

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/17/18
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPEMTHN COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	12 DECEMBER 2017
SUBJECT OF REPORT	WORKFORCE CULTURE, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION – POSITIVE ACTION
LEAD OFFICER	Director of Service Improvement
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This report sets out Positive Action work which has been undertaken since November 2016 and results on staff diversity.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	None at this time
EQUALITY RISK AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	Where required, ERBAs will be carried out on particular projects or areas of work.
APPENDICES	A - Wholetime recruitment process diversity data B - extract from email from Ann Millington in relation to national diversity data
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	Brandon Lewis's speech to the Asian Fire Service Association conference in November 2016.

1. INTRODUCTION RECRUITMENT & PROMOTION – POSITIVE ACTION

1.1 This is a report detailing progress towards achieving a more diverse workforce and improved inclusion, particularly through Recruitment and Promotion and the use of Positive Action as set out in the Equality Act 2010 section 159.

1.2 It sets out the actions undertaken in the various areas where diversity of our workforce can be influenced and diversity results of the Wholetime Recruitment campaign.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The speech Brandon Lewis, Policing and Fire Minister, gave on 24 November 2016 and the one given previously by the then Home Secretary, Theresa May, in May of 2016, gives a flavour of central Government's position for the urgency, for the right and understandable reasons as well as the significance to Fire Reform.

2.2 The Service is taking short, medium and long-term approaches to achieving a more diverse workforce in order to improve the way services are delivered to the community of Devon & Somerset. Whilst the Service has improved in this area, it is recognised that more can be achieved and recognise that patterns of under-representation and differences in outcomes can be challenged through positive action programmes.

2.3 The advantages, for the Service, and the community we serve in taking positive action is that we will have:

- a wider pool of talented, skilled and experienced people from which to recruit;
- a diverse and adaptable workforce able to respond to changes;
- a better understanding of the needs of our service users/community and partnerships.

2.4 These benefits of a diverse workforce will have result in:

- having a wider range of resources, skills and ideas among our employees to tap into;
- ensuring that community safety initiatives are delivered in a professional manner that is sensitive and responsive to the diverse needs of our communities;
- building a reputation as being a diverse organisation and hence an employer of choice;
- building a competitive edge in recruitment as selection is taken from a larger more diverse pool of candidates;
- to better meet diverse needs through increased understanding and engagement;
- having improved community trust, confidence, understanding and co-operation;
- promoting effective community engagement.

2.5 As an employer that is recognised as one that takes positive action we are more likely to be perceived externally as one that is progressive and prepared to contribute to the general wellbeing of society. This may be relevant when we make submissions for funding and commissioning opportunities.

3 POSITIVE ACTION

3.1 For all groups of people with characteristics protected under the Equality Act to benefit equally from the services provided by voluntary and community organisations, some groups may need more help or encouragement than others. In particular we are concerned with people who:

- are at a disadvantage because of a protected characteristic and/or;
- are under-represented in the organisation, or whose participation in the organisation is disproportionately low, because of a protected characteristic and/or;
- have specific needs connected to a protected characteristic.

3.2 The Equality Act allows service providers to take action that may involve treating one group more favourably where this is a proportionate way to help members of that group overcome a disadvantage or participate more fully, or in order to meet needs they have that are different from the population as a whole. This is called 'positive action'. Positive action is always voluntary – not compulsory.

3.3 The Service must be able to show evidence that any positive action is reasonably considered and will not discriminate against others through.

- respecting the rights of individuals, including the right to hold different views and beliefs;
- not allowing these differences to be manifested in a way that is hostile or degrading to others;
- expecting commitment and involvement from all our staff, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our vision and we equally make the same commitment;
- not tolerating bullying or unfairness in the workplace and will support staff that report bullying and investigate cases quickly and fairly;
- having an up to date and communicated whistleblowing policy;
- having a recruitment process that is fair and transparent;
- We will involve people internally and externally in the co-design of services to achieve excellence in service delivery.

3.4 In September 2016, the role of Workforce Diversity Project Officer was created with the intention of trying to improve and retain the diversity of our workforce. It has involved working with other departments to improve marketing and promotion of the Firefighter role to minority and underrepresented groups. The current post holder was recently presented with the Queens Fire Service Medal for distinguished service in road and community safety and diversity.

- 3.5 The Service has contributed to and considered Positive Action strategies shared through the National Fire Chiefs Council forum. Shared Positive Action initiatives and recruitment process steps with Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service. Devon & Cornwall Constabulary's Positive Action Strategy and Work Plan were also considered and actions, where appropriate, were implemented within Fire Service approach.
- 3.6 The Service is near to completing a positive action briefing paper and a toolkit for our recruiting managers in order to equip them with the skills and ability to plan appropriate activity. It will also give them a greater understanding of the need for a diverse workforce as a requirement to meet the needs of our community more efficiently and effectively, therefore, creating a safer community.
- 3.7 In order to raise the profile of females joining the Fire and Rescue Service we began attending large careers fairs. With a small team of both men and women, a very large interactive stand was set up where students, particularly girls, were encouraged to try on fire kit and get hands on with some of the equipment. There were various pieces of equipment available such as hydraulic cutting equipment, hose, thermal imaging camera etc. The stand was popular and interaction with young people very positive.
- 3.8 Subsequently schools have been visited to speak directly to students about choosing a career with the Fire Service and dispelling some of the myths. Having face to face engagement with the public seems to be a successful way to raise the idea of joining the Fire Service and in particular plant the seed with young women, many who say they had never considered the role

4 WHOLETIME RECRUITMENT- POSITIVE ACTION

- 4.1 To prepare for the Wholetime recruitment campaign which ran from January 2017 to July, Facebook links of sporting clubs that were specifically female, such as rowing clubs, football and rugby clubs, pole fitness, gymnastics, running, swimming, women's groups, LGBT and BAME groups were collated in order that these groups could be contacted giving advance information in relation to the recruitment campaign.
- 4.2 A list of those interested in attending taster sessions was collated. The sessions were facilitated at 2 locations, one in Devon and one in Somerset. All women who wanted to attend the sessions were given a place and the rest was made up of interested men on a first come first served basis.
- 4.3 The Taster days consisted of short activities on a rotational basis for the candidates which included a BA drill, an exercise to get familiar with equipment and the ladder lift. Candidates were shown around the appliances and offered the opportunity to ask questions about the role. The day was very successful, although the original figure of 36% female who had booked, only 25% ended up attending for a variety of reasons including child care. Senior Officers attended to show their support as did the local media to promote the day.
- 4.4 On a weekly basis Wholetime Recruitment Planning meetings took place to ensure monitoring of interest of under-represented groups and deal with ad-hoc issues coming up in relation to engagement with and involvement of those groups.

- 4.5 Information booklets were designed and website content amended to reflect the modern role of a Firefighter and give clear information about the requirements and expectations. Any visual content clearly showed the range of diversity of staff. Similar action has been undertaken in relation to On Call recruitment information.
- 4.6 After the written process 23 females, who had been successful, were contacted to offer general support and the opportunity for free fitness support with our fitness advisor. 9 females responded to the contact and only 4 took up the offer of any engagement with the Fitness Advisor – whether remotely or in attending sessions. This was mostly down to having to work, the distance to travel to attend or child care. All who failed the fitness test later on had not engaged with our fitness advisor, which would indicate that fitness support was worthwhile.
- 4.7 With those females who had not responded, information was forwarded in relation to our expectations with the bleep and swim tests and the practical tests, which included fitness documents and YouTube links which clearly showed the activities they would be taking part in.

5 ON CALL RECRUITMENT– POSITIVE ACTION

- 5.1 The Diversity Project Officer has put a map together of where operational females are located to see where the gaps are and provide a starting point in trying to develop a marketing strategy in those areas. Meetings were set up in the relevant areas offering support to managers and discuss a recruitment strategy.
- 5.2 An On-call Recruitment Facebook page was set up which has been populated with information about recruitment and in particular those stations who are recruiting.
- 5.3 A list of employers within a 5 minute response time of ten priority stations was drawn up and they have been messaged via the on-call recruitment Facebook page asking them to like and share our page as another means of contacting locals through social media.
- 5.3 As part of this support for recruitment campaigns, large superstores have been visited with operational crews to raise awareness of On Call recruitment. The Service is now looking into collaborating with a large superstore chain to encourage them to release their staff to respond to the nearby fire station.

6 RETENTION, PROGRESSION & PROMOTION

- 6.1 The Service has developed an extensive network of coaches and mentors both internally and externally which can now offer support for employees who wish to progress their career. Consideration is being given to Maternity coaching to increase retention of women returning from Maternity leave.
- 6.2 'Women in The Fire Service' is a national network to support women in the profession. Three Service employees cover the positions of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer in the network and attend quarterly meetings of the National Executive Committee. The network facilitates a national annual Development Weekend and in 2017 the Service has supported 17 women to attend.

- 6.3 This year our own in house women's network WANDS has been reinvigorated and an event took place September 14th where attendees were able to choose from classroom based workshops or physical activities in the morning and with inspirational speakers in the afternoon. This event was open to women (and men) from all roles across the service and other Southwest Services.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As Positive Action is business as usual for the Service in recruitment, progression and promotion and is part of everyday recruitment for management, the financial implications are generally wrapped up in their wages, apart from the Project Officer which supports and advises full time on the matter. Besides this officer there is a further team which has Positive Action as part of their duties, consisting of a Diversity & Inclusion Manager, Diversity & Inclusion Officer and the On Call Development Manager. Most materials required for Positive Action are produced in house without extra cost, but some is purchased externally from relevant budgets. It is likely that more resource will be required to engage with increasing amounts of face to face communication and building relationships as these appear to be the most successful forms of Positive Action.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This work supports the Service equality and diversity objectives as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Positive Action activities are directly promoting and supporting the equality and diversity objectives as stated in the Corporate Plan and the Equality and Diversity Plan. Notwithstanding external/national drivers, the diversity of skills, knowledge, perspectives and experiences within the workforce will ensure we will be better placed to identify and meet the needs of our community.

10. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are several corporate risks for the Service to be mindful of including a Workforce that does not reflect the diversity of the area and an inability to meet legal duties. Work to mitigate the workforce profile not being representative of the wider community is restricted by a low level of recruitment, at least for Wholetime positions, and a low level of BAME communities within the counties of Devon & Somerset. These are not only risks to reputation and scrutiny under the Fire Reform agenda but importantly they impede the Service having an ability to attract the most suitable candidates to undertake the role in the 21st Century.
- 10.2 The National People Strategy 2017-2022 highlights the changing role of a firefighter which is significantly dominated in the practise of prevention, protection, community engagement and partnership working, plus the ability to undertake the operational response element of the role. As a result of these changes we need to maximise the pool of candidates we choose our employees from.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 To ensure the Service is better able to identify and meet the needs of the increasingly diverse community, especially in relation to protection and prevention, more diversity is required within the workforce to get the knowledge, experience and perspectives required to engage with the community and partners.
- 11.2 For these reasons we aim to increase our intake of new female operational Firefighters and BAME, and encourage promotion and development of current staff, with targets to be determined in line with IRMP, Target Operating Model and workforce strategy/planning.
- 11.3 Positive Action has been successful considering the increase in female operational staff, both Wholetime and On Call. In comparison with other Fire Services our intake of female recruits (7 females, 25%) was, percentage wise, only surpassed by Cheshire (6 females, 30%) and, in actual headcount, by London (10 females). Appendix A
- 11.4 It is essential that both the Recruitment system and the Workforce system are able to record diversity data and that there is an option to extract that date to allow for analysis in order to identify trends. Increased data sharing with partnership organisations will allow for more in depth information about the community which can help in developing and targeting Positive Action. At least the following performance data will be considered:
- New Firefighter intake – women, BAME, LGBT, disability;
 - Promotion and temporary promotion - women, BAME; and
 - Gender/BAME/LGBT ratio – Uniformed, non-uniformed, Control and overall.
- 11.5 A Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Steering Group has been put in place. This Steering Group will consider data and trends to identify required changes, take forward any national guidance on diversity and inclusion, and take a broad perspective on how this affects planning of Service delivery and the workforce, including Positive Action.
- 11.6 Explicit Positive Action activity has taken place in the recruitment of On Call, Wholetime, Control and non-operational staff, by targeting on social media, advertising on specific recruitment agencies and our website. This activity will continue and where opportunities arise, expand.

PETE BOND

Director of Service Improvement

APPENDIX A TO REPORT HRMDC/17/18

Wholetime recruitment process diversity data

	Females in Application Process	After Shortlisting	After Written Tests	After Practicals	After interview	Recruits
DSFRS	337 (2888) 11.65%	N/A	222M 23F 9.4%	80M 7F 8.0%	21 M 7F	20M 7F
Cambridge	19 (186) 10.3%	90M 12F 13.3%	38M 6F 15.7%	36M 5F 13.88%	27M 3F 11%	27M 3F 11%
Cheshire	(2772) 7.6%	7.60%	10.70%		30%	14M 6F 30%
Derbyshire	21 (247) 10.94%			247M 21F (10.94%)	103M 3F 2.9%	17M 2F 10.5%
Cumbria	123 (927) 13.1%		123M 11F (8.1%)	49M 4F (7.5%)		10M 2F 16.7%
South Wales	324 (2978) 10.88%					
Hampshire	74 (812) 9.11%					
Durham and Darlington	3805M 441F (11.59%)		465M 28F 6%	71M 4F (5.6%)	47M 4F (8.5%)	8M 2F (25%)
South Wales	324 (2978) 10.87%	441M 56F (12.69%)	197M 13F 10.5%	133M 2F (1.5%)	108M 2F (1.85%)	
Hampshire	74 (812) (9.11%)	241M 35F (14.5%)	123M 15F 12.1%	69M 5F (7.2%)	53M 2F (3.77%)	26M 1F (3.8%)
West Midlands	15.4% (2193)		264M 45F (14.6%)	199 M (11 amber) 19F (10 amber) (9.54%)		16M 3F (15.8%)
Gloucester	48 (474) 10.1%			(223) 36F 16.1%	36M 19F (52%)	
London	73 10.4%	262M 34F 11.5%			49M 11F 18.3%	46M 10F (17.9%)

APPENDIX B TO REPORT HRMDC/17/18

Extract of email from Ann Millington in relation to national diversity data

Sent on behalf of Ann Millington, Chair of the NFCC Workforce Coordination Committee

Dear Colleagues,

Below is a summary of the stats release that went out yesterday.

In addition, if you look at the data tables the new diversity data on new joiners (whole-time and on-call) is very encouraging with 8.7% being female and 5.1% being from ethnic minorities. During 2016/17 there were 1,480 new firefighters (by headcount) across 39 fire and rescue services (it was collected on a voluntary basis this year but will be mandatory next). This accounts for a total of 6% of the workforce in these services. There were 472 new whole-time staff and 1008 on call staff. For new whole-time staff the diversity figures show a greater improvement, with 12% of all new whole-time staff being female and 9% being from an ethnic minority.

Two publications were released yesterday by the Fire and Rescue Analysis Programme team:

1. The annual statistical release "Fire and rescue workforce and pensions statistics: England, April 2016 to March 2017" which gives information on workforce, leavers and new joiners (including diversity), and on-duty firefighter health and safety as well as information on firefighter pension income and expenditure and membership schemes.

Headline findings:

- 40,180 staff (FTE) were employed by FRSs on 31 March 2017. This was a 5% decrease compared with the previous year and a 22% decrease since 2010/11.
- 33,049 staff (FTE) were employed as firefighters on 31 March 2017. This was a 4% decrease compared with the previous year and a 21% decrease since 2010/11.
- 5.2% of firefighters were women in England in 2017. This compares with 5.0%. Since 2010 the main cause in the increase in the proportion of women firefighters has been a decrease in the number of men firefighters.
- 3.9% of firefighters were from an ethnic minority group in England in 2017. This compares with 3.8% in the previous year. This has been caused by the number of white firefighters decreasing by a greater rate than the number of firefighters from an ethnic minority group. This compares with 14.6% of the English population coming from an ethnic minority group according to the 2011 Census.

Main release: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-and-rescue-workforce-and-pensions-statistics-england-april-2016-to-march-2017>

Data tables: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables>