

Joint Commitment

between NFRS and its Representative Bodies to improve workforce diversity



Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service works hard to attract, recruit and retain different groups of people to work for the organisation. The Service traditionally experiences under-representation from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities (BAME), women (in firefighter positions), LGBTQ+ communities and disabled people.

Long-term institutional barriers have led to this under-representation and, so it is up to the Service to reduce these barriers both within the organisation and within the communities we are trying to attract. It is not enough to say that we are 'open' and 'equal' without addressing the barriers of bias, cultural perceptions, self-confidence or discrimination which exclude people – consciously or unconsciously. Positive action goes some way to levelling the playing field for people.

This statement provides the joint clarity for NFRS managers, employees and their representative bodies regarding our commitment to attracting, recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce. Diversity enables us to engage more readily and positively with community members using our services and it enables us to solve problems in different ways. It is also essential in attracting a broader range of talent to the organisation.

Positive action provisions (sections 158 & 159), as outlined in the Equality Act 2010, allow employers to identify and remove the barriers and issues to the employment, retention and progression of people from 'under-represented' groups, whilst still employing people on merit.

Our Commitment

In summary, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and all workforce representatives are committed to greater diversity in the workforce. All parties understand the importance of this and will seek to improve understanding of diversity and positive action across the workforce and union membership. The support of all employees and managers is essential in making NFRS a truly inclusive workplace and improving workforce diversity.

Mark Stilwell, FBU

Sonny Roberts, FBU

Clare Hudson, FBU

John Buckley,
Chief Fire Officer

Jo Dawson, FOA

Michael Payne,
Chair of the Fire Authority

Jolanta Nanda, UNISON



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is positive action?

Positive action includes measures taken to inform under-represented groups within the Services workforce about career opportunities. It can be targeting advertising at under-represented groups and measures to increase a particular group's skills or understanding of a recruitment process, for example, this could include mentoring a group on the application process.

What is the difference between positive action and positive discrimination?

Positive action means taking steps to enable all individuals to have equal access to jobs and career opportunities. Positive discrimination means to treat an applicant more favourably on the basis of a protected characteristic. NFRS would only do this in very rare circumstances and only if legally permissible.

What is the value of positive action?

Successful positive action will help to reduce disadvantages and allow people from all communities to have equal access to NFRS career opportunities. Positive action should be an ongoing initiative and it can be more successful if sustained work is undertaken over a longer period. This may include ensuring that girls in primary schools routinely see, and have access to, visible female role models in less 'traditionally' female careers like firefighting. Positive action also helps to replicate the networks in minority groups which may exist between existing employees and their families, friends and relatives.

What forms can positive action take?

Positive action can be delivered in a variety of formats depending on the desired outcomes. Some examples of positive action may include:

Targeted advertising

Advertising on particular radio shows or stations which may target ethnic minority groups should raise the awareness of the Service's careers amongst under-represented groups within the community.

Mentoring

Providing coaching on what each stage of the recruitment process requires will address disadvantage between different groups. For example, providing additional information on how to achieve the fitness standards to female candidates who, statistically, are most likely to drop out of the process at the fitness test stage.

Awareness raising events –

The Service has previously delivered firefighter for a day events and targeted these at women and BME communities, where physical firefighter selection tests have been undertaken complemented by a presentation on the role of a firefighter to raise awareness of both the fitness standards and the Service's careers.