

# DFRS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2021-2024

\*Core values image\*

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## **FOREWORD FROM THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHAIR OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

We have great pleasure in introducing our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy for 2021-2024.

We know that we have made significant improvements since our previous EDI strategy was published, but we also acknowledge that there is a lot of work to still be done. Our workforce is currently 22% female, 1.5% LGBT+ and 3.5% BAME across the whole organisation and 7.5% female and 2.4% BAME in operational roles. Although this shows improvements year on year due to our extensive programme of positive action work, it is clear that that is more that needs to be done to ensure that our workforce represents the communities that we serve. We have formed and developed six employee support networks, continued with an extensive programme of community engagement and improved our relationships with key community groups.

In the lifespan of the previous strategy, we have received national recognition and awards for the work that we are undertaking. We have also seen large improvements in our benchmarking, moving into the Top 100 of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and becoming Disability Confident Leaders. We have implemented work around the British Sign Language Charter and hosted the inaugural Deaf community open day, just one of over 150 community engagement and recruitment events in 2019, engaging our communities to be our firefighters of the future.

The next three years and beyond will continue to be exciting and evolving, but just as challenging, and we will proactively shape our approach to reflect this. To further our success we will continue to engage with our partners and communities and be self-reflective when thinking about where our EDI work can take us. We have a strong collaborative relationship with Derbyshire Constabulary, but also work with the University of Derby, Rolls-Royce, Derbyshire Community Healthcare Services NHS Trust, University Hospital of Derby and Burton, Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council.

It is important to remember that we all play a part in creating an environment and culture, where people are treated with respect. Therefore, as individuals, teams and on behalf of DFRS, we ask that we continue showing our ongoing support and stand together with our colleagues and communities to Make Derbyshire Safer Together.

Gavin Tomlinson  
Chief Fire Officer

Cllr Kevin BATTERY  
Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority

## **KEY MESSAGES**

Our EDI strategy is promoting the message that inclusion is for all. Whilst we have made improvements in increasing the diversity of our workforce, we know that we must continue to develop an inclusive culture, both internally and with the communities that we serve.

Inclusion involves everybody, and we all have a part to play. Attending employee support network groups, hosting community groups on station, holding open days, completing People Impact Assessments (PIAs) for new activities, taking part in training sessions and using inclusive language, are all inclusive acts that we can participate in.

Without inclusion, diversity will decrease, and without diversity our teams will not be as strong. By continuing to promote an inclusive and accessible culture and service, we will provide the best community safety advice that we can, recruit the best people for the job and allow people to be themselves at work.

## **DFRS VISION AND SERVICE PRIORITIES**

Our EDI Strategy is aligned with our organisational vision: 'Making Derbyshire Safer Together'.

Our EDI Strategy also underpins our Service Priorities, which are:

**PREVENTION** This encompasses a range of activities which are focused on the safety of our diverse communities in their homes, on the roads and at leisure. Some of the work is carried out with partner organisations where responsibilities overlap.

**PROTECTION** This requires collaborative working with partners and other enforcement agencies to ensure effective working, complying with statutory obligations and keeping people, properties and the environment safe.

**RESPONSE** This is the area of work that is most visible to the public. This is responding to emergency incidents, saving lives, protecting buildings and the environment and rendering humanitarian services.

Current topical issues include Black Lives Matter, non-binary and trans identities and recognition and the menopause. To continue to effectively support our staff and communities we know that we need to keep up to date with training needs and raise awareness about the areas that we can improve. To do this we will strive to offer EDI training to all managers and those with recruitment responsibilities, add EDI objectives to job descriptions and complete a service user journey to ensure that we are effectively serving our communities.

Every employee, regardless of their rank, role, diversity or identity, is valued, respected and given equal access to opportunity. It is vital that our communities are represented within this, as their voices and experiences must be integral to the work that we do and the decisions that we make.

As an emergency service, we have to be efficient, but we must now be ambitious in ensuring that we are serving an ever-increasing, diverse community and workforce.

This means that we must empower our employees to be part of successful teams, celebrate success and contribute to our vision of Making Derbyshire Safer Together. The success of this strategy and our EDI work is reliant upon strong, effective relationships between our employees and communities, and this will be achieved by everyone working together to make DFRS the best that we can be.

## **UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES**

- **Service delivery**

- Service delivery means delivering excellent services through inclusion. Operational delivery, including prevention, protection and response, is the core of our work, but inclusion must be woven throughout everything that we do. Excellent service delivery means being open and transparent, engaging with our diverse communities and ensuring that we are accessible and inclusive to all. Diversity is vital, but this is only the start. Real difference comes with creating an inclusive culture that is embedded into our decision making and key performance indicators. This aligns with the People Strategy underpinning principle of Delivering Differently.
- Aims
  - Inclusion will be embedded into everything that we do
  - Inclusive practices will be ensured, especially in relation to recruitment, progression and procurement
  - People Impact Assessments (PIAs) and our EDI reports will be published externally
  - We will make best use of our resources, regionally and nationally
- How will we achieve this?
  - Improve the publication of EDI information, both internally and externally
  - Continuously refresh recruitment practices to ensure that they are up to date
  - Include EDI in all top level meetings
  - Research best practice in procurement, both inside and outside the sector
  - Appoint senior diversity champions
  - Share best practice in regional and national EDI groups
  - Completing a service user journey to ascertain barriers to accessibility
- What will success look like?
  - PIAs will be published on the internal and external website
  - Updates on the EDI Strategy and action plan added to governance meetings
  - Unconscious bias training delivered to all recruiting managers
  - Suppliers are invited to EDI training
  - EDI training delivered to all front line staff
  - Service user journey completed and any actions implemented

- **People and culture**

- By supporting our people to bring their whole self to work, we will create a supportive culture where we communicate our values. We want to improve the diversity of our workforce, but this is not the only solution – we must create a workplace where our employees feel that they belong. This strategy will support DFRS to create an inclusive and accessible workplace, by working alongside the People Strategy priority of promoting a culture of inclusivity and wellbeing.
- Aims
  - We will create and develop an inclusive environment. We will encourage our employee support network groups to continue their momentum, and ensure that all of our staff, regardless of service length, understand our core values and commitment to inclusion. We will continue to review our policies for inclusive language and refresh our training to improve awareness knowledge and education. We will also support openness and improvement in recruitment, retention and progression.
- How will we achieve this?
  - Share opportunities and networking through our Employee Support Networks
  - Embed inclusive language into our behaviours and policies
  - Refresh our service wide EDI training
  - Improving relations between our employees and the communities that we serve
  - Encourage the best talent to apply for roles, including through youth engagement
- What will success look like?
  - Refreshed processes which respect and celebrate individual differences, increasing retention of staff
  - Clear understanding of EDI, allowing staff to be accountable or their inclusive behaviours
  - Diverse, well attended and diverse employee support networks, who can provide confidential support and make tangible changes to inclusion related topics
  - Annual EDI training opportunities for managers
  - Refreshing the Independent Community Inclusion Board membership, to ensure a diverse representation
  - Engagement and consultation with our communities, giving a voice to our communities which will make our work more inclusive
  - Staffing local community events
- **Collaborative Working**
  - We will continue to explore collaborative working to ensure that we are working with partners to Make Derbyshire Safer Together. Sharing

good practice, both regionally and nationally, will enable us to uphold a gold standard of inclusion. Across DFRS we will continue to engage in collaborative working, as outlined in the People Strategy and demonstrated in a number of Derbyshire Constabulary and East Midlands Ambulance Service joint locations across the County.

- Aims
  - We will identify local and national partners, both inside and outside the fire sector, to share best practice and resources. Identifying those fire services who were rated as “outstanding” in HMICFRS and local partners who are achieving excellence in inclusion, will allow us to improve our own practice.
- How will we achieve this?
  - Identifying local and national partners to collaborate with
  - Working with national bodies, such as Inclusive Companies and the National Fire Chiefs Council, to share best practice and consider examples
  - Engage with local partners to celebrate EDI, for example events for LGBT+ history month or black history month
  - Continuing to work with Derbyshire Constabulary on joint events
- What will success look like?
  - Being able to use more diverse examples, where we currently do not have that diversity in the workforce
  - Collaborative working with local partners, engaging across Derbyshire on EDI events

## **EQUALITY NETWORKS**

Our Employee Support Network Groups have a proud history of providing support and guidance to our workforce. They enable networking and create a sense of community, allowing members to come together and make tangible changes.

Over the past four years, our employee support network groups have evolved and have run a number of successful events, including an annual LGBT+ conference, supporting mental health awareness week, Black History Month seminars, supporting religious festivals including Diwali and attending community events, such as Pride.

Our employee support networks have run lunch and learns and awareness raising events, on topics such as Bi Visibility or the history of Black people in the UK, to educate and inform our employees on a range of diverse topics.

Our current equality supports groups and mechanisms include:

- Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA)
- Dyslexia Support Network

- Fire Brigades Union (FBU)
- Gender Support Network
- LGBT+ & Allies Support Network
- Multi-cultural Support Network
- Veterans Group
- Wellbeing Support Network
- Women in the Fire Service (WFS)

## **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN**

The EDI Action Plan will be updated annually.

### ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

If you require this document in a different format, in braille or in other languages, please contact us on [DFRSInclusion@Derbys-Fire.Gov.UK](mailto:DFRSInclusion@Derbys-Fire.Gov.UK)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** and how to get involved, please contact us on [DFRSInclusion@Derbys-Fire.Gov.UK](mailto:DFRSInclusion@Derbys-Fire.Gov.UK)

One page infographic/overview



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