

## Reasonable Adjustments Update

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact John Redmond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Jonathan Hyams, Equality and Diversity Officer on 01743 260236.

#### 1 Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of reasonable adjustments, made to support employees in their work roles.

#### 2 Recommendations

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

#### 3 Background

Under the Equality Act 2010 Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is required to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled employees to carry out their work.

This report provides an overview of the number and types of adjustments that have been made to support employees in the past year, and the associated costs.

#### 4 Reasonable Adjustments – Caseload

The Service has currently 46 reasonable adjustment cases, the majority of which are adjustments for dyslexic employees. The duration of individual cases varies according to an employee's needs, and support may last from a few months to the whole of somebody's employment.

#### 5 Reasonable Adjustments – Process

Depending on their disability, employees are referred to an appropriate expert for advice on adjustments to their work processes or equipment to enable them to perform their role.

Initial referrals may include Occupational Health and Access to Work for specialist advice and/or potential funding for workplace support and equipment. Dyslexia accounts for some 80% of total cases. Employees, who self-refer or are referred to E&D, are assessed by a professional psychologist, who diagnoses whether they are dyslexic and, if so, the probable level and type of support and equipment they need.

Other cases involve the provision of workplace equipment, and have included back, neck and wrist problems, hearing and visual impairments and dyspraxia.

When the assessment recommendations are received the employee meets with the Equality and Diversity Officer and, where appropriate, with other officers to discuss and agree an action plan. This typically includes the provision of equipment, tuition, training, support, 'buddying', mentoring, and training. Only those recommendations that are agreed as necessary are put in place.

## **6 Adjustments**

The need for adjustments depends on individual circumstances. Among the more common are:

### **Dyslexic employees**

- Large PC monitor screens
- Changing text size and colour
- Using coloured paper instead of white
- Software, such as Read and Write Gold and Claro-reader, to help with spelling and grammar and with writing long documents
- Changing the colour of the computer screen background to make it easier to read
- Specialist dyslexia tuition to help with subjects, such as spelling, grammar, organisation skills, memory techniques (mind mapping) and more
- Electronic dictionaries
- Dictation machines to help with memory and organisational skills
- Highlighter pens for important information
- Notebooks to write down key words and definitions
- Coloured overlays to help with reading
- Documents in audio and headphones to listen to them
- Documents, such as PowerPoint training presentations provided in advance
- Adapting teaching styles to suit the employee's needs

### **Employees with hearing impairments**

- Specialist headsets
- Individual neck loop
- Hearing equipment

### **Other impairments**

- A specialist mouse
- Specialist chairs and/or desks
- Equipment for desks, e.g. document holders

- Touch typing courses
- Change tin rest times and/or working hours.

## **7 Financial Implications**

Every assessed employee is asked to contact Access to Work (ATW) to see if they can provide funding. ATW will only contribute towards tuition and similar costs, and will no longer support the cost of professional assessments, equipment or software packages. In the twelve months from 1 March 2013 to 28 February 2014 Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has spent £8,872.28 on reasonable adjustments for employees. It has been possible to reclaim £4,119.00 from ATW, leaving a net cost to the Service of £4,753.28.

## **8 Legal Comment**

This is a summary of action taken and does not require legal comment.

## **9 Initial Impact Assessment**

This is an historical report and, as such, does not require an Initial Impact Assessment.

## **10 Equality Impact Assessment**

This is an 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.

## **11 Appendices**

There are no appendices attached to this report.

## **12 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.