-driven, it is purposely designed to avoid a prescriptive list of requirements. FRSs should therefore use the framework, this 'Key principles' document and the 'Help' document as guidance on the type of outcomes and supporting evidence that will be required in order to achieve specific levels of performance.
- Level 1: 'developing'
  - Level 2: 'achieving'
  - Level 3: 'excellent'.

## **10. WORKING WITH THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK (FRS EF)**

- 10.1 Although there are three different achievement levels, the framework should be regarded as a whole, representing a path of continuous improvement.
- 10.2 In planning to work with the FRS EF, fire and rescue services should initially study the expectations of an 'excellent' service so that they can understand what is required to get there. FRSs should also then study the details of the 'developing' and 'achieving' achievement levels so that they have built up a strong understanding of the overall requirements.

- 10.3 There will be aspects of work that many fire and rescue services are already at the achieving or excellent levels, although as a whole, they would still be at the developing or achieving levels. This is to be expected as part of the cycle of continuous improvement and the overall journey to excellence.
11. **MIGRATING FROM THE EQUALITY STANDARD FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO THE FRS EF**
- 11.1 As Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue has reached Level 2 of the Equality Standard, our achievement will be migrated across to the 'developing' level of the EF FRSs. It is expected that the key principles and actions within the single equality scheme, Making the Connections, when addressed, will go some way towards achieving the desired excellent status by 2012, however the equality and diversity unit will be carrying out an initial self assessment exercise against the requirements of each level early in 2010. This will identify further actions required against each criteria.
12. **MEASUREMENT**
- 12.1 Measurement will be undertaken via two key mechanisms, namely:
- Peer challenge
  - 'Efect' web based assessment tool
- Peer Challenge*
- 12.2 FRSs may claim performance at the 'developing' level based on a thorough self-assessment. At the 'achieving' and 'excellent' levels, however, self-assessments will require validation by an IDeA Diversity Peer Challenge.
- 12.3 The Diversity Peer Challenge that previously applied to Levels 3 and 5 of the Equality Standard has been revised to provide a means of benchmarking achievements against the FRS EF.
- 12.4 It will consist of two parts:
- a review by IDeA accredited FRS peers of the service's own self-assessment, including appropriate supporting evidence
  - an on-site visit by three peers to conduct interviews and focus groups with employees, councillors and other stakeholders.
- 12.5 FRSs that have acceptable evidence of current performance at the 'achieving' and 'excellent' levels of the FRS EF will be awarded a certificate by the CFOA or IDeA and will be entitled to use the relevant FRS EF seal.
- 12.6 In order to ensure that accreditation is current and to encourage continuous improvement, 'achieving' and 'excellent' FRSs will be expected to apply to the IDeA for re-evaluation at least every three years.
- 12.7 The Equality and Diversity Steering Group to be made of external interest groups and partners will also provide a challenge and scrutiny role which will assist in evidence for how well we are doing against the Equality Framework and demonstrate effective engagement.

*'Effect' web based assessment tool*

- 12.8 IDeA plans to launch 'Effect' in the New Year. This is a web based assessment tool which will allow fire and rescue services to upload evidence, links and data against each performance area. DSFRS will be adopting this method of assessment, which will enable auditors to view all the evidence against the framework in one place. There is a significant project to be scoped around the implementation and monitoring of this tool, to enable evidence to be collected across the organisation.

**13. RECOMMENDATION**

- 13.1 To endorse and adopt the Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework ("*The Journey to Excellence*") as the framework against which the Authority will measure its equality & diversity outcomes.

JANE SHERLOCK  
Head of Human Resources Management & Development

# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>HRMDC/10/4</b>
<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>ields results</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>

**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>