



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority  
Human Resources Committee

# **PROMOTION OF EQUALITY AT NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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**Agenda Item No:**

**Date:** 20 March 2009

**Purpose of Report:**

To seek approval from Members for an additional non-uniformed post within the equality and diversity function.

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The new national Equality and Diversity Strategy requires that by 2013:
- A minimum of 15% (18% stretch target) of new entrants to the operational sector are to be women; and
  - Recruitment of ethnic minority staff across the whole organisation is to be at the same percentage (2-5% above is the stretch target) as the minority ethnic representation in the local working population
- 1.2 Current figures demonstrate that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's workforce currently consists of;
- |                              |       |
|------------------------------|-------|
| • Female Firefighters        | 2.67% |
| • Staff from BME Communities | 3.73% |
- 1.3 Following discussions around a long-term approach to positive action at the first Equalities Action Group meeting on 17 June 2008, it was decided to investigate the possibility of using part of the LPSA grant to fund posts in order to move this aspect of the equalities agenda forward.
- 1.4 On 10 November the Chief Fire Officer and Strategic Management Team (SMT) colleagues agreed to convert a vacant Watch Manager post in Fire Protection to a non-uniformed post. This will be reported to Human Resources Committee at a future meeting as part of the post conversion reporting process. SMT also agreed to support the following business case for an additional non-uniformed post to support the Equality and Diversity Officer in tackling both employment-related and wider corporate issues relating to equality.
- 1.5 Alongside high profile recruitment targets sits the organisational target of achieving level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. The service is currently self-assessed at level 2 and needs to make considerable progress at all levels in the organisation in order to make any impact. SMT is making and demonstrating its commitment to the agenda. This now needs to be cascaded down through departments in order to make progress at grass roots level.

## 2. REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to HR Committee regarding the resourcing of the equality and diversity function in order to ensure that NFRS makes as much progress as possible in this area over the next five years.
- 2.2 The Job Description of the Equality and Diversity Officer is extensive, ranging from ensuring a strategic overview of the Service's equality and diversity agenda to the co-ordination of routine administrative duties. The role is currently a stand-alone post having sole or main responsibility for all aspects of equality and diversity in NFRS. Expansion of the E+D function would allow the Equality and Diversity Officer to prioritise and focus upon the strategic aims of the Service. For instance, working towards achievement of Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local

Government (please see Appendix A) as well as responding to the CLG Equality and Diversity Strategy.

2.3 Increased funding for those FRSs who commit to stretched targets will be offered—18% women firefighter recruits and 2-5% above the local population for BME recruits. The Service will need to put considerable effort into achieving and being seen to try and achieve these targets.

2.4 NFRS is keen to commit to these stretch targets because;

- It will push the organisation to work harder to change the make-up of applicants and recruits
- They will demonstrate that NFRS is highly committed to changing the diversity of its workforce

### Current Campaign

2.5 In order to resource our efforts to increase the proportion of people from minority groups joining the Service SMT have provided funding to develop a positive action strategy. In addition to this, Response facilitated the secondment of a Firefighter to run a project (Recruitment Awareness Events/Advertising). Administrative support for positive action activity and mainstream recruitment is also being funded by HR. Both of these posts have been essential to the success of positive action/recruitment awareness events. Duties have included;

- negotiating costs of advertising space with advertisers
- agreeing and amending artwork
- producing and co-ordinating content for the new recruitment micro website
- forging working relationships with new long-term partners; community radio stations, BME forums, media agencies
- sending out mail shots of posters/postcards
- organising attendance of NFRS staff at gyms, leisure centres, festivals and other recruitment events
- Organising recruitment awareness events on station
- Producing a new recruitment information pack for attendees
- Administrative support in order to achieve the above

2.6 The above activity has led to a certain level of success in attracting a wider range of applicants.

<b>Attendants of awareness days</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
273 People	
24 Women	8.79%
54 BME	19.78%
<b>Application Requests</b>	
1278 People	
99 Women	7.75%
128 BME	10.02%
<b>Combined Total</b>	
1551 People	
123 Women	7.93%
182 BME	11.73

2.7 Although these figures are far from being converted to operational firefighters, it does demonstrate that greater resources to advertise in a more strategic way will enable us to attract a greater diversity of applicants. This has been achieved through a concentrated campaign over a short period of time.

## **Future Challenges**

2.8 In order to meet these significant challenges, NFRS needs to commit resources to tackling these issues through the implementation of a longer-term strategy. The service has particular problems attracting people from Asian Communities. The following actions are required in order to engage more effectively with these groups;

- holding consultation events
- attending festivals/events
- arranging positive action events

2.9 Engagement with girls and women is also a huge challenge. The following are required in order to begin tackling this particular issue;

- Female Firefighter Role models in schools presenting to young children
- careers advice for teenagers
- Promotions at women's sports clubs/events, gyms, parent/toddler groups, leisure centres, job centres etc

2.10 Other activities would include;

- All-year-round engagement with schools, community centres, careers advice (connexions, JC + etc), colleges, universities.
- Become a link with some colleges offering the public sector/emergency services courses. Gap year possibilities/Shadowing schemes
- Possible development of a trainee/apprenticeship programme for 15-18 year olds. This could be developed in partnership with Risk Reduction in order to address over-lapping equalities objectives.
- Attending Job/careers fairs.
- Developing long-term effective partnerships with local communities alongside Community Safety
- General promotion of the service and the roles we can offer
- Management of promotional material; artwork, adverts, leafleting, posters etc.
- organising consultation (on policy/strategy) events and positive action events (Venues, publicity, artwork, food/drink, contacting attendees, circulating relevant paperwork),
- undertaking research, chasing monitoring information, reminders for EIAs, providing admin support for employee groups etc.
- running small projects
- Providing briefings/Learning and Development sessions to employees
- setting up and running employee engagement groups

- 2.11 The Equality Framework for Local Government (New name for the Equality Standard) and Public Sector Duties also require extensive audit trails to demonstrate work undertaken and progress made. These need to be properly administered.
- 2.12 In addition to the above challenges the service has other issues in relation to culture change, particularly with regards to managing difference on stations. This is pertinent at a time when the organisation is working hard to attract people from different backgrounds to the service. If we are successful in recruiting but then fail to retain we will have ultimately failed. In addition to general equality and diversity training, more focus on management development around at Watch Manager level on an ongoing basis may be required to make any significant impact. Avon Fire and Rescue Service has begun to address this through a comprehensive Development Programme for Watch and Station Managers. The Programme is not only aimed at management strategies but aims to challenge the way people think as well as how they act and behave in the workplace.
- 2.13 By converting a Watch Manager post to a non-uniformed equality and diversity post, the Chief Fire Officer has shown his commitment to the equality and diversity agenda, however, given the challenges listed in above in Paragraphs 2.8 – 2.10, it is clear that if the Service wishes to achieve their ambitions, further resources will be required. An assessment of the work required indicates that one further post would help the Service meet expectations. This would increase the staff associated with the Equality and Diversity Department from one to three.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The job description for the additional non-uniformed post is yet to go through the job evaluation process, though it is anticipated that this will come out in the Grade 5 range (£21,412 - £26,067, plus oncosts).
- 3.2 Funding for the initial equality and diversity post has come from the release of finance from a uniform Watch Manager post. The residual amount along with revenue remaining from the previous year's anticipated pay award will fully meet the total costs. These amounts have been built into the 2009-2010 budget previously approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority.

#### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The temporary addition of both an Equalities Assistant and the regional recruitment Administrator has produced a significant increase in the number of under-represented potential recruits to NFRS. In order for this to be sustained these appointments will be required for all the reasons identified above. The personnel implications for these appointments mean that the E&D officers JD would need to be updated to include the line management of personnel. Although the current JD does not include line management functions it is unlikely to attract an upgrade as the post is already at an 8. Some form of management training may be required for the current post holder but that will be dealt with as part of his PDR process.
- 4.2 The draft sample job descriptions for the new posts are attached (Appendix B) and will require evaluation.

#### **5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An equality impact assessment is not required. This paper makes proposals to improve the resourcing of the equalities agenda.

#### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The legal implications arising from this report are commensurate with the appointment of a new member of staff.

#### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

If the Service does not invest adequately enough in the Equalities agenda it will fail to make sufficient impact on the new targets set by CLG through the Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018 and will not reach level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by 2009. There is also a risk that the significant early progress of attracting underrepresented groups to NFRS will be stunted.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members agree:

- 9.1 One additional non-uniformed post within the Equality and Diversity function
- 9.2 Flexibility in terms of uniformed support for equalities work, plus a budget for overtime to support this (yet to be determined).

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

Frank Swann  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT EQUALITY STANDARD (Level 3)**

### **3.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment**

**3.1.1 Ensure consistency of Corporate Equality Scheme with statutory equality schemes**

**3.1.2 Develop a system and timetable for reporting the results of impact assessments**

**3.1.3 Ensure that all departments and service areas set targets based on equality objectives devised through completed impact assessments and participation of designated community, staff and stakeholder groups**

**3.1.4 Equality objectives and targets for sexual orientation, age, religion and belief to be set by March 2009**

**3.1.5 Establish corporate guidelines for information gathering and equality monitoring**

**3.1.6 Seek agreement on equality targets with designated community stakeholders and local partners**

**3.1.7 Establish mechanisms for ensuring that equality targets are delivered by contractors through contract management**

**3.1.8 Ensure completion of equality action plans at department and service level incorporating performance indicators**

**3.1.9 Adopt where appropriate national targets/performance indicators as prescribed by Government departments or by the Audit Commission**

**3.1.10 Implement systems for reviewing progress and revising the Corporate Equality Scheme and departmental action plans**

**3.1.11 Members and senior officers to endorse action plans as appropriate**

**3.1.12 Link action planning to performance management and Best Value processes**

**3.1.13 Ensure that action on achieving targets has started**



**3.1.14 Ensure that progress has been verified through self-assessment, scrutiny and audit and have been validated externally through an accredited assessor**

## **3.2 Community Engagement and Accountability**

**3.2.1 Develop a strategy for all designated community, staff and stakeholder groups to participate in the development of equality objectives, service design and employment practice**

**3.2.2 Make all service level and employment objectives and targets available for consultation and scrutiny**

**3.2.3 Make provision of language services appropriate to designated consultation and scrutiny groups**

**3.2.4 Consultation is systematically built into equality impact assessment, self-assessment and the equality planning process**

**3.2.5 Involve designated community, staff and stakeholder groups with scrutiny procedures**

**3.2.6 Consultation on equality to be linked with the continuing development of community strategies**

## **3.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care**

**3.3.1 Equality objectives and targets developed within each department/service area for race, gender and disability based on completed impact assessments**

**3.3.2 Equality objectives and targets developed within each department/service area for sexual orientation, religion and belief and age by March 2009**

**3.3.3 Service plans to specifically address the importance of barriers, accessibility and reasonable adjustment in the provision of services**

**3.3.4 Allocation of appropriate resources to achieve targets**

**3.3.5 Establish structures of responsibility at departmental and service level to progress action plans**

**3.3.6 Set timetable within action plans for creating/adapting information and monitoring systems within service areas**

**3.3.7 For agencies delivering services on behalf of the local authority, include within contracts a requirement to deliver an effective and appropriate service, fairly and without unlawful**

**3.3.8 Establish monitoring of contracts to secure equal employment and equal service delivery targets**

**3.3.9 Start action on departmental and service area targets**

## **3.4 Employment and Training**

**3.4.1 Set employment equality targets for recruitment, staff retention, work force profiles for race, gender and disability**

**3.4.2 Set employment equality targets for work force profiles for sexual orientation, religion or belief and age according to available data**

**3.4.3 Conduct an equal pay review and plan for equal pay adjustment**

**3.4.4 Establish that policies and procedures associated with equality are part of staff handbook and are understood by staff**

**3.4.5 Establish a system of guidance and training on relevant equality issues to short-listing panels and interviewers**

**3.4.6 Ensure that staff and members are aware of action plans and the implications for services and employment**

**3.4.7 Provide training for managers on the implementation of the Standard with contractors and partners**

**3.4.8 Appraise competency/behaviours to ensure that managers and staff are capable of implementing the Equality Standard, including the new strands of sexual orientation, religion or belief and age**

**3.4.9 Provide training for all staff on the detailed implementation of the Equality Standard including action plans and updates on legal and other developments**

**3.4.10 Ensure that Local Government Workforce Strategies address equality issues**

**3.4.11 Build equality objectives and targets into management appraisal mechanisms**

**3.4.12 Provide information and appropriate training on action plans to support scrutiny process**

**3.4.13 Start action on all employment and pay targets**



## **Specific health and safety responsibilities**

10. In conjunction with the Service Health and Safety Adviser ensure the relationship between equality and diversity and occupational safety and health is considered and that Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service discharges its duty of care in both respects

## **General Responsibilities**

1. You must take reasonable care for your own health and safety and that of other persons who may be affected by your work activities.

You must co-operate with Nottinghamshire's Fire and Rescue Service's attempts to comply with health and safety legislation. Where appropriate you must safeguard the health and safety of all persons affected by the work activities you supervise at any premises you have control over.

You must work in the safe manner in which you have been trained and instructed and advise your line manager of any health and safety problems you become aware of.

You should familiarise yourself with the contents of the Service's Written Safety Policy.

2. To keep up to date with current practice, undertake training and Continuous Professional Development as required.
3. To take proper care in handling, operation and safeguarding of any equipment, vehicles or appliance, used or issued by the Service or provided or issued by a third party for individual or collective use in the performance of the postholder's duties.
4. To uphold the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's Fairness at Work and Equal Opportunities policies and practices.
5. To promote and deliver fair and quality services that are sensitive and responsive to customers.
6. Where appropriate you will work with computer and new technologies and associated systems as required.
7. Compliance with computer security measures to protect against unauthorised access to, alteration or disclosure.
8. Any other duties which may reasonably be regarded as within the nature of the duties, responsibilities and grade of the post as defined, subject to the proviso that normally any significant changes of a permanent nature should be incorporated into the job description in specific terms.

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**Job Title:** Equality Development Officer

**Grade:** To be determined

Evidence Codes	
AF	Application form
JRT	Job related test
I	Interview
D	Documentation
R	Reference

CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	SOURCE OF EVIDENCE
<b>Experience</b>	Experience of working in a customer-facing environment		AF/I
		Experience of working in a recruitment setting	AF/I
		Experience of working with young people	AF/I
	Experience in running projects and co-ordinating events		AF/I/D
	Experience of collaborative working with external agencies		AF
		Experience of delivering equalities training	AF
<b>Skills</b>	Ability to communicate effectively with people at all levels internally and externally		AF/I
	Ability to use Outlook (calendar and email), Word, Excel and web browsers in order to manage work and admin		AF/I

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>ESSENTIAL</b>	<b>DESIRABLE</b>	<b>SOURCE OF EVIDENCE</b>
	Ability to forge and manage relationships with suppliers, partners, colleagues and members of the public		I
	Ability to communicate effectively and accurately in writing		JRT
	Ability to deal with difficult issues in a constructive, confidential and sensitive manner		I
	Ability to think creatively		I/JRT
	Ability to analyse and interpret statistical data		JRT
<b>Knowledge &amp; Qualification</b>	An understanding of the public sector's duty to promote equality		I
	An understanding of positive action provisions and supportive of their use		I
<b>Education &amp; Training</b>		HR or Equalities Related Qualification	D
<b>Other requirements</b>	Proven commitment to promoting the equalities agenda		I
	Willingness to work outside of normal office hours		AF
	Ability to drive a car Reasonable Adjustments will be made for disabled people.		AF