

## Reasonable Adjustments Update

### Report of the chief fire officer

For further information about this report, please contact Paul Raymond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260205 or Natalie Hill, Equality and Diversity Officer, on 01743 260236

#### 1 Purpose of Report

To provide elected Members' with an overview of reasonable adjustments that have been made for our employees to support them whilst in our employment.

#### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

#### 3 Background

Under the Equality Act 2010, and formerly the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) 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 our employees and the costs involved with these.

#### 4 Process for reasonable adjustments and numbers of current cases

SFRS currently have 14 live reasonable adjustment cases. The duration of the cases and the length of time that support is required depends on the individual circumstances but may last anywhere from a few months to 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 or any necessary equipment required in order for them to do their role. This may include referral to Occupational Health for advice.

86% of our current cases are dyslexia cases and we have used a professional psychologist to undertake a report to ascertain whether the individuals are classified as dyslexic, the severity of the case and what support and equipment they may require. The rest of the cases involve other physical conditions which require adjustments in terms of workplace equipment.

When a report is received providing advice and recommendations the employee is invited to a meeting to discuss the report. When the meeting has taken place adjustments will be made and equipment will be provided. It is important to note that only what is required and necessary is put in place.

## **5 Types of reasonable adjustments**

Depending on whether the employee undertakes an operational or non-uniformed role, this will have an impact on the type of adjustments that can be made. With regard to operational employees they are still required to work in a dynamic environment and as such there are some areas where adjustments cannot be introduced, for example with the Breathing Apparatus (BA) Board, as this may have potentially life threatening consequences for others. All adjustments that are implemented must be 'reasonable' and as such if the adjustment could have an adverse impact on the health and safety of others then it would not be made.

For many of our employees with dyslexia, depending on the type of role they undertake there are several types of adjustments that can be made, here are some examples:

- 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
- 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

Other types of adjustment may include:

- Specific chairs / desks
- Change to rest times / working hours
- Hearing equipment
- Large monitor screens

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

## **6 Financial Implications**

With all of our identified reasonable adjustment requirements we contact Access to Work to see if they can provide us with any funding for equipment or tuition. Given below is a breakdown of costs and funding for the last 12 months:

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service have contributed **£2,044.65**

Access to Work have provided funding of **£9,166.98**, towards tuition for people with dyslexia (this has not all been used yet).

## **7 Legal Comment**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **8 Equality Impact Assessment**

This is a historical report and as such does not require an Equality Impact Assessment. The processes related to the work detailed in the report, for example the Dyslexia Brigade Order, have had Equality Impact Assessments completed.

## **9 Appendices**

There are no appendices attached to this report.

## **10 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.