

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

DIVERSITY

Accepting, Respecting & Valuing People as Individuals

How to contact us

If you would like to obtain further information about any aspect of this Gender Equality Scheme document please contact us, using one of the methods shown below:

Letter: Gender Equality Scheme Issues
West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters,
Lancaster Circus Queensway, Birmingham B4 7DE.

Phone: 0121 380 6242

Fax: 0121 233 1770

E-mail: equalityanddiversity@wmfs.net

You can also visit our website at www.wmfs.net

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Forewords



Vijith Randeniya OBE
Chief Fire Officer
West Midlands Fire Service

Whilst fire discriminates mainly against the less fortunate, firefighters have always worked together as a team as well as in partnership with others to save life and reduce the ever present risks within our society. We are more aware than ever before of the valuable contribution that having a diverse workforce brings.

Our Gender Equality Scheme highlights our commitment to eliminating gender discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Our competitive employment conditions allow for the flexibility that our modern lifestyles require. By promoting equality of opportunity, we are recognised

as the employer of choice for people who share our belief of serving those at risk, preventing incidents through education and responding immediately, when required.

Our Equality and Diversity Section have detailed specific initiatives that will promote our Core Values of Improvement, People, Diversity and Service to the Community. These initiatives allow us to engage fully with our workforce and the people of the West Midlands and in turn, will empower them to contribute more fully to our vision of 'Making West Midlands Safer'.

Forewords



Peter Howard
Chairman
West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the first Gender Equality Scheme for the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority. Through the Equality Act 2006 and the Gender Equality Duty 2007 we have a legal duty to positively promote gender equality. This scheme details our planned actions for the next three years to not only fulfil our legal duty, but to embed our Core Values to create an organisational culture which values equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes between men and women.

This scheme sets out how we are going to achieve our specific duties to promote gender equality. It takes into account the small but significant steps we

plan to take towards this goal as well as identifying our plans for assessing and monitoring our policies and functions.

This new scheme requires us to be proactive in promoting equality for men and women, rather than simply to make adjustments for staff and service users in order not to discriminate.

I welcome the opportunity to work with the new Lead Member for Equality and Diversity issues and look forward to supporting the Lead Member in taking a positive lead on equality and diversity for the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority.

Forewords



Councillor Kevin Foster
Lead Member, Equality and Diversity
West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

As the new Lead Member for Equality and Diversity issues I am delighted to introduce our new three year Gender Equality Scheme which sets out how we intend to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to succeed regardless of their gender.

Our organisation is fundamentally based on the value of public service and protecting all those who live or work in the West Midlands, irrespective of who they are. That is why, for me, our Gender Equality Scheme is not just about ticking a box or meeting our legal obligations. It is about ensuring that we meet our moral duty to ensure that we promote equality and combat prejudice.

At our next Comprehensive Performance Assessment, I want us to be able to show that not only have we put measures in place, but that real progress has been made towards ensuring that diversity has become a natural part of both our service and culture.

Whilst we naturally place great value on achieving the goals set out in this scheme, the key result for me will be seeing real equality of opportunity for men and women as well as a safer West Midlands.

Background to Gender Equality Scheme

Women and men in employment

Despite 30 years of sex discrimination legislation, gender inequality still persists, although there have been some significant changes over the last three decades (Equal Opportunities Commission: facts about men and women 2006).

Women are very often disadvantaged by policies, practices and procedures that do not take account of their greater childcare responsibilities and the need for different patterns of working. Men are also disadvantaged in our society by organisational cultures that do not recognise or support their family or childcare responsibilities largely due to stereotyping of their roles.

Furthermore, forty two percent of all working women in the UK work part time, compared to just nine per cent of working men. Whilst changes have taken place to the extent that men share caring responsibilities, 57 per cent of all working women, compared to 23 per cent of all working men use one or more of the following arrangements: part time, flexitime, annualised hours, term time working, job

share and home working (Equal Opportunities Commission Facts about men and women 2006). Since 1975 the UK has also seen a decline in men's employment. At the same time women's employment has increased from around six out of ten to seven out of ten, 79 percent for women of working age.

A recent report by the Government's Women and Work Commission also found that in the UK women who work full time, earn 13 per cent less than men who work full time, based on median hourly earnings.

The Women and Work Commission reported that the causes of the gender pay gap are due to a combination of factors which include:

- occupational segregation, where women's jobs are under-valued;
- length of work experience;
- number of interruptions to work experience;
- part time employment experience;
- qualifications and skills;
- travel to work issues; and

Background to Gender Equality Scheme

- discriminatory treatment of women at work.

The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority recognises that men and women, including transsexual men and women, will, at some point in their lives, also experience discrimination based on their age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, ethnicity, marital or civil partnership status and disability.

It is in this context that the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority aims to embed equitable treatment for both men, women and transgender people through its employment practices and through the delivery of excellent services to the wider community.

Definition of Gender

Gender

Whilst the term sex refers to the biological differences between women and men which are universal, gender refers to the wider social roles and relationships that structure men and women's lives. These change over time and vary between cultures.

Transgender

Transgender is the state of one's gender identity (self-identification as male, female, both or neither) not matching one's assigned gender (identification by others as male or female based on physical or genetic sex). Trans-gendered does not imply any specific form of sexual orientation, transgender people may identify as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual or asexual.

What is a Gender Equality Scheme?

A Gender Equality Scheme sets out our plans for the next three years to address gender inequality for people who work for the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority and for people who access our services.

The aim of a Gender Equality Scheme is to actively address the discrimination and general inequality which still exists between men and women.

This scheme provides an opportunity for gender mainstreaming that will enable the West Midlands

Background to Gender Equality Scheme

Fire and Rescue Authority to build and embed gender equality into its core business and processes.

Why do we need a Gender Equality Scheme?

Legal context

The Equality Act 2006, which amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Equal Pay Act 1970, places a legal duty on public services when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to :

- eliminate sex discrimination; and
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

The duty is split into two sections: the general duty and the specific duty.

General Duty

The general duty came into effect on 6th April 2007 and requires the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; and
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

The duty applies to all public authorities in respect of all of their functions. This means that the general duty applies to service delivery, the development of policies and procedures and all employment matters.

Specific duty

Under the specific duties the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority is required to:

- prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme showing how we will meet the general duty and specific duties, setting out gender equality objectives;
- develop our overall objectives, consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap;
- gather and use information on how our policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services;

Background to Gender Equality Scheme

- consult stakeholders (employees, service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine gender equality objectives;
- assess the impact of our current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality;
- implement the actions set out in our scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable and impracticable to do so; and
- report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.

The gender equality duty and gender reassignment

The gender equality duty also places a legal requirement on public authorities such as the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority to eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination against individuals who define themselves as transsexuals in the fields of employment and vocational training.

The Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) already provides protection for people who undergo or intend to undergo gender reassignment and the SDA will be

extended, by December 2007, to ensure that individuals undergoing, or who intend to undergo, gender reassignment are protected against discrimination in the provision of goods and services.

The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority will ensure that due regard is given to the need to eliminate gender reassignment discrimination and harassment in the development of this Gender Equality Scheme.

The local context

The community of the West Midlands comprises a broad social and cultural mix of 5,267,337 people of which 2,575,503 are males and 2,691,834 are female (key data for the West Midlands 02).

The region includes the major cities of Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry and the metropolitan districts of Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull and Walsall. The city region, as these areas are known, has a working age population of 1.55million, however, within this there is a particularly high population of people from groups that are less likely to be well

Background to Gender Equality Scheme

qualified and face barriers to employment. The city region also has a particularly high proportion of people with no qualifications, 30.7% compared with 22.8% nationally (Birmingham, Coventry City Region Business Plan June 07 update).

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

West Midlands Fire Service was formed in 1974 and became West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority, hereafter known as WMFRA, in 2004, it employs approximately 2,500 staff, including approximately 1,900 operational firefighters and officers. The Service responds to thousands of calls each year. In 2005/2006, for example, we attended 50,249 incidents.

To align our service delivery to a more focussed and relevant level we have a devolved structure of seven boroughs which are aligned to the cities and metropolitan areas we serve.

The West Midlands Fire Service primary functions are to protect the people of the West Midlands through helping to prevent fires and responding when fires and other emergencies occur, to reduce the loss of life, injury and damage to property.

This is reflected in our vision statement:

'Making West Midlands Safer'

We intend to achieve this through our mission statement.

Providing a quality service to reduce risk by:

- Preventing
- Protecting
- Responding

A number of aims have the ability to improve equality through work in the community and in partnership working.

In February 2006, WMFRA adopted the Core Values which provide focus and support both to our service delivery and employment practices.

Core Values

We value Improvement at all levels of the service by:

- Accepting responsibility for our performance
- Being open minded
- Considering criticism thoughtfully
- Learning from our experience
- Consulting others

We value all our People by practising and promoting:

- Equity and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- Personal development;
- Co-operative and inclusive working

We value Diversity in the service and community by:

- Treating everyone equitably and with respect
- Providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- Promoting equality of opportunity in employment and progression within the service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

We value Service to the Community by:

- Working with all groups to reduce risks
- Treating everyone equitably and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve
- Striving for excellence in all we do

Within the WMFS area, poverty and disadvantage raises the incidence of fires, injuries and death caused by fire. These Core Values frame all our services and actions both internally and with the community.

They enable us to progress equality and diversity issues and to build upon our position of respect and trust within the community with a greater understanding of the needs of all those we serve.

Fire and Rescue Authority National Framework

The government is responsible for setting clear priorities and objectives for the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Fire Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for England came into effect on 1 April 2005. The target is, by 2010 reduce the number of accidental fire related deaths in the home by 20% and the number of deliberate fires by 10%.

In addition, the Fire and Rescue National Framework strategic plan outlines how the PSA and other objectives can be delivered. The framework areas are listed below:

- Fire Prevention and risk management
- Working together
- Effective response
- Resilience and New Dimension
- Fire and Rescue staff
- Workforce development
- Finance Performance Management
- Research

The framework requires us to produce an Integrated

Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which sets out our plans to tackle existing and potential risks to the community and in achieving the plan how we will make efficient and effective use of our resources.

The duty to produce an IRMP is met through our production of a three year Corporate Strategy and Annual Service Plan.

The key priorities within the strategy are demonstrated below:

1 Communities and Partnerships

- 1.1** Educate, inform, target vulnerable groups
- 1.2** Ensure our services meet the needs of diverse local communities
- 1.3** Advice and enforcement
- 1.4** Combat arson and fire crime
- 1.5** Work with partnership agencies at all levels, to achieve our common objectives
- 1.6** Contribute to improvements in local well being.

2 Response

- 2.1** Deploy appropriate resources

Fire and Rescue Authority National Framework

- 2.2** Deal effectively with incidents
- 2.3** Provide appropriate vehicles, equipment and risk information
- 2.4** Develop civil resilience and planning.

3 People

- 3.1** Maintain the health, safety and welfare of our staff
- 3.2** Enable a skilled and competent workforce to achieve their full potential
- 3.3** Embrace the core values; equality and diversity.

Goals

- Prevent fires and other hazardous incidents
- Protect life and property
- Mitigate the social, economic and environmental impact of fires and other emergencies.

Outcome

- Making West Midlands Safer

The priorities are strongly connected and support the

aims of the Equality Act 2006, particularly in relation to service delivery and partnerships. Our aim is to deliver fire and community safety services, sensitive to the needs and aspirations of all the diverse communities. To do this we will need to create a workforce, at all levels, that reflects and is able to understand, empathise and communicate with all our communities. Equality and, in particular, gender equality is a pivotal element that underpins all our objectives.

The delivery of the Gender Equality Scheme and action plan links into the following areas which provide for external scrutiny of our performance.

Fire and Rescue Authority National Framework

There are five levels of achievement to which Local Authorities can aspire. We are currently at Level 2 and are working to achieve Level 3. In many ways the Equality Standard and Gender Equality Scheme go hand in hand with each other. Both set out to achieve the same aims, to evidence that we are eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting equality of outcomes for gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

This standard is also a consideration of Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

All local authorities, including Fire and Rescue Authorities, are formally assessed each year to see if they are delivering their service in the most effective way. The result of the assessment process grades authorities in one of five ways:

1. **Excellent**
2. **Good**
3. **Fair**

4. **Weak**
5. **Poor**

Our first assessment was in 2005 and we were rated as Good. Whilst this was a pleasing result we are aware, from the feedback we received, that more needs to be done in respect of equality and diversity. Ultimately our aim is to become an excellent performing Fire Authority through achieving and demonstrating improvement throughout the Service.

Leadership

The Chief Fire Officer is the designated Champion of Equality and Diversity issues within the Service, with overall responsibility for the delivery of the gender equality agenda. An elected member of the WMFRA has the lead role for equality and diversity which includes responsibility for leading, shaping and influencing policy, monitoring and scrutinising actions and outcomes.

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

The WMFRA comprises 27 elected members who

Equality Standard for Local Government

meet five times a year. Their role is to receive reports and recommendations for consideration.

There are five committees:

- Appointments
- Executive
- Appeals
- Standards
- Audit

Elected members also sit on the following:

- Policy Planning Forum
- Joint Consultative Committee.

Scrutiny

Appropriate structures are in place to monitor progress of the scheme. Overall the scheme will be monitored and scrutinised internally by the Internal Equalities Group and Corporate Board, (see Page 65 for structure), and WMFRA who will receive quarterly update reports.

The full scheme will be reviewed in three years time but we will report on progress made, review and refine and, if required, amend it annually, in addition to producing and publishing annual employment data.

The scheme will be externally reviewed using the following performance management tools and strategies:

- Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)
- Equality Standard for Local Government
- Best Value performance indicators
- Full equality impact assessments
- Corporate Strategy

Meeting the general and specific duties

There are three principles that govern the way in which we are obliged to meet the general duty in order to promote gender equality these are as follows:

Obligatory – the duty's aim is to make gender equality a central part of any policy or service that is

Equality Standard for Local Government

relevant to the duty. Therefore, the West Midlands Fire Service must promote gender equality and gender equality considerations must be built into normal day to day practices.

Relevant – as a public authority we must consider all functions and decide whether they are relevant to gender equality

Proportionate – the weight given to the function should be in proportion to its relevance to promoting gender equality.

Consultation process

Internal consultation

In line with our duty to consult with stakeholders and staff, the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority commissioned external consultants to carry out consultation for the Gender Equality Scheme. All members of staff, including the Senior Management Team, were invited to participate in the gender equality questionnaire and focus groups. An internal email was sent out to approximately 2,500 personnel

giving people the option of completing a confidential questionnaire to obtain views about gender issues within the Service. Individuals were also given the option of participating in seven focus groups which took place across the nine districts of the West Midlands and they were also given the opportunity to participate in one to one interviews and telephone interviews.

External consultation

External stakeholders were invited via email to complete the gender equality questionnaire. An external focus group W.A.I.T.S (Women Active in Today's Society) was also held and a female Station Commander from the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority was invited to discuss her experiences as a female firefighter in the West Midlands Fire Service. Questionnaires were also sent out to community organisations and businesses via the external consultants.

Equality Standard for Local Government

Aims of the Gender Equality Scheme

Taking into account the findings from the internal and external consultation process the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority has developed objectives in line with the recommendations from the consultation process. The recommendations are as follows:

- Leadership and management development aimed at modernising the service in line with corporate aims and objectives and core values as well as legal requirements in respect of the equality duties.
- A pay and grading review across staffing groups.
- Support group for female staff.
- Gender equality champions at Board, Senior Management and operational levels.
- Training needs analysis at all levels and learning and development initiatives to address identified training needs.
- Incorporation of gender equality at induction.
- The development of robust systems for data collection regarding entry to and exit from the

Service based on gender, ethnicity and age.

- Robust systems for data collection in respect of incidents of bullying and harassment and analysis by gender, ethnicity, and age.
- Review of all policies and procedures to assess impact on gender issues.
- All data collation, monitoring training and development activity in respect of gender equality to pay particular attention to the needs and views of transsexual men and women (if applicable).
- The Gender Equality Scheme to be monitored and scrutinised internally by the Corporate Board and Internal Equalities Group and to be reviewed in line with legal requirements.

As a result of the recommendations from the consultation process, our Gender Equality Scheme aims to embed practices and procedures that recognise and respond to equality of outcomes for both men, women and transgender people.

By implementing this Gender Equality Scheme we intend to achieve the following outcomes:

Aims and Objectives of the Gender Equality Scheme

- Develop through training, the knowledge and understanding of our staff in relation to gender equality and gender reassignment;
- Fully analyse and incorporate gender equality when developing policies, strategies and procedures in order to consider the implications of gender issues for men women and transgender people within our workforce and the wider community;
- Ensure that gender equality is a key factor with partnerships and in the procurement of goods and services;
- Identify and address any under representation of men and women in relation to employment (occupational segregation) and the decision making processes;
- Undertake a pay and grading review in order to demonstrate equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes for men and women;
- Promote gender equality within the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority encouraging an open, flexible and equitable workplace which celebrates diversity;
- Ensure that both men and women have equal

access to the full range of fire prevention, fire safety and emergency services provided by West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority;

- Eliminate harassment and sex discrimination;
- Review the whole scheme again in 2010 and produce annual reports on the progress made, particularly in relation to the general and specific duties.

Gender equality objectives

The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority gender equality objectives are focused on making significant improvement and seeing real equality of outcomes between men, women and transgender people in the following four key areas:

- Employment
- Service delivery
- Representation
- Policy and planning.

The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority has developed gender equality objectives which it believes it can genuinely deliver as they will

Aims and Objectives of the Gender Equality Scheme

contribute to equality of outcomes for both men and women. Our gender equality objectives are listed on the following pages.

Training

We will ensure that all staff are adequately trained in the duty to promote gender equality and will adopt gender equality champions within the service to further promote the gender duty. We will also ensure that our Procurement Team is fully trained in relation to the gender equality duty in the procurement of goods and services. We will also incorporate gender equality in staff induction programmes.

Proposed Policies

All proposed policies, projects and services will be required to undergo a preliminary screening process to identify whether it is relevant to gender equality. In line with our legal obligations to carry out gender equality impact assessments we have already developed a list of all the functions that will need to undergo an equality impact assessment (a list of all

the functions can be found on page 38. The results of the outcomes of the impact assessments related to gender will also be published on our intranet site for members of the public to access.

Review of Functions and Policies

We currently operate a three yearly review of policies known as Standing Orders and we have built in mechanisms to ensure that an Equality Impact Assessment is completed at the stage of the review.

An ICT database is currently being developed which will enable us to produce reports in order to monitor the number of EIAs being completed by each department.

Aims and Objectives of the Gender Equality Scheme

Employment

Continue to take positive steps to attract more female firefighters into the Fire and Rescue Service

Ensure the promotion of flexible working policy and report on and monitor the number of staff requesting flexible working

Train all staff on gender equality and gender re-assignment

Report on and monitor the percentage of male and female staff, uniformed and support staff, accessing training and development opportunities particularly at lower grades

Eliminate harassment, unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity between men and women, through the promotion of our policies and training for staff

Undertake a pay and grading review

Improve data collection systems to report on and monitor the number of males and females (uniformed) taking up promotion opportunities against the number of males and females who are eligible for promotion

Develop, promote and pilot a development programme for support staff (male and female) on lower grades

Improve data collection systems in order to report on numbers of female firefighter applications against the numbers of female firefighters becoming qualified firefighters

Promote policy and record and analyse requests for parental and caring leave by gender

Increase the proportion of women employed in senior roles (uniformed)

Aims and Objectives of the Gender Equality Scheme

Employment (continued)

Explore and investigate the possibility of double entry tier system to increase and improve the representation of the proportion of female firefighters in Senior Management roles

Review and improve data collection systems for reporting on the number of grievances by gender, ethnicity

Review and improve data collection systems for reporting on the number of bullying and harassment cases by gender

Review and improve data collection systems for reporting retention rates of female firefighters and information from exit interviews

Aims and Objectives of the Gender Equality Scheme

Service Delivery

Take steps to encourage businesses to tender for contracts within the WMFS supply chain where there is under-representation within specific groups

Review procurement process throughout the supply chain to ensure it is equitable and offers equal opportunities for women and men

Monitor and analyse successful tenders for contracts by gender against number of bids for contracts

Work with contractors to ensure they are compliant with gender equality duty

Review Compliments Comments and Complaints (CCC) process to ensure data is analysed and captured by gender

Develop partnerships with women owned businesses and organisations such as Women's Aid and Gingerbread in order to target vulnerable groups, develop external working relationships and to inform targeted community engagement

Carry out gender impact assessments on all policies, projects and procedures relevant to gender

Aims and Objectives of the Gender Equality Scheme

Policy and Planning

Report on the number of gender impact assessments that have resulted in changes to policies and procedures

Include gender equality and gender re-assignment in staff induction programmes (support staff and uniformed)

Recruit gender equality champions whose specific remit is to promote gender equality issues within the Service

Develop a policy on gender re-assignment, promote and issue to all staff

Develop and include gender equality objectives in all Departmental and Borough Action Plans

Undertake a training needs analysis with each department to establish baseline knowledge of gender equality at all levels

Develop and deliver bespoke training package on gender equality and equality considerations in the procurement of goods and services for the Procurement Team and deliver to the Procurement Team

Report on and monitor the number of staff that have undertaken gender equality training in each department

Develop briefing sessions and information sessions on positive action initiatives within the Service and spread information to all staff

Rationale for Gender Equality Objectives

Employment

The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority believes that gender equality within employment is a key success factor to achieving equality of opportunity and recognises that diversity in the workforce will make a fundamental difference. A breakdown of the composition of our workforce is detailed on page 34. We already carry out numerous positive action initiatives to target under-represented groups such as women and ethnic minority groups, however, we recognise that we can do more to ensure equality of outcomes for all.

As an employer we aim to address gender inequality in the four stages of employment. These are as follows:

Attraction

We will continue to promote the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority to women in the local community and we will also continue to develop partnerships with women owned organisations and businesses in order to promote the Fire Service as

the first choice employer for women.

Recruitment

We will continue to undertake and evaluate our positive action initiatives to encourage women to apply for vacancies (specifically firefighter roles). We will also continue to monitor the number of female applicants at the point of entry through to the exit interviews in order to identify any gaps and address issues.

Retention

We will continue to collate data on retention rates for females, ensure that gender equality is promoted at the highest levels within the organisation, operate an effective harassment and bullying policy, undertake an equal pay review, ensure gender equality is incorporated into induction for all staff and operate an effective flexible working policy and procedure.

Monitoring

We will continue to monitor the composition of our

Rationale for Gender Equality Objectives

workforce and we will also improve current data collection systems to monitor females taking up training and development initiatives, and promotion opportunities (uniformed).

Where there are any issues of under-representation we will ensure that we take specific action to address under-representation. We will also continue to improve, review and report on the number of grievances and disciplines specifically related to gender and the numbers of males and females requesting flexible working.

Service delivery

The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority recognises that it plays a major role in the delivery of goods and services to the local community and has, therefore, developed gender equality objectives in relation to the procurement of goods and services and the development of partnerships with women owned organisations. We will take steps to ensure that we develop new and existing partnerships with women owned businesses and organisations in order

to ensure effective and targeted community engagement, we will also encourage women owned businesses to apply for contracts with the organisation if it has been identified that there is under-representation in the supply chain.

We will also review and improve the way in which we collect data on compliments, comments and complaints to ensure that we accurately monitor the number of complaints received by gender.

We will also seek to incorporate the development of gender equality objectives into Departmental and Borough Action Plans which will enable us to mainstream gender equality in service delivery.

Policy and planning

The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority recognises that policies, projects and services which incorporate equality considerations can lead to equal outcomes for individuals that live and work within the West Midlands. In relation to policy and planning we have developed gender equality objectives concentrating on the following areas.

Rationale for Gender Equality Objectives

Our EIA process consists of two stages:

1. Preliminary Screening Process

Designed to screen a policy or function for its relevance to the six equality strands (age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion and belief).

2. Full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

A systematic way of fully assessing and revising a relevant proposed policy or function to make sure it will not have a negative impact on different groups.

Stage 1 - Preliminary screening process

Members of staff responsible for completing EIAs will need to identify whether the policy, activity, function or project impacts directly or indirectly on employees or members of the public. A scoring assessment in the preliminary impact assessment process will assist those responsible for writing policies to identify

whether the policy is relevant to gender and whether the policy, project or service has the potential to have a negative impact in relation to gender.

Stage 2 - Full Equality Impact Assessment

The full EIA consists of the following seven stages:

- 1.** Set clear policy aims and objectives.
- 2.** Examine any available data or past evidence or research.
- 3.** Assess the likely impact of the policy, function or activity on the six strands.
- 4.** Consider the practical considerations that need to be taken into account to reduce or remove negative impact.
- 5.** Consult on the outcome of the assessment.
- 6.** Make arrangements to monitor service delivery outcomes or the application of the policy once applied.
- 7.** Complete a summary report on the outcome of the assessment.

At the end of the assessment, the policy officer is required to attach a copy of the assessment and report to the policy document and will need to

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

submit the documents to the Internal Equalities Group and then Corporate Board (comprising the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Directors, Head of Human Resources and Head of Finance and Procurement, for approval). This may include a recommendation for piloting the policy to assess and monitor its impact prior to full introduction.

Dealing with negative impact

If evidence of adverse or negative impact is found during the EIA process the policy writer has to:

- change the proposed policy; or
- consider alternative ways of putting the proposed policy in place; or
- find alternative means for achieving the aims of the policy; or
- justify the policy as originally proposed.

EIA summary report

On completion of the full EIA, the policy writer is responsible for writing a report which will be

published on our website. The report will contain information on the following:

- Introduction
- Data sources
- Adverse or negative impact identified
- Consideration given to remove adverse or negative impact
- Details of formal consultation
- Conclusions and recommendations

EIA training

Training on conducting EIAs has been delivered to over 60 members of staff, including the Chief Fire Officer and Directors. An ongoing programme of EIA training is also being delivered to members of staff who have responsibility for writing policies.

Consultation

Consultation is a key stage in carrying out a full EIA and is built into the policy, with questions aimed to assist policy writers in their approach, and information on the process.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

The range of consultation methods we may use when undertaking consultation for the EIA process includes:

- Surveys
- Hosting meetings
- Questionnaires
- Focus Groups
- Partnership work
- Use of internet and intranet
- Local press and media
- Use of community advocates

Who will we consult?

We believe in engaging with both our internal workforce and the communities we serve to improve the services we deliver.

The way in which we deliver our service has the potential to affect every individual and community in the West Midlands, particularly individuals from disadvantaged groups. To make the consultation process realistic, we will ensure that it is targeted and aimed at the right people. Barriers may include accessibility, language, lack of awareness of the services we provide and understanding of needs.

The ranges of people we may use for consultation

include:

Internal

- The Black and Ethnic Minority Members (sub group of the Fire Brigades' Union)
- Fire Officers' Association;
- Association of Principal Fire Officers
- Unison
- All employees
- Fire Brigade's Union
- Equality Champions
- Peer Support Officers
- Internal Equalities Group

External

- West Midlands Regional Management Board for Equalities
- Partners
- Local community groups
- Voluntary and community organisations
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Private sector companies

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Scrutiny and monitoring

All consultations undertaken will be documented on the EIA form and the report, including details of who was consulted, outcomes, actions taken and feedback given.

This will be assessed by the Equality and Diversity Team and Internal Equalities Group to ensure that:

- the consultation was with appropriate groups and communities;
- the methods used were appropriate and accessible to the needs of those groups and communities; and
- those consulted were provided with all the necessary information so that the process was informed.

The EIA process fits into the organisation's standard policy making process through two areas:

- Standing Orders Policies
- All Standing Orders have to provide evidence to the Equality and Diversity Team of an EIA being

completed prior to its internal consultation and implementation.

The format of the standing order includes a section entitled 'Equality Impact Assessment' which the policy writer is required to complete stating findings from the assessment.

Reports to the Corporate Board and the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

All reports have to detail the EIA results, a copy of which has to be provided to the Equality and Diversity Team. Both the Standing Orders and reports or minutes of meetings are available to staff through either paper copies or the intranet.

Information gathering and monitoring the effects of our policies

In order to meet the gender equality duty we will continue to ensure that we gather information which informs policy decisions, and monitor our policies once applied. This enables us to measure their effect in practice so that we can tell if we are working within both the law and our own Equality and Diversity Policy.

Employment Monitoring Data

Monitoring and gathering information about our policies also enables us to review custom and practice, to ensure that the way in which we operate upholds the aims of the Equality Act and enables us to promote gender equality.

Monitoring and gathering information will help us to identify:

- how men and women are affected by our policies;
- whether men and women are equally satisfied with the way they are treated;
- whether services are provided effectively to all communities; and
- whether services are suitable and designed to meet different needs.

The table on page 31 shows the main areas of service delivery and employment data that we currently monitor.

Employment Monitoring Data

Area	Process/ system used	Responsible Directorates	Data Collected by	Publication/ reporting of data
Employment data	Combination of paper and computerised Human Resource Systems	Personnel, Performance Assessment and Improvement Team, Training and Development, Chief Fire Officer	Personnel, Policy and Planning, Recruitment, Professional Standards, Training, Equality and Diversity	Reported quarterly and published annually
Service delivery Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC)	Computerised systems	Operations	Operations	Reported quarterly and published annually
Service delivery FDR1 –accidental dwelling fires (Fire and Rescue)	Computerised database	Operations	Operations	Reported quarterly and published annually
Service delivery Fire Safety Audit Inspection Survey	Collection is paper based via an external company and inputted onto computerised database	Operations Support	Brigade Statistician, Corporate Planning and Support	Reported quarterly and published annually

Employment Monitoring Data

In order to ensure that we meet the general and specific duties to promote gender equality we will:

- collect accurate, consistent and up to date information by gender for all relevant functions and policies in service delivery and employment;
- determine actions required to address any issues revealed by the monitoring data;
- amend policies as appropriate; and
- publish the results of our monitoring annually on our website.

Progress will also be reported annually through the Annual Report and in returns to Communities and Local Government (CLG).

We will also continue to monitor and evaluate our major strategies and relevant policies by seeking the views of our employees, representative bodies, our partners and local organisations about the effects on gender equality through consultation.

We will also use qualitative information to monitor the effects of our policies, projects and services by using the following methods:

- Employee perception surveys
- Cultural audit
- Customer surveys
- Public consultation meetings and focus groups

In order to ensure that the information is accessible to all and freely available a copy of this scheme will be available on request in other relevant community languages, including large print, braille, CD or audio cassette.

Guidance has been taken from the Equal Opportunities Commission Code of Practice on the duty to promote gender equality in relation to information we will publish. The four main groups of information we will publish both internally and externally are listed in the table on page 33.

Employment Monitoring Data

Full EIA	Consultation	Monitoring for adverse impact Published on completion	Employment monitoring data Published annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the policy by the relevant directorate including a brief account of the EIA • A summary of the results of the assessment • Details of research data used • Details of any amendments made in light of the assessment • A statement of what will happen next such as implementation and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why we carried out consultation • How the consultation was conducted • A summary of replies received subject to the Data Protection Act • An assessment of the policy in light of responses • A statement of what will happen next 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of reviews • Details of any adverse impact identified • Details of action taken or planned to deal with evidence of negative impact • Any policy changes arising as a consequence of the findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of gender of West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority staff, applicants for jobs , promotion and training • Details of those receiving training by gender • Details of those subject to discipline by gender • Grievances by gender • Details of those who benefit or suffer detriment as a result of performance appraisal by gender • Details of those leaving our employment by gender

Employment Monitoring Data

Workforce composition

The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority recognises that when we are analysing and reviewing employment practices and processes, monitoring by gender is very important. Such analysis informs policy direction and provides evidence for change. West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority aims to be an employer of choice with a representative workforce. The government has set an employment target of 15% for female firefighters by 2010. With only 64 out of 1992 of firefighters presently being female (3.2%), we recognise we need to employ 235 female firefighters to achieve the target.

Gender breakdown of current employees

We currently have a staff quota of 2,694 staff of which 2,139 are male and 555 are female.

Addressing the under-representation of female firefighters is a significant priority for the Fire and Rescue Authority and as a result we have put mechanisms in place to help us monitor progress in the achievement of this target.

The chart below demonstrates the gender breakdown of current employees

Total number of staff: 2694 as at December 1st 2007
(The percentages below are worked out by using the total number of the workforce.)

	Male	%	Female	%	Total
Uniformed	1928	72%	64	2.4%	1992
Fire Control	3	0.11%	77	2.9%	80
Support Staff	208	7.7%	414	15%	622
Total Male	2139	80%	555	20%	2694

These mechanisms are as follows:

Employment Monitoring Data

Applicants for employment

The Recruitment team has responsibility for monitoring by gender applicants for all categories of jobs, those short-listed, those successful or unsuccessful at each stage of the selection process (that is, any tests undertaken) and those appointed. A combination of paper and a computerised database facilitates this data production.

Monitoring arrangements

In discharging our general and specific duties we will continue to monitor the composition of our workforce by gender and this will be carried out in accordance with the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

In keeping with the Data Protection Act we will ask each employee to verify or amend the personal information we hold about them including their ethnic group, on a regular basis at least every three years.

Our Human Resources system will be upgraded

within the next six months, this will include a data reporting tool which will enable the production, monitoring and analysis of data to be carried out more effectively.

Employees in post and leavers

We are currently improving our current systems for capturing information on leavers via our exit interview process which will enable us to provide a greater understanding of the reasons why staff are leaving and whether this is related to gender issues.

Training

We use a computerised system for applying for and granting of training. We will continue to improve the way in which this data is captured to ensure that the information on training requested and received is analysed by gender.

Performance appraisals

In line with other Fire and Rescue Authorities we currently use a performance appraisal system entitled

Employment Monitoring Data

Individual Personal Development Review (IPDR).

The recording of IPDR is completed via a computerised system, however, in order to achieve consistency we are currently reviewing our performance appraisal systems to ensure that the system has equal outcomes for both men and women.

Applicants for promotion

In 2008 we will be reviewing and improving the way in which this information is captured in order that analysis of individuals eligible for promotion is analysed against individuals obtaining promotions via gender in operational roles.

Grievances

All paperwork relating to grievances is sent, reviewed and monitored by the Equality and Diversity team. The ability to analyse more effectively by gender will be enabled on the introduction of the upgraded Human Resources system. In the interim, measures have been put in place to produce basic monitoring

data, based on a computerised database.

Disciplines

Discipline cases are managed by the Professional Standards team within our Personnel function. The ability to analyse the data will be fully enabled by the upgrade of the Human Resources system. In the interim, measures have been put in place to produce basic monitoring data, based on a computerised recording database.

Positive action

The Recruitment team produces a positive Action Plan annually, the objectives of which are to:

1. target recruitment initiatives towards women and or black or ethnic minority members of groups;
2. evaluate all initiatives and achieve measurable outcomes where possible;
3. raise awareness of a career with the Fire and Rescue Authority and improve availability of information;
4. break down both perceived and real barriers;

Employment Monitoring Data

5. encourage women and black ethnic minority groups to apply at the next recruitment opportunity;
6. provide support to potential applicants to improve their chances of success;
7. educate both the public and the workforce regarding the legal definition of the positive action;
8. build relationships and working partnerships with community groups or projects and other agencies;
9. develop our house style with regard to all promotional materials; and
10. monitor all responses to advertisements for all categories of staff and provide statistical information.

The strategy includes long, medium and short term aims to assist in meeting the employment targets in relation to attracting more female firefighters:

- Involvement with Women's Football Association
- Involvement with Women's Rugby
- Awareness raising events for women

- Working with 'U hire' organisation
- To run women only fitness sessions to improve their chances of success in firefighter recruitment
- Running recruitment campaigns for women via the radio

The recruitment strategy and processes have had success over recent years in improving our workforce profile for women firefighters.

Appendices which include our EIA schedules and our Gender Equality Action Plan are located at the end of this document.

Prioritised functions for Gender Equality Impact Assessments

Personnel

Policy Personnel	High relevance to Gender Duty?	Date gender equality impact assessment to be completed by
Discipline Procedure	Yes	November 2010
Grievance Procedure	Yes	April 2008
Transfer of personnel	Yes	April 2009
Managing Vacancies	Yes	April 2009
Recruitment Procedure	Yes	June 2009
Character References, character witnesses and attendance at Court	Yes	April 2009
Provision of reflection rooms	Yes	April 2010
The Armed Forces, Volunteer Reserve Forces, Reserves of Cadet Forces	No	-
Death or serious illness on duty notification to next of kin	Yes	April 2009
Official conduct	Yes	April 2008
Equality and Diversity policy	Yes	July 2010
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes	August 2010
Job share	Yes	April 2009

Prioritised functions for Gender Equality Impact Assessments

Personnel

Policy Personnel	High relevance to Gender Duty?	Date gender equality impact assessment to be completed by
Acceptance of Donations, Gifts and Hospitality	No	-
Data Protection and Disclosure of Information	Yes	April 2009
Workplace Harassment and Bullying	Yes	April 2010
Secondment Policy	Yes	April 2008
Employment of people with disabilities	Yes	August 2010
Whistle Blowing policy	Yes	April 2008
Declaration of membership of external organisations and possible conflicts of interest	Yes	April 2010
Secondary Employment Policy	Yes	April 2008
Performance and Conduct Procedures Phase 1 Trainees and Phase 2 fire fighters	Yes	April 2009
Flexible working procedure	Yes	November 2007
Home Working Policy	Yes	April 2009

Prioritised functions for Gender Equality Impact Assessments

Personnel

Policy Personnel	High relevance to Gender Duty?	Date gender equality impact assessment to be completed by
Exit Procedure	Yes	April 2008
Sexual Orientation	Yes	December 2007
Religion and belief	Yes	December 2007
Re-employment of uniformed personnel following retirement	Yes	April 2009
Confirmation of appointments	Yes	April 2009
Criminal disclosure	Yes	April 2010
Trade Union Consultation	Yes	April 2010
Trade Union Facilities	No	-
Relocation Policy	Yes	December 2008
Job Evaluation	Yes	December 2008
Redeployment Policy	Yes	December 2008
Selection Promotion Policy	Yes	December 2008
Redundancy Policy	Yes	December 2008

Prioritised functions for Gender Equality Impact Assessments

Personnel

Policy Personnel	High relevance to Gender Duty?	Date gender equality impact assessment to be completed by
Honorarium Policy	Yes	December 2009
Work Force Planning	Yes	December 2008
Reorganisation	Yes	April 2009
Dress Code	Yes	December 2009
Work time/Flexible contracts	Yes	April 2008
Reward	Yes	April 2008
Employment involvement and participation	Yes	April 2008

Prioritised functions for Gender Equality Impact Assessments

Personnel

Policy	High relevance to Gender Duty?	Date gender quality impact assessment to be completed by
Pay and Allowances		
Payment of Salaries and Rates of Pay	Yes	December 2009
Overtime	Yes	December 2009
Allowances for travelling expenses	No	-
Subsistence allowance, free meals, spoilt meals and refreshments	No	April 2008
Standby duty	Yes	April 2010
Essential and Casual car user allowance	Yes	December 2008
Car leasing scheme	No	December 2010
Additional responsibility allowance	Yes	June 2009
Time off in lieu	Yes	December 2009
Acting up	Yes	December 2009

Prioritised functions for Gender Equality Impact Assessments

Personnel

Policy	High relevance to Gender Duty?	Date gender equality impact assessment to be completed by
Leave		
Annual leave	Yes	April 2009
Public Holiday leave, extra statutory public holiday leave and concessionary leave	Yes	December 2009
Special leave	Yes	April 2008
Parental leave	Yes	April 2008
Paternity leave and Pay	Yes	April 2008
Adoption leave and Pay	Yes	April 2009
Maternity leave and Pay	Yes	December 2009
Policy	High relevance to Gender Duty?	Equality Impact Assessment to be completed by
Sickness and Injury		
Administration of absences	Yes	April 2010
Attendance Management	Yes	April 2010

Prioritised functions for Gender Equality Impact Assessments

Personnel

Policy Training and Development	High relevance to Gender Duty?	Date gender equality impact assessment to be completed by
Training and Development Policy	Yes	December 2008
Training Courses	Yes	December 2008
Operational Training Programme	Yes	December 2009
Probationer fire fighters	Yes	December 2009
Qualified fire fighters	Yes	December 2009
Training retained personnel	Yes	December 2009
Inspection of driving licences	No	-
Brigade Exercise Policy	Yes	April 2010
Inspection of off site training venues by representative bodies	No	-
Post entry training scheme and financial and other assistance for education	Yes	April 2009
Individual performance review IDPR	Yes	April 2008

Prioritised functions for Gender Equality Impact Assessments

Personnel

Policy	High relevance to Gender Duty?	Equality Impact Assessment to be completed by
Occupational Health and Welfare		
Light duty	Yes	April 2009
Extended Health and Screening/Routine medicals	Yes	April 2009
Drugs and Alcohol Policy	Yes	April 2008
Stress Policy	Yes	December 2007

Prioritised functions for Gender Equality Impact Assessments

Personnel

Policy Operations Support	High relevance to Gender Duty?	Equality Impact Assessment to be completed by
Fire Safety	Yes	April 2009
Automatic Fire Suppression Systems	Yes	April 2010
Dealing with fire service complaints and issues	Yes	April 2009
Smoke Alarms	Yes	April 2010
Home Fire Safety Check	Yes	April 2009
Community Fire Safety Campaigns	Yes	April 2009
Home Fire Safety Check Referral Policy	Yes	December 2009

Prioritised functions for Gender Equality Impact Assessments

Directorate – Corporate Planning and Support

Policy	High relevance to Gender Duty?	Equality Impact Assessment to be completed by
Corporate Planning and Support		
Consultation Policy	Yes	April 2010
Marketing Campaigns and Promotions	Yes	April 2008
Communications Policy	Yes	April 2010
Customer care and compliments comments and complaints policies	Yes	April 2010
Correspondence and production of documents	Yes	December 2008
Distribution of key documents and information	Yes	April 2010

Directorate – Procurement

Policy	High relevance to Gender Duty?	Equality Impact Assessment to be completed by
Procurement Policy	Yes	April 2008
Partnership Working	Yes	April 2010

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Employment

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Develop a gender equality training course and train all staff on gender equality and gender re-assignment	April 2008	Human Resources	Equality and Diversity, Training Team	To ensure all staff are aware of their responsibility in relation to gender equality. Increased understanding of gender equality throughout the organisation	People Diversity
Report on and monitor the percentage of male and female staff (uniformed and support staff) accessing training and development opportunities particularly at lower grades	December 2008	Human Resources	Training and Development Officer (Training Centre) Equality and Diversity Manager	Staff at all levels can gain access to training and development opportunities including part-time staff. All staff competences developed.	People Improvement Diversity

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Employment

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Investigate and explore the possibility of undertaking a pay and grading review	December 2009	Human Resources	Personnel Manager, Equality and Diversity Manager	WMFS able to demonstrate equal pay across grades and compliance with Equal Pay Act 1970	People Diversity
Develop and improve data collection systems to report on and monitor the number of males and females (uniformed) taking up promotion opportunities against the number of males and females who are eligible for promotion	December 2009	Human Resources	Assessment Development Training Manager, Equality and Diversity Manager	To gain a comprehensive idea of the numbers of females and males eligible for promotion against successful applicants for promotion in order to ensure equality of opportunity between males and females	People Improvement Diversity
Investigate and explore the possibility of a double entry tier system to encourage under represented groups to join the Fire and Rescue Authority	April 2010	Human Resources	Head of Human Resources	Increase in under represented groups in senior management roles	People Diversity

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Employment

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Develop, promote and pilot a development programme for male and female support staff on lower grades	April 2008	Human Resources	Training and Development Manager	To ensure females at the lower grades are given the same opportunities for training and development initiatives	People Improvement Diversity
Explore and investigate the possibility of flexible working in operational roles to encourage more females to join the service	April 2010	Human Resources	Senior Personnel Officer, Personnel Manager	More females applying for operational roles therefore increasing the numbers of females joining the Fire and Rescue Authority	People Improvement Diversity

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Employment

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Review and improve data collection systems for reporting on the number of grievances by gender ethnicity disability	April 2009	Human Resources	Personnel Manager, Equality and Diversity Manager	Effective analysis of grievances by gender, ethnicity, disability in order to ensure equality of opportunity	People Improvement Diversity
Review and improve data collection systems for reporting on the number of bullying and harassment cases by gender	April 2009	Equality and Diversity (Fire Fighter Secondment Peer support Co-ordinator) Equality and Diversity Manager	Senior Personnel Officer, Personnel Manager	Effective analysis of the numbers of bullying and harassment cases specifically related to gender, ethnicity and disability to ensure the elimination of harassment and bullying in relation to gender	People Improvement Diversity

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Employment

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Review and improve data collection systems for reporting retention rates of female firefighters and information from exit interviews	April 2009	Human Resources	Personnel Manager	Effective analysis of reasons why people are leaving the Service In order to aid work force planning	People Improvement Diversity
Carry out an annual staff survey and distribute to all staff	April 2010	Human Resources	Personnel Manager	To ensure that there are no differences in the experiences of male and female staff that we cannot justify To use the staff survey to inform judgements on the impact on employment policies and practices on women and men	People Improvement Diversity

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Service Delivery

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Publish tender opportunities on websites of organisations who actively work with suppliers who are under represented within specific groups	April 2010	Finance	Supply Chain Manager	Under-represented groups have the opportunity to tender for contracts	Community Improvement Diversity
Review procurement process throughout the supply chain to ensure it is equitable and offers equal opportunities in relation to gender equality	April 2010	Finance	Supply Chain Manager	Equality of opportunity for men and women throughout the supply chain	Community Improvement Diversity

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Service Delivery

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Monitor and analyse successful tenders for contracts to identify under representation from specific groups within the supply chain	April 2010	Finance	Equality and Diversity Manager, Supply Chain Manager	Effective monitoring and analysis of adherence to the Gender Equality Duty of successful suppliers	Community Improvement Diversity
Work with strategic suppliers to ensure they are compliant with the Gender Equality Duty where relevant	April 2010	Finance	Supply Chain Manager, Equality and Diversity Manager	Strategic suppliers are compliant with the Gender Equality Duty	Community Improvement Diversity

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Service Delivery

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Develop partnerships with organisations, agencies and business, in order to target vulnerable groups, with particular refer to gender specific communities; develop a strong working relationship for targeted community engagement and to raise the profile of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority.	April 2009	Finance	Partnerships Officer Equality and Diversity Manager	Profile of West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority raised with businesses or organisations. Vulnerable groups in community accessed to further the work of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority in relation to the reduction of fires and Community Fire Safety Campaigns. Targeted community engagement in order to encourage more men and women to become engaged in decision and policy making.	Community People Diversity

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Service Delivery

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Review key documentation and literature to ensure that gender inclusive language, symbols and examples are used when communicating written information	April 2010	Corporate Planning and Support	Corporate Services Manager	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority is seen as a gender inclusive by men and women employees. Promotion of gender equality throughout key documentation.	People Diversity

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Service Delivery

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Review marketing and advertising literature to ensure that gender inclusive language, symbols and examples are used when communicating written information to members of the public	April 2010	Corporate Planning and Support	Corporate Services Manager	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority is seen as gender inclusive by men and women in the local community. Promotion of gender equality via key documentation to the wider community.	Community People Diversity

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Service Delivery

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Promote flexible working policy to all staff and continue to monitor the number of staff requesting flexible working	December 2008	Human Resources	Personnel Policy and Planning Manager	All staff are aware of the contents of policy. All staff have the opportunity to request flexible working if appropriate. Requests for flexible working are monitored. Equality of outcomes for men and women in respect of flexible working.	People Diversity
Recruit gender equality champions at all levels whose specific remit is to promote gender equality issues within the Service	January 2009	Human Resources	Equality and Diversity Advisor	Gender equality promoted throughout the West Midlands Fire Service. Increased understanding of the importance of gender equality throughout the Service.	People Diversity

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Service Delivery

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Develop a policy on gender reassignment, promote and issue to all staff	April 2008	Human Resources	Equality and Diversity Advisor	Increased understanding of gender reassignment throughout the organisation. Transgender staff feel supported and protected.	People Diversity
Develop a training course on gender equality and pilot to staff	October 2008	Human Resources	Equality and Diversity Trainers	Staff are aware of their responsibility in relation to gender equality. Increased awareness and understanding of gender equality throughout the organisation.	People Diversity

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Service Delivery

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Develop and deliver a bespoke training package on gender equality and equality considerations in the procurement of goods and services for the Procurement Team	December 2008	Human Resources	Equality and Diversity Advisor, Equality and Diversity Trainers	Increased understanding of gender equality and equality considerations in the procurement process. Compliance with gender equality duty and legislation.	People Diversity
Report on and monitor the numbers of staff that have undertaken gender equality training in each department	April 2009	Human Resources	Equality and Diversity Manager	All staff trained in gender equality. Specific targeting of departments where staff have not undertaken training in relation to gender equality.	People Diversity Improvement

Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

Service Delivery

Action/How	Time Line	Responsible Directorate	Responsible Officer(s)	Outcomes	Core Values Supported
Include gender equality and gender –reassignment in staff induction programmes for uniformed and support staff	January 2009	Human Resources	Equality and Diversity Trainers	Increased knowledge and understanding of gender equality throughout the service.	People Diversity Improvement
Develop briefing sessions and information on positive action initiatives and spread to all staff	January 2009	Human Resources	Recruitment Manager, Equality and Diversity Trainers	Increased understanding about positive action and why it is necessary	People Diversity Improvement

Customer Care

West Midlands Fire Service Customer Care

We are proud of the services we provide and are committed to providing you with a caring efficient and cost effective fire and rescue service which we continually seek to improve. You, the customer, are our top priority.

Our organisation provides a wide range of service and we have a series of Customer Care standards that set out the level of service you can expect from us.

We will check to make certain that we achieve our standards and look for ways in which we can improve the services we provide.

Through our website you should be able to find all the information you require. If you need further assistance please contact us.

Contact Us

We value your views. Your comments will help us to improve our services.

If you require any further information or would like to comment, compliment or complain about our services, please contact our Public Relations Team by the following methods:

Ring our: Customer Service Line on 0121 380 7404
(24 hour answer phone)

Write to: Public Relations Team
West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters
Lancaster Circus Queensway
Birmingham B4 7DE

By phone: 0121 380 6102/6103/6104
(During office hours)

email: contact@wmfs.net

How you can stay safe

As part of our commitment to your safety at home we are offering you a free safety check and where necessary, free smoke alarms. This service is carried out by firefighters from your local station.

Visits will be by appointment only. All appointments will be pre-arranged with you. The firefighters calling will always be in uniform, use an agreed password and show ID card.

This safety check will look at areas of accident and fire risk within your home. We will advise you on the installation of smoke alarms and also give advice and information on how to stay safe from fire, including kitchen hazards, safe disposal of smoking materials, candles, heaters, electric blankets and dangers from harmful substances. In addition we will help you to make an escape plan to prepare you, should a fire occur in your home.

To arrange your free appointment please call **Freephone Helpline 0800 389 5525** or register via our website at **www.wmfs.net/homesafetycheck**

Contact us

For further information about our Gender Equality Scheme

Write to: Sabrina Richards
West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters
Lancaster Circus Queensway
Birmingham B4 7DE

Phone: 0121 380 6241

Email: sabrina.richards@wmfs.net

Look on our website **www.wmfs.net**

West Midlands Fire Service Preliminary Impact Assessment Screening form

West Midlands Fire Service Preliminary Impact Assessment Screening Pro forma

Standing order/Procedure/Project title	
Standing order No (if applicable)	
Is this a new or existing policy, procedure, function?	
Section Department	
Directorate	
Name of person responsible for writing the policy/ Telephone No/e-mail address	
Policy owner/Manager of section	
Brief Description/Aims of the policy project or activity	
<p>Preliminary Screening assessment Please answer the following questions that relate to the West Midlands Fire service legal obligations under the Race Relations Amendment Act, 2000 Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, DDA 2005, Employment Equality Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003, Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003, and Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.</p>	
<p>POTENTIAL IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES OR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC Yes/No</p>	
1. Does the policy, function or activity directly or indirectly impact on employees of the West Midlands Fire Service	
2. Does the Policy function or activity directly or indirectly impact on members of the public?	
3. Could the way in which the policy, function or activity is provided or applied result in a potential negative or adverse impact for employees of the West Midlands Fire Service?	
4. Could the way in which the policy, function or activity is provided or applied result in a potential negative or adverse impact for members of the public?	
5. Is there any past evidence or data currently available related to the policy, function or activity which demonstrates that the policy may have discriminatory outcomes?	
6. Is there any public or political concern in relation to ethnicity, age, gender, religion or beliefs, disability issues or community issues attached to the policy?	
7. Do ethnic minorities disabled people, women, men, young people, older people, lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender, or people belonging to faith or religious groups have differing needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to the policy, function or activity?	
8. What is the extent of potential adverse or negative impact on members of the public and staff? Please indicate below whether the impact is low medium or high. Please note if the assessment results in a medium or high impact then the responsible policy owner must complete a full Equality Impact Assessment	Potential Impact?
<p>Total score Yes 0-1 =Low Impact. (Full impact assessment not needed please complete section below) Total Score Yes 2-4 =Medium Impact. (Full Equality Impact Assessment needed) Total score Yes 5-7 = High Impact. (Full Equality Impact Assessment needed) Total number of Yes answers = _____ therefore a full Equality Impact assessment is needed/not needed (*please delete as appropriate)</p>	
<p>Please complete this section if a full Equality Impact Assessment is not needed A Full Equality Impact Assessment is not needed due to the fact that, please complete one of the following answers</p> <p>A) The policy scored a low impact and does not have direct or indirect implications for employees or members of the public due to</p> <p>B) The assessment carried out demonstrates that the policy, function, project or activity promotes equal outcomes for all groups and the policy owner has evidence to substantiate this claim due to</p> <p>C) There is no evidence or data which suggests that the policy, function, project or activity will result in discriminatory outcomes and the policy owner is able to substantiate this claim due to</p>	
<p>I am satisfied that the completed Preliminary Equality Impact Assessment is accurate and correct Signed (Completing Officer) – ----- Signed Responsible Policy owner /Manager of section -----</p>	

This form is available on the intranet in an interactive format.

Corporate Management Structure

West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority

Chairman

Fire Authority

West Midlands Fire Service

Chief Fire Officer *

Corporate Support

Deputy Chief Fire Officer *

Director Operations *

Director Operations Support *

Director Technical Services *

Head of Finance and Procurement *

Head of Human Resources *

Director Corporate Planning and Support *

Equality & Diversity

* These Senior Personnel make up our Corporate Board

Notes

