

Reasonable Adjustments Update

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with an overview of reasonable adjustments that have been made for employees to support them whilst in the Service's employment.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the content of this report.

3 Background

Under the Equality Act 2010, formerly the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is required to make reasonable adjustments for employees, who have a disability.

This paper provides Members with an overview of the types of adjustments that have been made to date to support the Service's employees and the costs involved.

4 Process for Reasonable Adjustments and Numbers

The Service currently has 23 live reasonable adjustment cases. The duration of the cases depends on the employees involved but may last anywhere from a few months to over 12 months or for the duration of their employment.

Depending on the type of disability or potential disability, the employee has to be referred to an expert for advice on adjustments to be made or any necessary equipment required in order for them to perform their role. This may include referral to Occupational Health for advice.

The Service also uses 'Access to Work' for specialist advice on workplace adjustments and for potential funding for these adjustments.

78% of current cases are for dyslexia and the Service has used, or is in the process of using, a professional psychologist to ascertain whether the individuals are classified as dyslexic and what support and equipment they may require.

The rest of the cases involve other physical adjustments, which require workplace equipment, e.g. back, neck, wrist problems, hearing impairment or dyspraxia.

When a report is received with advice and recommendations, the employee has a meeting to discuss the contents. When the meeting has taken place adjustments and equipment will be implemented. It is important to note that only what is required and necessary is put in place.

5 Types of Reasonable Adjustments

For many Service employees with dyslexia, depending on the type of role they undertake, there are several types of adjustments that can be made. Below are some examples of these.

- Large monitor screens
- Changing the font size of text and colour of paper (from white)
- How information is given to them – in writing rather than verbal and broken down into smaller chunks by using bullet points.
- Software for the computer to help with spelling, grammar etc and to help write long documents, such as Read and Write Gold and Claro-reader
- Changing the colour of the computer screen (to make it easier to read)
- Tuition by a specialist dyslexia tutor to help with areas, such as spelling, grammar, organisation skills, memory techniques (mind mapping)
- Electronic dictionaries
- Dictaphone to help with memory and organisation skills
- Highlighter pens to highlight important information for memory recall
- Note books to write down key words
- Headphones to listen to documents
- Coloured overlays to help with reading
- Providing documents in audio
- Providing documents, such as power point presentations in advance
- Adapting learning styles to suit the employee

For those with hearing impairments:

- Specialist headsets
- Individual neck loop
- Hearing equipment

For other types of disabilities adjustments may include:

- A specialist mouse
- Specific chairs / desks
- Equipment for desks, e.g. document holders
- Touch typing course
- Change to rest times / working hours

All reasonable adjustments have to be assessed on an individual basis and, as such, each employee may be different to another, even those with the same disability.

6 Financial Implications

With all reasonable adjustments, the Service contacts 'Access to Work' to see if they can provide any funding for equipment or tuition.

Breakdown of costs and funding from 1 March 2012 to 1 March 2013

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has spent a total of £7,033.21 for this period on all types of adjustments.

'Access to Work' have refunded £4,006.50 to date, which was specifically provided towards the dyslexia tuition cases. There is further funding yet to be claimed and recompensed for these cases.

The total funding paid by the Service is £3,026.71.

7 Legal Comment

Under the Equality Act 2010, formerly the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is required to make reasonable adjustments for employees, who have a disability. This report sets out a summary of action taken in order to comply with this legislation.

8 Risk Monitoring

When writing this report officers have reviewed Brigade Order 3 Part 2 Risk Management Protocol and have determined that there are no risk implications associated with it.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

This is a historical report and as such does not require an Equality Impact Assessment, the processes for this for example the Dyslexia Brigade Order have had an assessment completed.

10 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

11 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.