

Safest People, Safest Places

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service



Human Resources Committee

2 December 2022

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Report of Director of Emergency Response

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Human Resources (HR) Committee with an overview of the work carried out by the Service's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDIG).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group Update

2. Personnel from across the Service in collaboration with Cleveland Fire Brigade attended Durham Pride on 29 May with the Chief Fire Officer giving a speech alongside key partners. Service crested flags were flown at Service premises from 28 May and throughout June in support of 'Pride' month. Representatives from the Service attended UK Pride in Newcastle on 23 July in collaboration with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and attended Darlington Pride on 13 August.
3. As a member of the County Durham Inter Faith Network, the Service's Religion and Belief Champion attended the 3rd Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) Pastoral, Spiritual, Religious Summit in July held in conjunction with NHS partners entitled 'Let's talk about proactively managing pastoral, spiritual and religious belief in the workplace'. Following his attendance, he is seeking links with a Service Chaplain with the potential of providing additional support to staff and the Trauma Support Team if required.
4. The Race Champion attended the AFSA Winter Conference in November entitled 'Inclusion and the Fire Service Core Code of Ethics and considerations for the FRS'. The aim of the conference is to demonstrate how by adopting the core code of ethics and focusing on inclusion can lead to innovation and increased productivity. The Fire Authority and the Service have implemented the core code of ethics.
5. The Service has developed links with Durham Football Association, the aim being to build relationships and enhance knowledge and understanding of the FRS through positive action with the women's football groups and coaches.
6. The Disability Champion has completed a significant amount of work to enable the Service to be recognised as a Disability Confident Leader. The process involved completion of a self-assessment against stringent criteria and an independent validation process. Becoming a Disability Confident Leader demonstrates that the Service recognises the value disabled people can bring to the organisation, putting the Service ahead in the search for talent.

7. The Service submitted to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) 2022. The WEI demonstrates an organisation's commitment to making workplaces, services and products LGBT inclusive. The Service received its results earlier this year and was placed 128 out of 403 organisations submitting to the WEI, the Service also achieved a Silver Award for commitment to LGBT+ inclusion work. The LGBT Champion has conducted a gap analysis of our report and is currently developing an action plan to identify areas of improvement.
8. The Gender Champion is now a member of the Menopause Action Group which is a national group hosted by the Police to provide education and share best practice to assist organisations to provide support to their workforce.
9. The LGBT Champion is leading a project to further develop the understanding the Service has of the communities it serves. This project continues to develop a register of key contacts and networks within County Durham and Darlington which will assist to provide specific areas of focus and targeted interventions for prevention, protection and response activities as well as areas of focus and targeted interventions to support our positive action strategy and recruitment. These activities will be incorporated into station and Service plans. This intelligence will also assist in the development of the Community Risk Profile (CRP) and the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
10. To demonstrate the Service as an inclusive and supportive organisation and employer, the Service promoted awareness of key dates and events across the strands of equality with information and activities some of which included Dyslexia Awareness Week, Black History Month, Safeguarding Adult Week, Trans Awareness Week and Transgender Day of Remembrance.
11. The EDIG continues to drive the EDI Strategy Action Plan to meet the objectives of the action plan. Progress is evidenced in the Action Plan which is attached as Appendix 1.

Recommendation

12. Members are requested to:
 - a) **Note** the content of the report and action plan.

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