



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

*Working together to improve community safety*

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**



## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

This document details the policy of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority (the Authority) as implemented by Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service/CFRS). It replaces all previous policy documents, Service Management and Administration Orders and forms relating to this subject and its content is based on legislation, nationally agreed terms and conditions and good practice.

If you have any queries about the Authority's policy, please contact your Human Resources Adviser. Questions of procedure should be addressed to your line manager.

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### POLICY STATEMENT

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority recognises diversity and actively promotes equality and fairness in all the environments within which it operates.

The Authority is committed to developing a service where every employee feels valued, respected and able to give of their best. It is also committed to providing a professional service to the public which takes account of differences between groups and individuals in our community and responds to these appropriately and positively.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Unfair discrimination, including bullying or harassment, on the following grounds<sup>1</sup> will not be tolerated:

- gender or gender reassignment
- marital or civil partner status
- age
- race, ethnicity, colour
- nationality or national origin
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- disability

<sup>1</sup> Further information about different aspects of diversity along with practical examples and Frequently Asked Questions is provided in a series of guidelines referred to at the end of this policy.



We will ensure that all employees, regardless of their duty system, number of working hours or role in the organisation, have equality of opportunity and fairness of treatment. We will ensure that decisions made about recruitment and selection, reward, terms and conditions, training, appraisal, development and progression and any other benefits, are based on individual ability, matched to job requirements and consistent with the needs of the Service. We are committed to following employment policies and practices which are transparent, clearly understood and fairly implemented.

In delivering our services, we will ensure that members of the public are treated with dignity and respect regardless of their culture, background or lifestyle. We are committed to listening to and acting on the varied needs of our diverse community by providing services that are appropriate to them.

We believe that our Service needs to be representative of the communities it serves and are committed to retaining and attracting staff from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures.

### **Breach of Policy**

We will treat breaches of this policy seriously.

Concerns about breaches of this policy internally should be raised initially with the appropriate line manager, through the grievance procedure or resolving bullying or harassment procedures. Breaches of this policy by employees will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary procedures which could ultimately end in dismissal.

### **Aim**

The aim of this policy and supporting guidelines is to:

- Ensure equal opportunity at work for employees and job applicants.
- Ensure equality for members of the public in service delivery and outcomes.
- Prevent unlawful and unfair discrimination.
- Eliminate prejudice.
- Attain a more diverse and representative workforce.
- Actively promote good relationships within the workplace and within and between our communities
- Value and celebrate the benefits that diversity of opinion and approach can bring to our work and our communities.

### **SCOPE**

This policy and its associated guidelines and documents cover all employees, workers and volunteers of Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service irrespective of their job, role, duty system or conditions of service. The term “workers” is used in this policy to apply to all of these. The principles of equality and diversity laid out in the policy statement also apply to members of the Fire Authority.



### DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply in the context of this policy:

**Cohesion** – the principle that although people may have different cultural, social or religious backgrounds there are also many things that we have in common that bind us together as a community.

**Equality** - the principle that everyone should have equal opportunity in employment or equal access to services. It does not necessarily mean that everyone should be treated the same way.

**Diversity** - recognising that individuals differ from each other and may need different actions to be taken for equal opportunity or equal access to be achieved.

**Fair treatment** - in keeping with the rules, just and reasonable in the circumstances.

**Unlawful Discrimination** - treating one person less favourably than another on grounds of gender, gender reassignment, ethnicity, race, colour, nationality, national origin, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation or disability. Legislation exists to protect people from this, so such treatment is unlawful.

**Positive Discrimination** - describes the situation when someone is treated **more** favourably and to others' disadvantage on grounds of gender, gender reassignment, ethnicity, race, colour, nationality, national origin, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation or disability. This is also unlawful and people have protection from this under discrimination law.

**Unfair** - a sense of injustice.

**Positive Action** - legal measures the Service can take to encourage applications from, or train and develop, groups of people who are under-represented in particular work.

**Prejudice** - unreasonable dislike for a specific group based on little or no knowledge of the facts.

**Stereotype** - a fixed idea about an individual or group of people based on the characteristics of one or a few people belonging to that group.

### KEY POINTS

- Equal opportunity and fair treatment based on objective decision making is a fundamental right of every employee and applicant for employment.
- Employees are entitled to be valued, treated with dignity and respected for who they are, and the contribution they make to the Service.
- All members of the public are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Members of the public will be given equal access to our services, based on risk and impact assessments.
- In service delivery we will take account of differing needs in the community and plan to meet these.
- We want to attract a more diverse workforce which is representative of our communities.
- Everyone is responsible for challenging prejudice and discrimination in our Service.



### RESPONSIBILITIES

#### The Fire Authority

- Set corporate equality and diversity objectives
- Approve the Corporate Equality Plan

#### Deputy Chief Fire Officer

- Has overall accountability for diversity and equality in Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service.

#### Equality Project Board

- Make recommendations to the Fire Authority (through appropriate committees) on corporate equality and diversity objectives.
- Monitor progress on implementation of corporate equality and diversity objectives
- Report progress on implementation of this policy to the Scrutiny and Performance Committee

#### Senior Management Team

- Manage and co-ordinate the implementation of this policy

#### Diversity Steering Group

- Progress corporate equality and diversity objectives
- Ensure that equality and diversity plans are actioned, monitored and reviewed in every directorate, group and district.
- Report progress on corporate diversity objectives to SMT and the Diversity Project Board

#### Line Managers must

- Ensure management decisions are objective, fair and not influenced by prejudice, favouritism or any other irrelevant factors.
- Follow agreed procedures and processes for promotion, recruitment, grievance etc.
- Be aware of the diversity within their teams/watches and ensure this is managed to bring out the full potential of individuals.
- Ensure expressions of prejudice or discriminatory behaviour are appropriately dealt with.
- Lead by example.
- Monitor and assess the impact of applying policies and procedures to ensure that any adverse outcomes relating to diversity are identified and acted upon.

#### Employees must

- Challenge prejudice and unlawful discrimination at work, positively and politely.
- Follow the Service's Key Values and the National Core Values relating to diversity.
- Seek the advice of their manager if they become aware of potential unlawful discrimination.
- Adhere to this policy and follow appropriate guidelines.



### **Diversity Adviser will**

- Advise on the content, implementation, application and communication of this policy.
- Co-ordinate and manage specific activities and projects that achieve the aim of this policy.

### **Human Resources Advisers will**

- Ensure application of employment policies and procedures are consistent with this policy.
- Support managers in applying this policy.
- Advise managers and staff on the content and meaning of this policy.

## **STAFF REPRESENTATION**

A Service Advisory Group for Equality and Diversity also supports the achievement of equality and diversity objectives and:

- Provides an effective non-executive forum that considers and makes proposals to the Service on issues regarding equality and diversity
- Monitors progress on Service diversity objectives and action plans.
- Acts as internal “critical friend” by advising Diversity Steering Group on the effectiveness and impact of action plans on employees and service delivery.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Equality Plan and Outcomes**

Equality and diversity will only be achieved through focused activity and clear goals for the Fire Authority, the Service, districts, groups, teams and individuals. A corporate equality plan (CEP), setting out our equality and diversity objectives and specific activities needed to achieve them, forms part of this policy. It is part of the Fire Authority’s overall plan for the Service and is supported by both senior managers and representative bodies. It provides a framework for Groups and Districts to set and achieve their own equality and diversity objectives consistent with their business plans.

### **Practising Values**

Standards of behaviour expected of all staff are covered in the Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Policy. Staff are also expected to demonstrate the Service Key Values -

**Dignity                  Respect                  Welcome**

and to support the National Fire and Rescue Service Core Values in their dealings with colleagues, other agencies and members of the public.

### **Work/Life Balance**

Flexible working practices can help to attract and retain a diverse workforce. By providing creative and flexible working patterns we can ensure that those with differing circumstances and needs can continue to contribute their skills and experience to this Service.



The Service already operates a number of flexible working practices (different duty systems, job-share, part-time, flexi time, career breaks) as well as the statutory rights that employees have (parents' right to request flexible working arrangements, parental leave, maternity, paternity and adoption leave and provisions, time off for dependents etc.).

The Service will continue to respond positively to reasonable requests to work flexibly where this is consistent with the business needs of the Service. We will ensure employees and managers have the necessary support to accommodate flexible working arrangements wherever possible. We will work jointly with staff representatives to investigate and consider new ways of working for the benefit of the Service and its employees.

### **Positive Action**

Where under-representation exists, suitable positive action measures will be considered to increase the diversity of the Service. The effectiveness of positive action measures will be evaluated to inform future activity.

“Positive action” refers to **lawful** measures the Service can take to encourage applications from, or train and develop groups of people who are under-represented in particular work. For example, since women are under-represented in firefighting roles it is lawful to encourage and help them to apply for this work e.g. by holding an open day aimed specifically at women.

Positive action plays no part in selection or promotion decisions. **Once the process starts candidates are judged on the merit of their performance.**

### **Equality schemes**

All public authorities have a legal general duty to stop discrimination and promote race, disability and gender equality in service delivery and employment (*source: Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; Disability Discrimination Act 2005; Equality Act 2006*). Our equality schemes set out our objectives and timescales for achieving this. These are public documents and form part of our commitment to working in partnership with local communities to meet their needs. They are reviewed every 3 years.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

As part of our commitment to promoting equality, all functions and policies of the Service are assessed for the impact they have on sexual orientation, gender, disability, nationality and ethnicity, religion or belief and age. This process aims to ensure that none of our policies inadvertently discriminates on any of these grounds.

All new policies will be impact assessed in the development stage and amended as necessary to ensure they do not potentially discriminate against a particular group. Impact assessments can be viewed on the intranet.

### **Performance measurement - monitoring and standards**

Monitoring our workforce and the application of our equality and diversity policy helps us know and understand the extent to which we are achieving the desired outcome. Monitoring is the collection of statistical data to measure performance e.g. number of complaints received; number of Automated False Alarms; number of women in management positions; number of minority ethnic applicants for firefighting roles etc.



### Workforce Monitoring

It is a legal requirement to monitor the ethnicity of employees and job applicants (*Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000*). We also maintain information about the gender, disability and age of staff and job applicants. From 2007 we intend to monitor sexual orientation of staff as well as job applicants. We use this information to ensure staff of all groups are treated fairly throughout various employment processes, e.g. grievance handling, training opportunities, promotion, leaving the organisation.

Monitoring allows us to:

- highlight possible inequalities.
- investigate their underlying causes.
- remove any disadvantage or unfairness.
- identify, tackle and prevent discrimination.
- analyse how employment procedures and practices affect different groups.
- measure the diversity of our workforce.
- compare against peer groups and other comparable organisations
- assess the impact of positive action
- assess the positive outcomes of our policies for our employees and our communities

### Service Delivery Monitoring

As a public authority, we have a responsibility to monitor the impact of our services on different groups of people, e.g. by their ethnic group, gender or disability status. This will help us ensure that everyone has access to our services and that they are delivered in a way that is appropriate.

We will therefore monitor the age, ethnicity, gender, disability and religion or belief of service users at a time and in a way that is appropriate to the service they have received.

### Local Government Equality Standard (LGES)

The Authority is committed to improving performance by measuring progress against the LGES. This is a 5-stage standard which aims to help embed diversity into all aspects of the Service's work and monitor achievements.

### Review

This policy and supporting guidelines will be reviewed in the light of equality impact assessment findings and changes in legislation.

## GUIDELINES

This policy is supported by a number of guidelines relating to diversity, equality law and good practice. They are intended to help managers make the right decisions about diversity issues and give more detail, practical examples and FAQs on the different aspects of diversity. However all employees may find them useful in gaining a better awareness of diversity and equality.

Sexual Orientation Equality Guidelines  
Religion or Belief Equality Guidelines  
Gender Reassignment Equality Guidelines  
Age Equality Guidelines  
Nature of Discrimination Guidelines  
Positive Action Guidelines



## REFERENCE SOURCES

### Legislation / Regulation

Equal Pay Act 1970  
Sex Discrimination Act 1975  
Race Relations Act 1976  
Disability Discrimination Act 1995  
Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000  
Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003  
Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003  
Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003  
Employment Equality (Age Discrimination) Regulations 2006  
Work and Families Act 2006  
Equality Act 2006  
Employment Rights Act 1996 (and as amended 1999)

### Useful Links

[www.eoc.org.uk](http://www.eoc.org.uk) – gender and transsexual issues  
[www.cre.org.uk](http://www.cre.org.uk) – race & ethnicity  
[www.drc.org.uk](http://www.drc.org.uk) – disability  
[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk) – age, religion and belief and sexual orientation