

# **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

## **1. LFRS Mission and Values**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) is committed to its purpose of “making Lancashire Safer” and its priorities to support this intention are:

- Preventing and protecting people and property from fire
- Responding quickly and competently to emergencies
- Engaging with our staff and delivering value for money in how we use our resources.

LFRS values define how we STRIVE to achieve our purpose of “making Lancashire safer” by making sure what we do is guided by strong principles of:

- Service
- Trust
- Respect
- Integrity
- Value
- Empowerment

The Service’s annual priorities are detailed in our Annual Service Plan and in our Integrated Risk Management Plan. This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report flows from the overarching strategic plans of LFRS and links LFRS approach to equality, diversity and inclusion into the operational business process. Our approach is explained through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

## **2. Scope**

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy provides an approach in relation to the delivery of our services and the recruitment, selection and promotion of our staff.

The Policy applies to all those who come into contact with and work for the LFRS including staff, elected members, applicants for employment and other individuals who are affected by LFRS activity.

## **3. Policy Objectives**

- Aim to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation by ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion principles are embedded into all provision, services and procedures.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people that share protected characteristics by removing or minimising disadvantages, making reasonable adjustments, responding to individual needs.
- Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics by consolidating effective partnerships with key stakeholders.
- Ensure that all suppliers/contractors working on behalf of the LFRS follow the LFRS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy principles.

- Publishes data annually so that others can judge LFRS effectiveness in meeting statutory duties.
- Developing and publishing measurable equality objectives.

#### **4. Role and Responsibilities**

##### **4.1 CFA Members**

Responsible for ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion is incorporated into the strategic plans for LFRS through a commitment and to ensuring that due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion is given in relation to the development of strategic plans and decision making. A Member Champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion has been identified and their role is to promote, support and drive improvement with regard to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion through all activities of the Fire Authority, both for service delivery and employment.

##### **4.2 Chief Fire officer and Executive Board**

Be role models in embedding and forward driving the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda within the Service and supporting improvement.

##### **4.3 Assistant Chief Fire Officer**

Responsible for ensuring that operational service delivery meets LFRS statutory responsibilities in relation to the accessibility and delivery of operational services.

##### **4.4 Director of Personnel and Organisational Development**

Brief the Member Champion in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Oversee the consultation arrangements with regard to employment practices and procedures.

##### **4.5 Head of Human Resources**

Develop the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in accordance with legislative requirements.

Develop the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual report in consultation with Service Delivery.

Receive and investigate Harassment and Bullying complaints.

Support line managers in the development of Equality Impact Assessments.

##### **4.6 Head of Training and Organisational Review**

Ensure the development or commissioning of training in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion for all members of staff and Members of the Fire Authority.

##### **4.7 Head of Corporate Communications**

To ensure that information disseminated is accessible and meets the needs of the diverse communities of Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen.

## **4.8 Managers**

Responsible for creating a positive, inclusive culture that challenges discriminatory attitudes and behaviours amongst colleagues.

Be aware of the legislation and LFRS general duties in relation to the Equality Act 2010.

Ensuring that members of staff access appropriate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training.

## **4.9 Staff**

To not use discriminatory language or behaviour.

To challenge discriminatory language and behaviour as not appropriate where it is observed amongst peers.

Promote a positive and inclusive culture within the workplace, creating a positive work environment.

Recognise the impact of personal behaviour on others

## **5. Equality and Diversity and LFRS**

### **5.1 Equality**

LFRS recognises that equality is not about treating everyone the same but about fairness, respect and giving people an equal and fair chance of opportunity to fulfill their potential.

### **5.2 Diversity**

Diversity within LFRS, is about recognising, valuing and taking account of people's difference, backgrounds, knowledge, skills and experiences. In the context of this policy it also means encouraging and using difference to create a productive workforce, celebrate difference and recognising the contribution that every individual can make.

### **5.3 Inclusion**

Inclusion is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and taking deliberate action to create an environment where everyone feels respected and able to achieve their full potential.

### **5.4 Unconscious Bias**

Psychologists refer to unconscious bias as simply being our natural people preferences. Biologically we are hard-wired to prefer people who look like us, sound like us and share our interests. This preference can bypass our normal, rational and logical thinking.

## **6. Protected Characteristics (or protected groups)**

LFRS aims to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment for reasons relating to all recognised protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010.

- Age.
- Disability.

- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage and civil partnership (in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination).
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality.
- Religion or belief – this includes lack of belief.
- Sex (gender).
- Sexual orientation.

## **7. Monitoring**

Monitoring the equality, diversity and inclusion of the workforce enables LFRS to identify how employment policies are working and to identify areas where these may appear to be working disproportionately on certain groups of staff. Employment monitoring data is collected and reported annually in relation to all protected groups apart from gender reassignment due to the sensitive confidential nature of this data.

The LFRS Operational Emergency Cover Review includes an assessment of relevant data which allows LFRS to assess risk and focus its resources in those areas of highest need. This review includes analysis of data which covers a range of factor including data relating to Super Output area and demographic profile of the population per protected characteristic.

## **8. Types of Unlawful Discrimination**

### **8.1 Direct Discrimination**

Discrimination occurs where a person is treated less favourably than someone else in comparable circumstances, the treatment is for a reason relating to a person's protected characteristic, the treatment cannot be justified.

### **8.2 Indirect Discrimination**

This can occur when a condition, rule, policy or even a practice that applies to everyone particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if it can be demonstrated fully that the organisation acted reasonably in managing the business need, i.e. that it is "a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

### **8.3 Discrimination by Association**

This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example, a carer of a disabled child.

### **8.4 Discrimination by Perception**

This is discrimination against someone because the other person thinks or perceives that they possess a particular protected characteristic. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actual possess that characteristic.

### **8.5 Discrimination Arising from Disability**

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability and such treatment cannot be justified.

Discrimination arising from disability is different from direct discrimination, discrimination arising from disability will occur if the following three conditions are met:

- A disabled person is treated unfavourably, that is putting them at a disadvantage even if this was not your intention.
- This treatment is because of something connected with the disabled person's disability (which could be the result, effect or outcome of that disability) such as an inability to walk unaided or disability-related behaviour.
- The treatment cannot be justified by showing that it is proportionate of achieving a legitimate aim.

## **8.6 Harassment**

Harassment has a single definition in the Equality Act 2010 to cover the relevant protected characteristics. Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual."

## **8.7 Victimisation**

Can occur when an employee is being treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint, or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

## **8.8 Bullying**

Bullying is persistent behaviour, directed against an individual or group, which is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient<sup>1</sup>. It can include deliberate exclusion from a conversation or activity.

## **9. Accessibility**

The Corporate Communications Department ensures that communication is accessible and responds to the diverse needs of the community in terms of format and distribution of publications. LFRS provides information in printed form and via the LFRS website. The website aims to conform to web accessibility guidelines to ensure that the website is accessible to users with a range of disabilities, including those with visual impairments.

## **10. Complaints**

LFRS actively promotes equality and diversity and has developed robust policies for tackling bullying and discriminatory behaviour. LFRS takes complaints seriously and has a comprehensive complaints procedure for dealing with complaints from customers and stakeholders, plus harassment and bullying procedure which details how complaints on harassment and bullying can be dealt with. LFRS also has a grievance procedure which employees can use to make a complaint.

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<sup>1</sup> ACAS Bullying and harassment at Work October 2010

## 11. Training

As an employer, LFRS has a proactive approach to training and development in order to meet the needs of staff and the communities we serve. It is critical that staff have the skills and knowledge to help eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and value diversity.

The LFRS organisational development plan is one element of LFRS delivery mechanism to fulfil its equality commitments. The plan identifies the various training and development activities delivered to ensure that the workforce has, as a whole, an understanding of the concepts and principles of equality, diversity and inclusion as well as our duties and responsibilities and the methods to put these principles into practice.

Training and Development includes:

- All staff as part of their induction are required to go through equality and diversity training
- All staff involved in recruitment and selection are required to go through recruitment and selection training including an element on equality and diversity in recruitment.
- Individual members of staff have an annual appraisal where their specific training needs are identified in relation to equality and diversity.

## 12. Review

The progress in relation to this policy is monitored annually via the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report which is reported to the Fire Authority and the Executive Board and the Workforce Programme Board.

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