

Progress on Implementation of the Equality Action Plan

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Simon Hardiman Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Natalie Parkinson, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer on 01743 260236.

1 Purpose of Report

This report updates Members on progress on the key actions identified in the Equality Scheme Action Plan from March 2024 to February 2025.

2 Recommendations

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

3 Background

This report provides members with:

- Details of key actions within the Action Plan.
- Provides Members with the latest version of quarterly Action Plan (dated July 2024 – December 2024 two quarters combined).

4 Progress on the main Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) actions

The revised Action Plan for the final period of 2024 is attached for Member's information.

5 Examples of the Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service EDI Work

Employment-focused EDI work over the past year has included:

The Positive Action programme aims to encourage under-represented sections of the community to apply for employment with the Service and is sanctioned under the Equality Act 2010.

The following Taster Days have been held to encourage specific groups to apply for employment:

Date	Location	Type
16 th November 2024	Tweedale	On Call
23 rd November 2024	Shrewsbury	On Call

Mental Health:

- Several new Mental Health Courses have been attended as part of a Mental Health training review.
- A review has been completed on the Mental Health Training courses for employees and a new course is currently being developed for managers
- Implementation of the Mental Health at Work Commitment action plan is ongoing
- Chief Fire Officer sent a direct email to all employees about the 'time to talk day' in February 2025.
- A pack was sent to each station/watch or department in the service for time to talk day
- Information on the newsletter and portal about MIND and mental health support
- Mental Health awareness and suicide prevention courses are ongoing

The programme of reasonable adjustments to the working conditions of employees who have a disability has continued. The majority of support is to operational employees who have dyslexia, providing personal tuition, specialist equipment and peer support as appropriate, the Service has also seen an increase in ADHD assessments and requests for support or assessments.

Five Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Induction Training courses have been delivered for new employees during the year.

Equality Impact Assessment training has been delivered along with internal training on the online form and process by the EDI officer.

Dyslexia Awareness training has been delivered to managers and relevant employees.

Eight Women have attended the Womens Development Programme which was created in association with Women in the Fire Service and delivered by Women to Work. In addition to this the Women in the Fire Service development weekend was attended by 2 employees.

New Springboard Programme was developed with eleven employees attending.

The Voices employee support group is now embedded and the representatives have undertaken many initiatives and events working with the EDI team including the following:

- Health and Wellbeing Day was held on 10th October 2024 at HQ. This event was held to support the National World Mental Health Day /Menopause Day and World Global Diversity in October. We held a number of sessions:
 - Building Resilience by the Firefighters Charity
 - Reiki presentation and individual sessions by Nikki Davenport
 - Menopause Workshop by MBRACE
 - Presentation from the Firefighters Charity on “support for all”
 - Kettle Bell Class at HQ
 - Circuit Session at TC
 - In addition we had the following stalls:- Menopause, Dyslexia, Mental Health, Cancer Support Services, Fire Fighters Charity, Lajina Masala food stall. Plus we had free massage sessions by sports masseur and Reiki sessions.
- January 2025 we held the first Voices Planning meeting.
- Attendance at local LGBT events, Pride marches at both Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth and a display at HQ for Pride Month.
- A Menopause ‘chomp and chat’ session was held in April 2024 and January 2025 along with walks and talks.
- Menopause Rep attended the National NFCC Menopause conference.
- International Women’s Day, March 2024, the theme was “inspire inclusion” the service had 2 guest speakers, Jenny Blackhurst, bestselling author and Pam Hardy, Finance Support Officer and Team GB Duathlon Competitor, sharing their journeys, this event was well attended by a range of employees.
- Voices Representatives attend EDI steering group to provide an update on their specific area and other reps.
- A bi-annual newsletter is created and sent out around the service to update staff on what the Voices reps have been doing and any future events coming up.
- The BAME voices representative attended the Caribbean Festival event in Hadley, in July. This was to celebrate Caribbean culture with music and food stalls.
- Police World Cafe Event, 23rd October 2024 was held at Telford Central as part of the Telford Local Policing Area’s plan to celebrate Black History Month with several SFRS staff attending. This event brought together representatives from the diverse communities living in Telford and the Police Officers who work within the town, to engage in meaningful conversations.
- A second Women's Networking Event was held at Market Drayton Fire Station in April 2024 where we had a Heart math technique session, circuit session and menopause information.
- Two employees attended the Women in The Fire Service Development Weekend that took place on 7th-9th June 2024. Both provided feedback on the benefits and would recommend attending!

Confidential reporting line 'say so' is now embedded, briefings are ongoing and is also included in the induction programme for new starters.

'Moving More' Events were created for Mental Health Awareness month in May 2024 and these have continued through 2024. These sessions were an introduction to jogging, circuits/kettlebell/lunchtime walks and have continued in 2025.

NFCC – responded to all EDI consultation documents, attended NFCC EDI meetings.

Externally focused EDI actions over the year have included:

The Service is a member of the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dementia Action Alliance and regularly attends meetings.

The service's Protection Team have created a wide range of information videos and have included BSL interpretation as part of these.

Frequent articles and notices on social media and in 'The Pink' on providing employees and the public with information about equality-related issues and events including:

- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Time to talk day
- LGBT History Month
- International Women's Day
- Autism Awareness Month
- Black History Month

International Women's Day, 8th March 2024 the theme was #inspireinclusion, every woman in the service received an envelope in the post and social media to promote this day.

Attendance at and ongoing support for local equality, diversity and inclusion groups and events, including:

- Attendance at LGBT+ events such as Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth Pride.
- Flying Rainbow flags over HQ to mark Pride in June 2024 and LGBT History Month February 2025.
- Attendance at the NFCC Menopause Conference in September 2024.
- Attendance at Dyslexia Information Day October 2024.
- Attendance at the Blue Light Mental Health Symposium in January 2025.
- National Dyslexia Conference January 2025.
- Telford Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group, this is an ongoing multi-agency group.
- Telford Employer Partnership Group, looking at how to improve employment
- Telford Interfaith Basketball Group
- Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Group

6 Fire Alliance / Collaboration / Partnership Working

Working with other agencies as detailed within the report.

7 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8 Appendix

Appendix: Equality Scheme Action Plan (July 2024 – December 2024)

9 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.