



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

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

This policy and associated toolkit cover all employees, workers and volunteers of Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service. The term “colleagues” is used in this policy to apply to all of these. The principles of equality and inclusion in this policy also apply to members of the Fire Authority.

Version History

Version	Date	Comments
V1	31.8.11	Draft issued after initial colleague consultation
V2	30.9.11	Amended following further consultation
V3	12.12.11	Final draft after Head of Directorate meeting
V4	26.1.12	Final after approval by Policy & Finance Committee
V5	30.3.12	Renewed link to Equality and Inclusion Strategy
V 12	9.11.17	Mandatory and optional training added
V13	2.5.18	Remove ref to Positive about Disability group and update ref to strategy
V 14	16.08.22	Minor updates to language in policy.

CONTENTS

KEY PRINCIPLES
POLICY STATEMENT
DEFINITIONS
RESPONSIBILITIES
SUPPORT GROUPS
IMPLEMENTATION
LEGISLATION

Relevant documents referred to in this policy:

Professional Behaviour at Work Policy
Grievance Policy and procedure
Equality Impact Assessment Policy and Procedure
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Plan

KEY PRINCIPLES

- Equal opportunity is a legal right of every employee and job applicant.
- Colleagues and members of the public are entitled to be valued, treated with dignity, and respected as individuals.
- Delivery and decision-making from the Service will take account of differing needs for employees and in the community and plan to meet these.
- The Service believes that a workforce which is more representative of our communities in the long term will help us deliver excellence.
- Everyone is responsible for challenging prejudice and discrimination in our Service.
- Breaches of this policy may be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary procedures which could ultimately end in dismissal.

POLICY STATEMENT

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority recognises its legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and specifically under the public sector equality duty, for preventing unfair discrimination, advancing equal opportunity, and fostering good relations between diverse groups in our community. This means making sure that equality issues are considered as part of the routine, day to day activities and decision making of Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Authority values diversity in the community and in its workforce. It is committed to:

- having a workforce where every employee is valued and respected as an individual and are supported to give their personal best.

- providing a professional service to the public which takes account of differences between groups and individuals and responds to these appropriately and positively.

All forms of discrimination, including harassment and victimisation related to the following protected characteristics will not be tolerated.

- age
- disability including neurodiversity and mental health
- gender reassignment
- marital or civil partner status
- pregnancy and maternity
- race, ethnicity, colour, nationality, or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

All forms of discrimination will be avoided and actively considered with regards to decision-making. Forms of discrimination which will be opposed by the service include:

- pay and benefits
- terms and conditions of employment
- dealing with grievances and discipline
- dismissal
- redundancy
- leave for parents
- requests for flexible working
- selection for employment, promotion, training, or other developmental opportunities

All colleagues, regardless of role in the organisation, will have equality of opportunity and be treated consistently within the policies of the Service.

The Service commits to creating a working environment which is in line with its values: welcome, dignity and respect. All colleagues will be respected and valued, and instances of bullying, harassment and discrimination will be handled under Service protocol. Therefore, all colleagues and the Service will be held accountable for acts which do not align with this commitment.

To ensure that our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is upheld, every colleague must complete a yearly e-Learning to refresh their knowledge of the equality act, public sector equality duty and the reason we undertake Equality Impact Assessments.

Managers within the Service will make decisions about recruitment and selection, reward, terms and conditions, performance management, training, development, and progression based on individual ability, job requirements and consistent with the policies of the Service.

The Service will provide transparent employment policies and practices which have been assessed for equality impact (EQIAs), are clearly understood, and fairly implemented.

In delivering our services, members of the public will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their culture or background. We will assess the impact of our services on diverse groups and respond to their varied needs on a risk basis, engaging with them and providing services that are appropriate to them.

The Service believes that a diverse workforce will help achieve excellence and is committed to retaining and attracting colleagues from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures.

Concerns about breaches of this policy affecting colleagues should be raised with the appropriate line manager through the grievance procedure. Concerns raised by members of the public should be handled using the complaints procedure.

When appropriate, concerns about bullying or harassment related to the protected characteristics may be raised through the Professional Behaviour at Work informal resolution procedure.

DEFINITIONS

Equality - the principle that everyone should have equal opportunity in employment or 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 access to be achieved.

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

Protected Characteristics are -

age: refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g., 32-year-olds) or range of ages (e.g., 18 - 30-year-olds).

disability: a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

gender reassignment: process of transitioning from one gender to another.

marriage or civil partner status: marriage and civil partnerships are legally recognised unions between two people.

pregnancy: being pregnant or expecting a baby.

maternity: refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

race: refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

religion or belief: belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g., atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

sex: the assignment of male or female at birth. This is usually based on biological aspects, such as anatomy, chromosomes, and hormones.

sexual orientation: this refers to who you are attracted to and your sexual identity.

Neurodiversity – this represents the many ways of thinking, interpreting, and experiencing the world. This is often referred to in the context of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Asperger’s syndrome, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and several other variations of human cognition.

Direct Discrimination - when someone is treated **less favourably** than another because of a protected characteristic. This includes: -

Associative Discrimination – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic (but does not apply to pregnancy, maternity, or marriage/civil partnership.)

Perceptive Discrimination - direct discrimination against an individual because others **think** they have one of the protected characteristics (but does not apply to pregnancy, maternity, or marriage/civil partnership).

Indirect Discrimination – occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. In some circumstances indirect discrimination can be justified if it can be shown that it is a “proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.”

Harassment – a form of direct discrimination. Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the individual.

Victimisation - occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010 or were suspected of doing so.

Positive Action - a range of actions that aim to overcome or reduce disadvantages that people who share a protected characteristic experience.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Assistant Chief Fire Officer

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

Chief Officer Advisory Group (COAG)

- Manage the implementation of this policy and the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion plan.

Inclusion Steering Group

- Ensure ED&I objectives are being progressed through directorates and groups.
- Make decisions on ED&I priorities and raise ED&I issues with Chief Officers Advisory Group as needed.
- Provide leadership for improvement in ED&I.

Line Managers

- Ensure management decisions are objective, fair and not influenced by prejudice, favouritism, or any other irrelevant factors.
- Follow agreed employment policies and procedures.
- 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.
- Assess the equality impact (EQIAs) of policies and procedures, where necessary, to ensure that any potentially adverse outcomes are identified and mitigated where possible.

All Colleagues

- Challenge prejudice and unlawful discrimination at work, positively and politely.
- Follow the Service key values (see below) which support the Code of Ethics relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion and CFRS (Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service) One Team behaviours.
- Seek the advice of their manager if they become aware of potential unlawful discrimination.
- Adhere to this policy and follow appropriate guidance from the ED&I team.

SUPPORT GROUPS & NETWORKS

The following working groups exist to support continuous improvement of ED&I within the Service and to support colleagues.

- Inclusion Network
- Neurodiversity working group
- Female Operational working group
- Ethnicity working group
- Menopause working group
- Wellbeing working group
- Respect Champions working group

Our representative bodies also support our ED&I plans and have representatives on the Inclusion Network.

The Service is also a member of the following external networks which can provide information and support to colleagues.

Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) - This association works nationally with fire and rescue services and supporting agencies to enhance equality, diversity, and associated values. It has a particular focus on the needs of Asian communities and colleagues. Several regional and national development days and conferences are held each year to advance understanding of equality. Individual membership can also be applied for. See www.afsa.co.uk

WFS – Women in the Fire Service UK - Formed over 20 years ago, WFS aims to make the FRS a place where everyone can work, and compete, together professionally and harmoniously. Several training and development opportunities are available to both women and men through WFS. Again, individual membership can also be applied for. See [**Women in the Fire Service UK \(wfs.org.uk\)**](http://Women in the Fire Service UK (wfs.org.uk))

Enei – Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion – Through membership of this national network we can share and learn from the good practice of other employers in public and private sectors and access a range of advice, guidance, and development opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion plan is built into our strategy and IRMP planning every four year and is refreshed annually. It is part of the Fire Authority's overall plan for the Service and is supported by both senior managers and representative bodies.

Practising Values

Standards of behaviour expected of all colleagues are covered in the [Professional Behaviour Policy](#). In all dealings with colleagues, other agencies, and members of the public, we are expected to demonstrate the Service key values of **Welcome, Respect and Dignity** and display our One Team behaviours.

Work/Life Balance

Flexible working practices can help to attract and retain a diverse workforce. The Service operates several 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. See HR Policies on SharePoint for further details.

Positive Action

Where under-representation exists, suitable positive action measures will be considered to increase the diversity of the Service.

“Positive action” refers to a range of activities (e.g., promoting firefighting as a career which is inclusive of women by appropriate use of language and images in media) that aim to overcome or reduce disadvantage that people who share a protected characteristic experience.

When two applicants are equally qualified, there is limited provision in law to select or promote the under-represented candidate. However, the Service's policy is not to use this provision but to always select based on objective criteria.

Assessing Equality Impact

All Service functions, policies and practices are assessed for the impact they have on people who share a protected characteristic.

This assessment aims to ensure that none of our policies or practices unlawfully discriminates against groups because of a protected characteristic. It also helps the Service to pay “due regard” to the need to advance equal opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a certain protected characteristic and those who do not.

Training and Development

There are a range of training and development opportunities for colleagues and managers.

Our Equality Act eLearning module is mandatory for all colleagues to complete annually. It covers the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and why we complete EQIAs.

There are many other resources to allow colleagues to develop their knowledge and skills in applying the principles of equality and inclusion in all their interactions with the public and their colleagues.

There are optional modules in ED&I topics on our eLearning system and there are online events, videos and resources linked to from our Inclusion SharePoint page, which are regularly updated by the ED&I team.

In addition, the ED&I team work with the organisation to plan face-to-face sessions on topical aspects of ED&I.

Colleagues are encouraged to contact the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion team if they consider there is a need for additional ED&I training and to use the feedback mechanisms for the above courses and resources so training can be continually evaluated, reviewed, and improved.

Performance measurement - monitoring and standards

Monitoring our workforce and the application of our equality policy helps us understand how far we are achieving our objectives.

All job applicants are invited to declare their ethnicity, gender, age, disability status, sexual orientation and religion or belief, in confidence, when they request job information. This data is only available to the departments who handle it, such as recruitment and HR. Applicant data is not seen by the hiring managers or other colleagues.

Similar data for the whole workforce is asked for through the HR system— a self-service means of updating personal information on the HR database. It is maintained in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations.

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011), we have a responsibility to publish information relating to people who share a relevant protected characteristic who are affected by our policies and practices. To enable this to happen we monitor access to and impact of our services. This helps us ensure that those most at risk have access to appropriate services; that they are delivered in a way that has greatest impact and so helps reduce preventable deaths and injuries in fires or other emergencies.

LEGISLATION

Equality Act 2010

Public Sector Equality Duty