



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Equality & Diversity Plan

2006 - 2009



Introduction

The Service recognises the need for a coherent, strategic approach to equality issues, which is effective, appropriate, and provides continuous challenge. Our corporate equality plan will be built into existing mechanisms of strategic planning and performance management.

We will ensure equality and diversity issues are incorporated into business planning and delivery activities and so become part of the mainstream activity of the Service. Departments and individual managers need to build in to their day-to-day activity the commitment to equality for all people, acknowledging that for some the experience of injustice is a current reality.

Learning and development opportunities will be provided for all employees to enable them to fulfil the organisations commitment to equality, recognising that the choices they make everyday affect people's lives.

Achieving a position where our commitments are truly mainstreamed is a long-term process and will need sustained leadership, support and challenge. Our Corporate Equality Plan describes a vision for Equalities & Diversity activity in the Service to ensure Nottinghamshire is at the forefront of equalities practise in the British Fire Service. Through the development of progressive and flexible equality policies and procedures, also linking into the Regional Human Resources Workstream's, our aim is to ensure equalities & diversity becomes an integral part of the modernisation agenda.

Implicit in the statement is recognition of the major challenges involved in moving the equalities agenda forward. The plan seeks to create an underpinning direction through the change environment currently facing the service. It will provide a long-term direction to ensure Equalities & Diversity is mainstreamed across the whole Service, aligned with regional & local targets and priorities.

1.1 Equalities & Diversity Overview

Equality is not just about looking inward but as a public service provider, there are responsibilities to communicate with and involve all sections of the community in order to better establish need. Morally and legally we are required to deliver a fair and appropriate fire and rescue service to all members of our community in relation to their needs. We should consult and seek advice regularly from our communities that will be incorporated into the delivery of an inclusive and professional fire service.

The Government White Paper on Local Government reform makes reference to performance management within Local Authorities (including Fire and Rescue Authorities) and the consequences of failing to meet pre-set standards. The White Paper on the Fire and Rescue Service also heralds radical far reaching reforms. Alongside measures to facilitate more emphasis on Community Safety, focus will be on 'modern' management and leadership, including clarifying managerial prerogative through structural change. Strong emphasis and direction on equality and community representation is also anticipated, both in employment terms and at the service delivery level.

The Government's White Paper 'Our Fire and Rescue Service' set out a comprehensive programme of reform. Implementation of these reforms will form a vital role if the public is to have the Fire and Rescue Service it needs and deserves, and to achieve our overriding objective of saving lives. The publication of the National Framework has given guidance from central government of what the vision is of a modern Fire & Rescue Service.

Equality plays an integral part in that vision. It states in section 5.2 that 'Fire & Rescue Authorities must ensure that all members of staff are treated fairly and afforded equality of opportunity.' The statutory duty on

Fire and Rescue Authorities to promote fire safety through the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places more emphasis on community cohesion.

Our Corporate Equalities Plan needs to incorporate what is currently happening across the British Fire Service, linking primarily into the East Midlands Regional Equalities Strategy, along with other Corporate Plans. The plan aims to support, develop and, where appropriate, directly manage initiatives for change through the different aspects of the moderation agenda outline in the Framework document.

1.2 Legislation

Over the next few years the Fire Service will face some of its biggest challenges in terms of Equality and Diversity. Significant changes in employment legislation will continue to have a major impact. Equality legislation that focuses on Gender, Race, Disability & Religious Belief goes further than employment, but incorporates the delivery of Services. There is no doubt that along with changes in legislation, the Service will have to comply with general duties to promote Gender and Disability, just as it has been required to under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the introduction of Race Equality Schemes.

With the implementation of Article 13 of the European Union Directive, new legislation relating to sexual orientation, religion or belief has already been introduced. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Equal Pay Act 1970 will undergo further amendments in 2005. New legislation aimed at tackling ageism will be brought into force by October 1st 2006.

The recent amendments to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 have presented further challenges for the Service and not just from a Human Resources perspective but as a Service provider also. The removal of the exemption of the Fire Service from the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has the potential to impact across all departments but will have particular significance in relation to operational firefighting.

The Authority will need to ensure such changes are properly prepared for and implemented and that, thereafter, managers are properly equipped and supported to deal with the day-to-day implications of what amount to potentially significantly different working relationships with colleagues in a firefighting environment. The recent CFA / Disability rights Commission national guidance will support us in this.

The Employment Act 2002 introduced a range of statutory employment rights to be introduced with effect from April 2003 including Paternity and adoption leave, maternity leave and pay changes and flexible working. Employee expectations against the background of such legislative changes will need to be realistically prepared for.

The focus of what the employee needs from the employer and the balance of life/work interests is likely to change, for example, flexible working provisions are likely to have significant implications for the fire service. For the first time, statutory rights are given to parents to request variations to their working patterns so that they can work more flexibly. Changes may relate to hours, times and place of work. Employers will have a duty to consider requests seriously and will be able to refuse only where there is a clear business reason to do so.

Clearly, against the background of ongoing legislative change, the Service will need to adapt to review and revise existing policies and procedures. The Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan recommends changes to the current working patterns. Such changes will enable the Service to offer more flexibility for its workforce and in turn achieve individual work life balance and corporate agenda for change.

How We Achieve Diversity

2.1 Ad Hoc Equality Group

The Ad Hoc Equalities Group was established in 1999 to focus on a strategic vision within the equalities arena. Group members comprise of the Chairman and councillors of the Combined Fire Authority along with Senior Management and Union Representatives. The group's main aims are to develop policies and best practice across the Service which focus on equalities issues, plus monitor and review current procedures. The group will act as the steering group for the Equality & Diversity Strategy. Along with new governance arrangements, the Ad Hoc and Personnel Committees will champion equalities across a range of HR issues.

The Ad Hoc Equalities Panel is also responsible for reviewing, scrutiny & assessing the Equality & Diversity Strategy on a yearly basis. It will ensure the Authority undertakes continual consultation with community groups to ensure we achieve the Corporate Equality Plan.

2.2 Equality and Diversity Action Plan

The aims of this policy will be progressed through the Equality and Diversity Action Plan, which encompasses service delivery and employment issues, and is reviewed annually. The Ad Hoc Equality Group will oversee the Service's commitment to equality and diversity through the development of an action plan that is achievable and will describe the resources committed to this work.

The core aims of Equality and Diversity across the Service cover three key areas:

1. Ensure all members of the community are treated with equal fairness and respect and priority is placed on productive interaction with all communities to ensure the achievement of the Community Safety Strategy.
2. Increase the number of women, ethnic minority and disabled staff across the service thus creating a more diverse workforce.
3. Remove all forms of discrimination or unfair treatment across all levels of the service.

The main objectives of the Equality & Diversity Action plan are as follows:

2.3 Local Government Equality Standards

The Service is currently working through the equality standards for local government. Our aim is to achieve level five of the standard by March 2008. Systems will be developed to ensure the Service can assess itself against the Standard. We are committed to ensuring all adverse impact within policies, procedures and practices are removed. Through our Equality Impact Assessment process we aim to review all policies identifies as high priority in the next 12 months to ensure there are no adverse impacts on equality. Once this has been completed all new policies will undergo the process and current policies will be reviewed every three years.

To ensure the Service mainstreams equality & diversity across all strategic plans, process and policies all function heads and designated officers with responsibility for policies will:

- Received equality impact assessment training
- Equality impact assessed all strategic plans and undergo consultation with all community groups when necessary
- Identify functions, policies and procedures relevant to equality and categories them as either High, Medium or Low for equality impact assessment
- Over the next three years all functions, policies and procedures identified will undergo equality impact assessment
- All new functions, policies and procedures will undergo equality impact assessment
- Progress work identified in the Race Equality Scheme Action Plan
- Develop a Disability Equality Scheme, ensuring participation with people with disabilities throughout the process
- Implement equal pay audit to ensure staff receive equal pay for work of equal value
- Develop suite of local performance indicators for measurement of equalities
- Ensure all HR policies are reviewed for Age legislation implementation
- All Departments will be required to submit quarterly reports on progress made under the Equality & Diversity Action Plan to CFA via Ad Hoc Equalities Group

2.4 Cultural Change

Cultural change is imperative to ensure we mainstream the equalities agenda. The nationally set core values play a major part in providing our services and delivery of our Equalities and Diversity strategy. (please see appendix C) Our “mission” is about what we do and our “values” are about how we do it. Through our shared values, visions and goals, each individual within each Fire and Rescue Service understands what the service as a whole is striving to accomplish. Our values encourage us to unite in effective performance towards our common goal.

As a Service we will work with our employees to ensure a commitment and sign up to the values. A team culture which is open and inclusive at all time and at all levels is our aim. We are committed to preventing harassment and bullying at work. Harassment and bullying will be unacceptable as our culture will be founded on trust, not fear. Any person who feels that he or she has been subjected to such harassment may have recourse to the Services harassment and bullying procedure.

A staff audit will be undertaken to assess the organisational culture and identify any barriers that may exist to developing an appropriate discrimination free environment. We will then initiate a culture change programme, to run over 3 years with objectives outlines as to create a workplace which is fully engaged with the values, aims and objectives of the Service.

The Cultural Change Programme will ensure:

- Implement the Core Values across the Service
- Ensure the aims of the modernisation agenda are informed and understood by all employees.
- Ensure all employees feel values for their contribution.
- We will seek to engage opinion and feedback in the development of our objectives

The cultural change programme will be developed through a project management framework involving an 'elected member' as champion.

2.5 Equalities Training Programme

The Service is committed to raise awareness of equality issues through training. All current members of the Service will continue to receive training to raise awareness of equality and fairness issues and promote the Service's policy on eliminating harassment and bullying in the workplace. Managers will receive additional training to assist them in identifying and dealing with issues of fairness and equality. On-going training at station level will reiterate the equalities message and it will form part of induction for new employees.

Our Equalities Training Programmes aims over the next three years will be:

- Continue to roll out the fairness at work training programme.
- Fairness at work training programme to be included as part of induction programme for all new starters.
- Disability confident training cascaded to all station based personnel and administrators.
- Identify specific disability awareness training for assessment centre staff.
- Identify cultural awareness programme.
- Cascade sexual orientation and gender awareness.
- Ensure legislation updates are cascaded via Routine Orders and Intranet, hence ensuring managers and staff are aware of changes in employment law.

2.6 Recruitment and Selection

Our aim is for our workforce to reflect the diversity of the population of Nottinghamshire and we will achieve this by taking positive steps. As a major employer, we should be a positive example of good practice to other employers in the county.

We will ensure that practices and procedures reflect best practice. For example, person specifications will only contain criteria that are necessary for jobs. Where there is under representation of a particular group in an area of work, positive action may be taken to encourage applications. For example, the advert would invite people from under-represented groups to apply, and training may be provided in the skills needed for that type of employment. Where possible and practicable, workplace adjustments will be made to facilitate applicants with disabilities.

One of the Services primary aims is to continue to support and promote positive action initiatives that target under – represented groups.

To help us achieve this aim the Service will:

- Undertake positive action awareness sessions during recruitment campaigns.
- Explore the creation of a regional positive action team.
- Commence positive action with schools and colleges to actively encourage young women and minority ethnic individuals to look at the fire service as a possible career choice.
- Explore career development of under – representative groups.

As an employer we will also ensure workforce development incorporates Disability Discrimination Act amendments which has removed disability as a bar to entry and places new requirements on the Service to examine reasonable adjustments for Point of Entry Selection Tests.

To enable the Service achieve this we will:

- Ensure assessment centre personnel receive DDA awareness training.
- Equality impact assess all new procedures and policies which relate to workforce development

2.7 Employee Support Groups

The Service will encourage and support the development of, employee support groups for black and minority ethnic; women lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and disabled Employees. Union members are encouraged to participate with both the Fire Brigades Union and Unison's support groups. NFRS staff have access to the employee support groups based within Nottinghamshire County Council. However we aim to develop local and regional self support networks for under-representative groups within our Service. These groups, will also to assist in the development of policies and practices and develop recruitment and retention strategies to ensure equalities mainstreaming.

2.8 Work Life Balance

The Employment Act 2002 introduced a range of statutory employment rights to be introduced with effect from April 2003 including Paternity and adoption leave, maternity leave and pay changes and flexible working. Employee expectations against the background of such legislative changes will need to be realistically prepared for.

The focus of what the employee needs from the employer and the balance of life/work interests is likely to change, for example, flexible working provisions are likely to have significant implications for the fire service. For the first time, statutory rights are given to parents to request variations to their working patterns so that they can work more flexibly. Changes may relate to hours, times and place of work. Employers will have a duty to consider requests seriously and will be able to refuse only where there is a clear business reason to do so.

Any changes to current shift systems need to take into account all the different needs of all our workforce. Change will bring concern, as firefighters have adapted their family lives around current systems. The message sent across the organisation must be one of work-life balance and not necessary family-friendly policies as this sometimes brings false hope and claims of unfairness. Again changes to the culture, and

ensuring the workforce understand that work-life balance within the Fire & Rescue Service is about creating the opportunity for a suite of choices which meets the demands of a modern organisation.

To enable the Service achieve this we will:

- Review, develop and refine work-life balance policies researched in 2004/05 to support more efficient and flexible working
- Continue to promote part time, job share and flexible working for all staff in support of work-life balance and to continue to identify opportunities for application of part time working systems for operational staff
- Develop policy on flexible working options

2.9 Service Delivery & Community Cohesion

Community cohesion is important to the success of strategies and initiatives which aim to improve the quality of people's life. It is to a large extent built locally and to do this, local authorities and their partners should be prepared to invest in understanding their communities.

As a Service, we are working hard to develop local strategies to help improve the quality of life and the opportunities available to their communities. Community Safety is at the heart of the modern Fire & Rescue Service. Ensuring fire safety education reaches the whole of the region is essential in our aim to reduce fire deaths. Equality & Diversity plays an essential role in ensure barriers to communication are removed.

Research shows that those most likely to be at risk from and adversely affected by fire are those in the lower socio-economic groups. From an equality perspective, individuals who fall into these categories also, by default, may be from minority ethnic communities, elderly, and people with disabilities.

As a Service we have already taking positive steps to remove barriers. All stations have bi-lingual fire safety literature. We have a specialist development worker who works directly with minority ethnic communities. We have purchased emergency contact cards for the deaf, hard of hearing, visually impaired and also non English speaking communities. We are working in partnership with minority ethnic and disabled groups. Fire crews on stations are delivering community safety presentations to a variety of communities, plus undertaking Home Safety Checks.

Ensuring our workforce is equipped with the skills and resources to prevent institutional discrimination must also form part of any community safety strategy. Specialist skills such as bi-lingual or sign language should be recognised as they will assist in removing barriers to communication.

We are committed to providing quality services that are responsive and accessible to all. People who use our services are entitled to receive these free from discrimination and harassment. Managing diversity in service delivery is about providing appropriate services according to need, for all of our communities. The Service's Race Equality Scheme outlines how we will meet the needs of our minority ethnic communities. Over the next few months we will be producing our first Disability Equality Scheme which will ensure people with disabilities are involved in the development of key policies and procedures to remove barriers.

Over the next three years the Service will

- Further develop and enhance HSC process and link into wider community safety agenda and avoidable injuries
- Continue to establish links with the local minority ethnic community to generate interest and understanding of community safety
- Identify partners and the community, people at risk and develop interventions to reduce such risk

2.10 Information About Our Services

We are committed to making information about our services accessible by:

Using Plain English (language that is easily understood)

Providing appropriate translation and interpretation

Providing appropriate options for people with disabilities

We are committed to ensuring that all our communications use images and language, which promote equality of opportunity and good community relations and eliminate any unlawful discrimination.

2.11 Procurement

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue is committed to equality of opportunity in the provision of services and strives to ensure our services are equally accessible to everyone and appropriate to the differing needs of all sections of the community it serves.

Equality in service delivery concerns the adaptation of service provision to meet the diverse needs of different groups of people by ensuring the service is accessible, adequate and appropriate to the needs of all users. The Service aims to achieve a consistent approach to equality in the delivery of all its services. An important part of the Service's commitment to equality is to ensure all providers of Fire & Rescue Service's practice equal opportunities and that they are clear about the Services position on equality and are aware of the requirements placed upon them to adhere to the same policy.

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service takes a proactive approach to its obligations arising from Equal Opportunities legislation. It is essential that all organisations wishing to provide services on behalf of the Service are able to demonstrate that all reasonably practicable steps are taken to allow equal access and equal treatment in employment and service delivery for all. Failure to comply with this policy could make the Service, in some cases individuals, liable to legal action.

In order to ensure the Service meets its commitment to equality in procurement we will:

- Continue to promote equality of opportunity – outline commitment to Corporate Equalities Plan and Race Equality scheme to all contractors
- Collect evidence to ensure commitment to equalities via pre qualification questionnaire sent with every new contract.
- Incorporate a non discriminatory process for procurement of vehicles and equipment.

Policy on Race Equality

(incorporating the Race Equality Scheme)

Aim:

To create a diverse workforce which reflects our multicultural community, eradicate racial discrimination in the workplace and promote good race relations between racial groups.

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority 2nd Race Equality Scheme aims to demonstrate progress made across the general and specific duties, lessons learned and our aims over the next three years.

Our Key Race Equality Objectives are:

- To increase the number of minority ethnic firefighters (employees) within the service
- Eliminate all forms of racial discrimination throughout the Service
- Inform minority ethnic communities about the importance of community safety

Our second Race Equality Scheme will ensure that we continue to develop robust strategies that recognise and respond to the diverse and differing needs of our communities whilst delivering against Nottinghamshire & the City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authorities strategic priorities, particularly in terms of providing community reassurance and delivering respect.

Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority has recognised the needs of our diverse community and we aim to ensure that the scheme covers all of our minority ethnic communities, including those hard to reach groups such as gypsies and travellers, asylum seekers and refugees.

The Service will ensure that in carrying out its duties, minority ethnic employees & communities are protected from unlawful discrimination and treated equally. To help achieve this objective the Service will:

- Provide leadership to positively and proactively deal with race equality issues
- Ensure Fire Authority Members and Strategic Management Team and managers are aware of their responsibilities under the amended scheme
- Ensure policies identified as relevant to race equality are impact assessed within timescales set in the Race Equality Scheme Action Plan
- Ensure all policy owners received equality impact assessment training
- Submit quarterly reports on progress made under the Race Equality Action Plan to CFA via Ad Hoc Equalities Group
- Ensure monitoring for the number of house fires via ethnic classification and produce quarterly reports
- Continue to deliver community safety initiatives aimed at minority ethnic communities
- Continue to monitor racially motivated arson
- Continue to ensure all fire service publications are accessible to all sections of the community

- Continue to ensure all personnel continue to have access to the provision of Interpretation Services
- Develop performance indicators to measure issues relating to race
- To enable service users and excluded groups to participate in planning, making decisions and the monitoring of service provision through appropriate and relevant consulting mediums
- Ensure effectiveness of community safety message across minority ethnic communities
- Support, provide and promote initiatives and activities that target under-represented groups
- Continue to monitor, by reference to racial groups areas covered in the employment duty
- Develop monitoring system for training via ethnic classification
- Undertake cultural audit for internal perception of culture
- Continue training for all staff on issues relating to Equality and Diversity
- Develop regional policy on cultural and religious requirements
- Ensure procurement procedures have no adverse impact on racial equality
- To ensure that all contractors who deliver services on our behalf are made aware of their equality obligations and are monitored.

Legislation

The Stephen Lawrence enquiry, set by the Government in 1997 was tasked to 'inquire into the matters arising from the Death of Stephen Lawrence'. Although the findings of the report were predominately concerned with the police service it stressed that 'if racism is to be eliminated from our society there must be a co-ordinated effort to prevent its growth. It is incumbent upon every institution to examine their policies and practices to guard against disadvantaging any section in our communities'.

As part of its legislative response to these comments the Government placed a number of specific duties on public bodies to promote race equality in carrying out their functions and to avoid race discrimination before it arises. These provisions, set out in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRAA) which, as its name indicates amended and extended the Race Relations Act 1976 in respect of its application to public bodies.

The new general duty on public authorities to promote racial equality gave statutory force to the Lawrence Inquiries recommendations. It amended section 71 of the Race Relations Act. Section 71 imposed a general statutory duty, on local authorities, to :

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity; and
- Promote good race relations between persons of different racial groups.

Specific duties on employment

The specific duty relates to employment. Under section 5 (1) (2) and (3) of the Race Relations Act (Statutory Duties) Order 2001, specific duty requires the Authority to have in place arrangements for fulfilling, as soon as is reasonably practicable, monitoring, by reference to the racial groups to which they belong, in the following areas:

the number of –

- ◆ staff in post
- ◆ applicants for employment, training and promotion, from each such groups.
- ◆ those who receive training and those who don't.
- ◆ benefit or suffer detriment as a result of its performance assessment procedures;
- ◆ are involved on grievance procedures;
- ◆ are the subject of disciplinary procedures or
- ◆ cease employment with the Authority.

These figures will be publish annually.

Policy on Gender Equality

Aim:

To create a inclusive and open culture, free from sexism, where all genders are recognised for their contribution towards the Service.

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is committed to eliminating sex discrimination and enabling women and men to participate on an equal basis in social, cultural, and economic life. It is also committed to the principles of individuality and diversity. In pursuing these commitments the Service acknowledges its statutory duties under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (amended 1986), the Equal Pay Act 1975 (amended 1984) Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999, the Human Rights Act 1988 and the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

The Service will ensure that in carrying out its duties, women, men and transgendered people are protected from unlawful discrimination and treated equally. To help achieve this objective the Service will:

- Encourage women and men to participate equally in the decisions which affect their lives.
- Work in partnership to create safer environments for women, men and transgendered people.
- Value life skills developed in the home and the community.
- Support employees in making personal choices about their parenting, caring and work roles.
- Support and enable flexible working to help employees who wish to do so balance their lives inside and outside work.
- Improve development and progression opportunities for part-time workers.
- Ensure that female and male employees are paid the same for doing equal work and have the same service conditions apply.
- Ensure that employees are able to work in an environment that values them as individuals and is free from sexual harassment.
- Support, provide and promote initiatives and activities that target under-represented groups
- Address the under-representation of women in senior management positions by improving the working environment and investing in women's development programmes.
- Confront unlawful discrimination and promote sex equality through learning and development.
- Handle sensitively allegations of discrimination and harassment providing appropriate support to the alleged victim(s) in accordance with Service's policies and procedures.
- Ensure that recruitment and selection is carried out in accordance with corporate standards and best practice.
- Manage employees fairly and appropriately, ensuring there is no discrimination in terms of attitude, work allocations, promotion or other conditions of employment

- Provide appropriate development opportunities to assist with the implementation of this policy and ensure that employees are aware of their individual responsibilities and the organisations commitment.
- Ensure facilities and resources procured meet the needs of women, men and transgendered people.

Ensure that consultants, contractors, suppliers and partners including those in not for- profit sector are made aware of this policy and the expectation that their own policies will include as a minimum:

- § a commitment to equal opportunities
- § the name or position of the person responsible for the effective implementation of the policy.

Legislation

Under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 it is unlawful to treat a person less favorably than another is treated in similar circumstances on the grounds of sex. It is also unlawful to apply a requirement or condition, which discriminates against women because they are less able to comply with it than men are (or vice versa). The same protection applies to married people. It is also unlawful, in certain circumstances, to treat a person less favorably than another on the grounds that he or she intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.

The Equal Pay Act 1970 requires that men and women should be paid equally where they are carrying out the same job, work rated as equivalent under a job evaluation scheme or work of equal value.

The purpose of the Gender Recognition Act is to provide transsexual people with legal recognition in their acquired gender. Legal recognition will follow from the issue of a full gender recognition certificate by a Gender Recognition Panel. Before issuing a certificate, the Panel must be satisfied that the applicant:

- has, or has had, gender dysphoria,
- has lived in the acquired gender throughout the preceding two years, and
- intends to continue to live in the acquired gender until death.

Policy on Equality for People with Disabilities

Aim:

To ensure the removal of all barriers that prevent people with disabilities accessing our Service's plus making reasonable adjustments to assist with employment.

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is committed to eliminating discrimination against people with disabilities and ensuring that people with disabilities can participate fully as equal citizens. It is also committed to the principles of individuality and diversity. In pursuing these commitments the Service acknowledges its statutory duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 [DDA] and the Human Rights Act 1998 and its commitments arising from the adoption of the Employment Service's Code of Practice on the Employment of Disabled People and the Disability Symbol.

The social model of disability underpins the Service's commitments because it emphasises the dangers of exclusion, prejudice and devaluation of rights. The Service believes the barriers that exclude people with disabilities from full participation in society are the result of the way the social and built environments are constructed, and society's attitude towards people with disabilities.

The Service will ensure that in carrying out all of its duties people with disabilities are free from prejudice and discrimination in their everyday lives. To achieve this objective the Service has adopted the following principles:

- Develop a Disability Equality Scheme, ensuring participation with people with disabilities throughout the process
- All policies, procedures and practices will be reviewed to ensure they comply with the DDA.
- When developing policies and procedures, the Service will ensure that disabled employees and service users and their carers will be at the centre of the process and their specific needs considered and taken into account in any consultation process.
- Improvements in access to services will be informed by the views, creativity and expertise of people with disabilities.
- Barriers in the provision of joint services will be tackled through effective partnership working.
- Information will be available on request through a range of media and in a range of formats [including the provision of materials in symbols, large print, Braille, British Sign Language video or audio description] and alternatives to verbal communication will be offered so that people with disabilities enjoy equal access to information and services.
- Handle sensitively allegations of discrimination and harassment providing appropriate support to the alleged victim(s) in accordance with Service's policies and procedures.
- Support, provide and promote initiatives and activities that target under-represented groups
- Recruitment and selection will be carried out in accordance with corporate standards and best practice. Reasonable adjustments will be made so that applicants with disabilities and existing employees who are or become disabled are treated fairly and with proper consideration of their abilities.

- All reasonable efforts will be made to help employees who are or become disabled remain in the Service's employment.
- All employees will receive appropriate training in disability awareness and equality and will be made aware of their responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Employees will be managed fairly and appropriately, ensuring there is no discrimination in terms of attitude, work allocations, promotion, development opportunities, and conditions of employment or the work environment.
- Employees, in consultation with people with disabilities, will work to find solutions to disability issues to meet needs and deliver best value for users of the service.
- Consultants, contractors, suppliers and partners including those in the not-for-profit sectors will be made aware of this policy and the expectation that their own policies will include as a minimum:
 - § a commitment to equal opportunities
 - § the name or position of the person responsible for the effective implementation of the policy.

Legislation

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 makes it unlawful to treat people with disabilities less favourably because of a reason relating to their disability without objective justification. It also provides for a duty on an employer to make reasonable adjustments to working arrangements or premises if they place a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage to others.

Policy on Equality for Sexual Orientation

Aim:

To ensure appropriate provision of Service to lesbian, gay & bi-sexual (LGB) that is supportive of colleague and builds confidence in our service delivery to such groups within the community.

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is committed to eliminating homophobic prejudice and discrimination. It is also committed to the principles of individuality and diversity. In pursuing these commitments the Service acknowledges its statutory duties under the Human Rights Act 1998, Local Government Act 1988, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003.

The Service will ensure that in carrying out its duties lesbian, gay and bisexual people are given equal and unprejudiced treatment.

To achieve this objective the Service will:

- Ensure that policies, procedures and practices are not based on the assumption that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual.
- Acknowledge same sex relationships and ensure that, wherever possible, partners have equal access to the services and benefits available to heterosexual couples.
- Encourage the participation of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the decisions that affect their lives.
- Work with others to make communities safer and enable lesbian, gay and bisexual people to live without prejudice or fear.
- Confront unlawful discrimination and tackle prejudice through learning and development.
- Encourage a culture of openness about sexual orientation and ensure that lesbian, gay and bisexual employees have a safe and supportive environment in which to work.
- Ensure service users are aware that they do not have the right to refuse service from lesbian, gay and bisexual employees.
- Ensure that recruitment and selection is carried out in accordance with corporate standards and best practice.
- Provide appropriate development opportunities to assist with the implementation of this policy and ensure that employees are aware of their individual responsibilities and the organisations commitment.
- Handle sensitively allegations of discrimination and harassment providing appropriate support to the alleged victim(s) in accordance with Service's policies and procedures.
- Manage employees fairly and appropriately, ensuring there is no discrimination in terms of attitude, work allocations, promotion or other conditions of employment.
- Provide information and guidance to managers and employees in order to create a culture free from inappropriate language and negative behaviour relating to an individuals sexuality.

- Ensure that consultants, contractors, suppliers and partners including those in the not-for-profit sector are made aware of this policy and the expectation that their own policies will include as a minimum:
 - § a commitment to equal opportunities
 - § the name or position of the person responsible for the effective implementation of the policy.

Legislation

Under the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 it is unlawful to discriminate against workers because of sexual orientation.

These Regulations apply to employment – including recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals and vocational training. They make it unlawful on the grounds sexual orientation to:

- Discriminate directly against anyone - that is, to treat them less favourably than others because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation;
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone - that is, to apply a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages an individual because of their sexual orientation without a good reason
- Subject someone to harassment. Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- Victimise someone because they have made a complaint or allegation or have given evidence against someone else in relation to a complaint of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation;
- Discriminate against someone, in certain circumstances, after the working relationship has ended.

Exceptions may be made in very limited circumstances if there is a genuine occupational requirement for the worker to be of a particular sexual orientation in order to do the job.

Policy on Religion and Belief

Aim:

To ensure appropriate provision of Service to people whatever their faith, belief or religion, that is supportive of colleague and builds confidence in our service delivery to such groups within the community.

The Service will accordingly afford equal access to employment and services and will not discriminate on the grounds of religion. In order to achieve this objective, the Service will ensure that it is working towards the following principles:

- § When developing policies and procedures, the Service will ensure that employees and Faith communities are involved and their specific needs considered in any consultation processes;
- § Consideration is given to advertising and promoting services in the Faith media and in areas with high concentrations of black and minority ethnic people;
- § Service users are made clearly aware that they do not have the right to refuse service from particular members of employees on racial grounds;
- § Recruitment and selection is carried out with reference to NFRS standards, the CRE Code of Practice and general best practice;
- § Employees are given appropriate training in anti-discriminatory practices and are made aware of their responsibility for the implementation of this Policy;
- § Allegations of religious discrimination and harassment are handled with sensitivity, giving appropriate support to the alleged victim[s], within the context of the Service's policies and procedures;
- § Employees are managed fairly and appropriately, ensuring there is no discrimination on religious grounds in terms of work allocations, consultation and communication, development and training opportunities, granting of leave, or grievance and disciplinary matters;
- § Consultants, contractors, suppliers, and partners including those in the voluntary and community sectors are made aware of County Council policy on religious equality and the expectation that their own policies will include, as a minimum:
 - § a commitment to equal opportunities in recruitment, selection, training, transfer, promotion, discipline and dismissal;
 - § a statement that religious discrimination and harassment are disciplinary offences; and the name or position of the person responsible for the effective implementation of the policy.

Legislation

Under the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 it is unlawful to discriminate against workers because of religion or similar belief.

These Regulations apply to employment – including recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals and training. They make it unlawful on the grounds of religion or belief to

- Discriminate directly against anyone. That is, to treat them less favourably than others because of their religion or belief;
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone. That is, to apply a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular religion or belief without a good reason;
- Subject someone to harassment. Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them;
- Victimise someone because they have made a complaint or allegation or have given evidence against someone else in relation to a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief;
- Discriminate against someone in some circumstances after the working relationship has ended.

Exceptions may be made in very limited circumstances if there is a genuine occupational requirement for the worker to be of a particular religion or belief in order to do the job.

Priorities for Eliminating Age Discrimination

Aim:

To provide a Service that encompasses all age groups within the workforce and community that effectively meets their needs without discrimination.

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is committed to eliminating age discrimination.

- § We will do all we can to promote greater social inclusion for people of all ages.
- § We will develop the right conditions for our employees of all ages to develop and contribute.
- § We will include younger and older people in drawing up plans and making decisions.
- § We will support younger people's and older people's interest groups and make special efforts to include hard to reach groups.
- § Services will be provided on the basis of need, regardless of age.
- § We will work with partners in other organisations to improve our effectiveness in promoting equality and valuing diversity.
- § We will ensure that consultants, contractors, suppliers and partners [including those in the voluntary sector] are made aware of this policy and the expectation that their own policies will include as a minimum:
 - a commitment to equal opportunities
 - the name or position of the person responsible for the effective implementation of the policy.
- § We will continue to improve how we work towards eliminating age discrimination.
- § We acknowledge that older and younger workers may face stereotypes about their capabilities and prospects
- § Age stereotypes diminish choice for individuals and lead to ineffective use of people in the organisation
- § Age does not equate to physical or mental ability and is a poor predictor of performance
- § Any different treatment must be openly justifiable on other objective criteria
- § The Service will apply these principles to all employment policies, practices and decisions applied to the employees of the Service. This includes recruitment, selection, training, promotion, reward, retirement, redundancy, transfer and career development.
- § We will also adopt the Government's Code of Practice on Age Diversity in Employment.

Legislation

New legislation against discrimination on the grounds of age comes into force in October 2006.

These regulations apply to all employers, private and public sector vocational training providers, trade unions, professional organisations, employer organisations and trustees and managers of occupational pension schemes. The regulations cover recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals and training. They do not cover the provision of goods and services.

The regulations make it unlawful on the grounds of age to:

- discriminate directly against anyone – that is, to treat them less favourably than others because of their age – unless objectively justified
- discriminate indirectly against anyone – that is, to apply a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular age unless it can be objectively justified
- subject someone to harassment. Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them having regard to all the circumstances including the perception of the victim
- victimise someone because they have made or intend to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on grounds of age
- discriminate against someone, in certain circumstances, after the working relationship has ended.

Employers could be responsible for the acts of employees who discriminate on grounds of age.

Upper age limits on unfair dismissal and redundancy will be removed.

There will be a national default retirement age of 65, making compulsory retirement below 65 unlawful unless objectively justified.

Employees will have the right to request to work beyond 65 or any other retirement age set by the company. The employer has a duty to consider such requests.

DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

We are committed to developing, implementing and reviewing our policy in consultation with trade unions, and representatives of groups who are under-represented in the workforce and community organisations. A review of this policy will take place on a yearly basis.

TARGETS AND MONITORING

We recognise that working towards equality and diversity involves setting specific measurable and realistic targets. In addition to using targets required to attain nationally recognised standards we will use Best Value indicators and locally agreed targets to assess their progress. These targets will be set and monitored by us each year and reviewed regularly. The targets and the results of monitoring and any subsequent actions will be reported to the Ad Hoc Equality Group and will be made available to the public.

In addition to monitoring all departments will be required to submit quarterly reports on progress made under the Equality & Diversity Action Plan to CFA via Ad Hoc Equalities Group.

EQUALITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

To successfully tackle inequality the Service recognises that it needs to develop and maintain good relationships with others, which means gaining the trust and confidence of those it is seeking to work with and serve both now and in the future.

Through its participation in countywide and local strategic partnerships the Service will ensure that tackling discrimination is included in any plans to improve services in local communities and develop a vision for the future. The Service recognises that a different approach may be required to engage successfully those members of local communities who are from minority backgrounds to ensure that their needs and aspirations are properly taken into account and addressed as part of community planning processes.

CONSULTATION

As well as working in partnership within localities the Service recognises that if it is to provide an appropriate and professional service to all members of the community it needs to make changes internally. To achieve this, the Service will consult with relevant organisations that work with people from minority backgrounds (e.g. race and ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation) when producing new policies and procedures. By this we will aim to help combat the institutional processes that often inadvertently lead to discrimination.

PUBLICATION

The Equality and Diversity Strategy will be publicly available on the website, via CD ROM and on hardcopy on request. The results of the monitoring, assessments and consultations will be published annually on the website and will be available in alternative formats on request.

Appendix A

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2005-2008

PRIMARY AIMS

1. CORPORATE EQUALITIES OBJECTIVES
2. EQUALITIES TRAINING PROGRAMME
3. RECRUITMENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
4. WORK LIFE BALANCE
5. SERVICE DELIVERY
6. PROCUREMENT

PRIMARY AIM 1: CORPORATE EQUALITIES OBJECTIVES

Ref	Action	Reason	Lead Resource	Targets
CEO 1	Mainstream equality & diversity issues across all strategic plans, processes and policies	RRAA 2000 BVPI 2a&b DED 2006	All policy holders	Identify polices relevant by Oct 2006
CEO 2	Identify functions, polices and procedures relevant to equality and categories them as either High, Medium or Low for equality impact assessment	RRAA 2000 BVPI 2a&b DED 2006	All policy holders	Identify polices relevant by Oct 2006
CEO 3	Continue work towards equality standards for local government	FRNF 5.16 BVPI 2a&b RES 4,5,6,7,21	Equalities Officer	Review progress towards level 3 Sept 2006
CEO 4	Progress work identified in the Race Equality Scheme Action Plan	FRNF 5.16 BVPI 2a&b RES	Equalities Officer	Review process via quarterly reports to the Ad Hoc Equalities Group
CEO 5	Develop a Disability Equality Scheme, ensuring participation with people with disabilities throughout the process	FRNF 5.16 DDA 1995 DED 2006	Equalities officer	Scheme published by End of Nov 2006
CEO 6	Implement Cultural Change Programme	NFRF 5.16 RES 19	Equalities Officer	Review Progress Dec 2006
CEO 7	Continue to explore and secure funding for opportunities to develop initiatives to promote equality & diversity	CORP 02 HRS BP 04/05	Marketing & Sponsorship Officer	Review Sept 2006
CEO 8	Develop suite of local performance indicators for measurement of equalities	BVPI 2a&b RES 14	Information Services / Safety Services	Indicators identified Sept 2006
CEO 10	Ensure all HR policies are reviewed for Age legislation implementation	BVPI 2a	HR	Policies identified and reviewed by Sept 06

PRIMARY AIM 2: EQUALITIES TRAINING PROGRAMME

Ref	Action	Reason	Lead Resource	Targets
ET 1	All personnel to attend ongoing equality & diversity training	FRNF 5.16	SDC / External Training Providers	Fairness at Work course completed Oct 06
ET 2	Ensure legislation updates are cascaded via Routine Orders and Intranet		Equalities Officer	Ongoing
ET 3	Review harassment policy & procedures	CORP 02 HRS BP 04/05	Personnel / Safety Services	Reviewed policy in place Sept 2006

PRIMARY AIM 3: RECRUITMENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Ref	Action	Reason	Lead Resource	Targets
RWD 1	Support and promote positive action initiatives that target under – represented groups	FRNF 5.15 RRAA 2000 SDA 1975 DDA 1995	Equalities Officer / Training & Development Manager	Review progress Dec 2006
RWD 2	Ensure workforce development incorporates new DDA requirements and examines reasonable adjustments for POEST	DDA 1995 FRNF 5.20 CORP 2 D4	Equalities Officer / Training & Development Manager	DDA awareness incorporated into ADC staff training by Sept 2006
RWD 3	Contribute to the development of competencies in the area of equalities	FRNF 6.7 CORP 2	Training & Development Manager	Competencies identified by Sept 2006

PRIMARY AIM 4: WORK LIFE BALANCE

Ref	Action	Reason	Lead Resource	Targets
WLB 1	Review, develop and refine work-life balance polices researched in 2004/05 to support more efficient and flexible working	FRNF 5.4 CORP 02 HRS HRBP 2	Personnel	Review Dec 2006
WLB 2	Continue to promote part time, job share and flexible working for all staff in support of work-life balance and to continue to identify opportunities for application of part time working systems for operational staff	FRNF 5.4 HRS HRBP 2	Safety Service	Review Dec 2006

PRIMARY AIM 5: SERVICE DELIVERY

Ref	Action	Reason	Lead Resource	Targets
SD 1	Further develop and enhance HSC process and link into wider community safety agenda and avoidable injuries	NFRS Vision IRMP 1.1 CORP 1 FRNF 1.16	Community Safety	Quarterly Progress reports to Ad Hoc Equalities
SD 2	Continue to establish links with the local minority ethnic community to generate interest and understanding of community safety	NFRS Vision IRMP 05/06 1.3 & 1.5 FRNF 1.16 RES 12	BME Development Worker	Quarterly Progress reports to Ad Hoc Equalities
SD 3	Identify partners and the community, people at risk and develop interventions to reduce such risk	NFRS Vision IRMP 05/06 1.3 & 1.5 FRNF 1.11 RES 13	BV Partnerships review / External Partners	Quarterly Progress reports to Ad Hoc Equalities

PRIMARY AIM 6: PROCUREMENT

Ref	Action	Reason	Lead Resource	Targets
P 1	Ensure procurement procedures have no adverse impact on equality	RRAA 2000 DED 2006 BVPI 2a&b RES 23	Estates Manager	Quarterly Progress reports to Ad Hoc Equalities
P 2	Continue to promote equality of opportunity – outline commitment to Corporate Equalities Plan and Race Equality scheme to all contractors	RRAA 2000 DED 2006 BVPI 2a&b RES 23	Estates Manager	Quarterly Progress reports to Ad Hoc Equalities
P 3	Collect evidence to ensure commitment to equalities via pre qualification questionnaire sent with every new contract.	RRAA 2000 DED 2006 BVPI 2a&b RES 23	Estates Manager	Quarterly Progress reports to Ad Hoc Equalities
P 4	Incorporate a non discriminatory process for procurement of vehicles and equipment.	RRAA 2000 DED 2006 BVPI 2a&b RES 23	Transport Manager	Quarterly Progress reports to Ad Hoc Equalities

APPENDIX B

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AUTHORITY

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS AT WORK

POLICY STATEMENT

The Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is a community service and is committed to ensuring equality and fairness in employment and to giving a high level of service to all people living in and visitors to the area.

Our aim and commitment is to ensure no person whether an applicant for employment, employee or member of the community receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, marital status, having dependants, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, trade union activity, disability, age or any other factors.

All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and consideration at work. This extends to the right to work in a safe and healthy environment free from harassment, bullying, discrimination or intimidation either directly or indirectly by other employees.

It is our aim to give everyone an equal chance to develop and fulfil their potential. We value the contribution each person can make to the organisation. We believe that treating people fairly is right and makes good business sense.

The Service is committed to the implementation of this Policy and will actively pursue practices designed to promote Equality and Diversity and to eliminate bullying, harassment and direct or indirect discriminatory behaviour, language or attitude.

The overall responsibility for the Policy lies with the Chief Fire Officer/Authority, however all staff are expected to comply with the Policy and to act in accordance with its objectives so as to remove any barriers to equality and fairness.

Any act of discrimination by employees or any failure to comply with the terms of the Policy may result in disciplinary action which could result in dismissal.

APPENDIX C

JOINT STATEMENT ON HARASSMENT & BULLYING

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority, Management and the Representative Bodies are committed to promoting an environment where all personnel can work without fear of being intimidated, harassed or bullied. We are opposed to any conduct which causes distress and undermines the values or dignity of employees.

To address workplace harassment an extensive training package on awareness has taken place and continues to be rolled out. This has resulted in the expectation that all members of the Service fully understand what is acceptable behaviour or inappropriate behaviour.

Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect at work. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in the Service. Establishing a culture that values the right of individuals to be treated fairly and with dignity at work, necessarily entails a responsibility to ensure that behaviour which impinges on these rights will be addressed by the Service.

Harassment at work is defined as any unwanted behaviour that creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating working environment. Harassment is clearly defined under laws covering discrimination and harassment. Intentional harassment is a criminal offence under the Criminal Justice Order Act 1994, but it does not have to be intentional for a charge to be brought under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. The Service will also pursue allegations of alleged harassment outside the workplace which involve its own employees.

Therefore the representative bodies, management and the Authority are committed to endorse the principles of the Service's Harassment & Bullying Policy. We will address and endeavour to eliminate harassment and bullying at work by:-

- a) Promoting a positive working environment where everyone treats each other with respect.
- b) Ensuring allegations of harassment and bullying are fully investigated
- c) Use of the disciplinary procedure where appropriate
- d) Providing access to confidential support and counselling services.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE WILL STRIVE TO CREATE A WORKPLACE FREE FROM HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

Signed
Authority
FBU
FOA

Management
RFU
UNISON

APPENDIX D

Core Values

We value...

- Service to the community
- People
- Diversity
- Improvement

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

We value service to the community by...

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

PEOPLE

We value all our employees by practising and promoting...

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, Integrity and mutual trust
- Personal development
- Co-operative and inclusive working

DIVERSITY

We value diversity in the service and the community by...

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

IMPROVEMENT

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