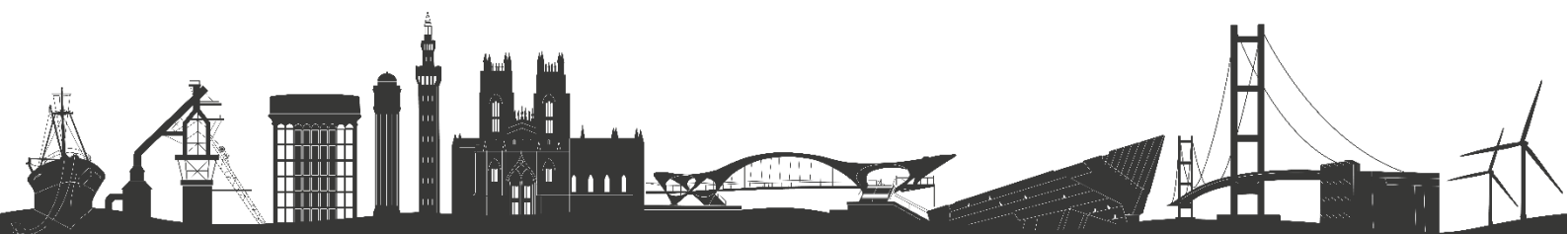




HUMBERSIDE
Fire & Rescue Service

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2023 - 2024



Contents

Introduction2

Continued progress with Service EDI Objectives2

Priority 1 – Leading by example on equality.....2

Priority 2 – Increasing diversity throughout our workforce3

Priority 3 – ensuring a safe and fair workplace for all staff5

Priority 4 – Continuing to improve our knowledge of our diverse communities and how we engage with them6

Priority 5 – Identifying the fire and other emergency risks linked to multiple disadvantages and discrimination8

Forward look: work on PSED priorities during 2024-20258

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the range of activities, outcomes and progress made by Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) during 2023/24.

Adhering to the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED), this includes both general and specific duties, as detailed below:

1. General equality duty (section 149 Equality Act 2010):
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between different groups.
 - Foster good relations between different groups.
2. Specific duties (Schedule 19 Equality Act), listed public authorities must publish:
 - Information on employees (if 150 staff or more) and people affected by policies and practices to show compliance with equality duty, at least annually.
 - Specific and measurable equality objectives, at least every four years.

Continued progress with Service EDI Objectives

While the Service has taken the opportunity to review its approach to EDI, including consulting upon its Equality and Inclusion Priorities it has continued to progress. The five Priorities which were reapproved in early 2021 are:

- Priority 1: Leading by example on equality
- Priority 2: Increase diversity throughout our workforce
- Priority 3: Ensuring a safe and fair workplace for all staff
- Priority 4: Continuing to improve our knowledge of our diverse communities and how we engage with them
- Priority 5: Identifying fire and other emergency risks linked to multiple disadvantage and discrimination

Priority 1 – Leading by example on equality

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is led through the EDI Steering Group, whose membership comprises of a variety of stakeholders including elected Members, Heads of Function, Trade Unions and members of our staff forums who represent under-represented groups. The Steering Group assesses our progress against our Equality objectives regularly through the PSED action plan. Progress, learning, gaps and emerging issues are documented in an updates action plan for the coming year.

Leadership in EDI occurs at different levels, with significant roles played by HFRS' Senior Equality Ambassadors within the Strategic Leadership Team, each championing a protected characteristic of the Equality Act 2010. Departmental Heads of Function are responsible for implementing the PSED within their given areas throughout the year and actively contribute to the action plan through their membership of the EDI Steering Group.

Managers play a vital role in fulfilling their statutory equality duties, including conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for any policy, process, project or change which affects our people or our communities.

We continue to provide EIA training to all newly appointed middle and senior managers throughout the Service. The training is delivered by the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) preferred supplier, McKenzies LLP, who designed the EIA template, which is used nationally across the sector, and is considered best practice.

All EIA's are published on the Service's intranet, with any negative impacts allocated to the relevant Head of Function via the EIA action tracker. This process ensures progress is tracked to demonstrate how a negative impact is reduced, mitigating or removed entirely.

Staff groups, such as Voices for Women, Voices for Disability, LGBTQ+ and the Age Forum bring together and empower under-represented groups, influencing our workplace culture and enhancing our policies. The Service is currently looking to establish two new staff groups relating to Faith/Religion and Race/Ethnicity.

The Core Code of Ethics underpins everything we do relating to 5 key ethical principles:

- Putting our Communities First
- Integrity
- Dignity and Respect
- Leadership
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Through continuous learning and various methods of staff engagement we ensure the principles are embedded throughout our organisation. HFRS is an active member of the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) and Women in The Fire Service UK (WFSUK). We have led regional initiatives, such as a women's mentoring programme, and established networks to foster collaboration and support among professionals.

Improving our equality monitoring systems

The Service is currently undertaking a project to improve the Human Resource (HR) system which we utilise to maintain all staff records and workforce data, ensuring they are up to date. At present, an annual return is made in line with other processes, to keep records up to date. It is intended for changes to the new system to be brought in for a more dynamic process to be in place, capitalising on new technologies such as app-based push notifications and communications, for end users to maintain up to date information in a live system which in turn feeds dashboard style reports continually. This will also allow the Service to gather more accurate equality data in relation to our workforce demographic.

Staff Survey

In June 2023 the Service commissioned RealWorldHR to provide staff engagement and consultancy services with the aim of supporting HFRS in taking what was recognised by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as a good organisation, to an outstanding one. RealWorldHR were asked to look at the Service's approach to staff engagement in the context of our people journey towards outstanding, set against a backdrop of various independent cultural reviews reporting negative feedback on behaviours across the wider fire and rescue sector. The views within the report captured people's lived experience and triangulated the feedback in such a way that the Service can now learn from and build upon through the next stage of our journey. The process was a real opportunity to demonstrate to our staff how we will become outstanding organisation and how we get there together.

People Dashboard

The Service has developed a People dashboard with the aim of providing a comprehensive view of key data relating to our employees, initially relating to absence, grievance, disciplinaries, performance and capability and complaints raised by external parties. The People dashboard will also display data relating to 'softer' HR metrics which will include employee satisfaction gathered using 'customer' surveys. The dashboard will also support a proactive approach to identifying trends and patterns of behaviour which in turn will assist the Service in providing appropriate training, learning and support to our leaders and managers.

Priority 2 – Increasing diversity throughout our workforce

HFRS is dedicated to enhancing the diversity of our workforce. We acknowledge areas where we have a lack of representation in relation to the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

To address this, we continue our work to proactively engage with and create opportunities for underrepresented groups. Our initiatives for positive attraction during 2023/24 include.

- Collaborative events and partnership working with Humberside Police at various venues and locations across North-East Lincolnshire, the East Riding, Hull and North Lincolnshire.
- Attendance at local schools, colleges and universities including the University of Hull, Toll Bar Academy, Franklin College, Hessle High School, Hull College and Ron Dearing Technical College.
- Outreach and positive attraction activities at community events such as the Peel Street Fete, Hull All Nations Alliance (HANA) football event, Welcome House Hull, Hull Pride, Wolds Pride, Beverley Pride, Bridlington Pride, St. Stephens, and the Foundry; highlighting HFRS as an employer of choice and the breadth of roles available, both operationally and corporately.

We have integrated positive attraction activities and community engagement into the core activity hours of our full-time crews, providing input on the delivery of standardised positive action and recruitment messages to ensure the accuracy of information passed to members of the public. Each station has also received a positive action grab bag to enable them to conduct their own targeted initiatives.

Our newly established Reasonable Adjustments Policy Delivery Guidance, supporting documentation and reasonable adjustment passport process provide essential support to applicants with disabilities, neurodivergent conditions, or health issues throughout the recruitment process. We have also introduced a learning styles questionnaire and dyslexia screening tool into our onboarding process for all new staff joining HFRS. This ensures that the appropriate support and learning environment is available from the first day of employment.

Awareness Days

To support the Service's recruitment activities, we have designed awareness days to encourage engagement and applications from all sectors of society and to promote HFRS as an employer of choice by raising its profile within our communities.

PRIDE Events

During the summer months of July, August and September the Service took part in the PRIDE celebrations which took place across the region in Bridlington, Cleethorpes and Grimsby, Hull, Beverley, Goole, Scunthorpe, and Pocklington. We attended with our PRIDE wrapped fire engine to show support for our local LGBTQ+ communities and to celebrate the benefits that greater diversity and inclusivity can bring. By actively supporting PRIDE and respecting individual choices, we nurture an environment where everyone has a voice and feels valued and supported.

Improve the retention and progression levels for all underrepresented groups

Our new Reasonable Adjustment documentation and passport process is not just for new members of staff. The process also allows existing employees to discuss and implement reasonable adjustments that enhance their working environment. We have piloted the process to support the progression and retention of staff with neurodivergent conditions, which has allowed us to introduce a range of reasonable adjustments to support individuals during promotion processes. Each of our Human Resources Service Partners have received training to assist managers in implementing reasonable adjustments and passports at work. We also work with a specialist neurodiversity organisation who work with individual staff and line managers to develop workplace needs assessments. The contents of the workplace needs assessment assists managers in agreeing the most appropriate reasonable adjustments to implement to support the individual concerned. We are also able to offer expert coaching based on the findings in the workplace needs assessment, helping individuals to maximise the value of the reasonable adjustments that are put in place. HFRS is committed to fostering an inclusive work environment where every employee feels valued, respected, and supported to perform at their best.

Learning and Development Opportunities

HFRS continues to invest in the learning and development of all staff, recognising its role in retention. Role-Specific Training Outlines (RSTO's) have been designed for every role throughout the organisation, setting out the core skills and role specific elements required for all staff to perform their job effectively. Our annual Performance Development Review (PDR) process encourages employees to discuss their career aspirations and development needs as well as considering their personal resilience, health and wellbeing.

Examples of development opportunities related to EDI include:

- Attendance at the annual Women in the Fire Service UK National Training and Development Weekend where delegates are encouraged to try new things, learn new skills, invest in their own development, and spend time with like-minded individuals from across the sector.
- Organising an event for International Women's Day 2024, focusing on becoming an ally of women, challenging discrimination in the workplace, maintaining personal resilience and exploring sex based microaggressions; what they are and how to challenge them.
- Continued implementation of the NFCC Coaching and Mentoring programme to promote a coaching style of management, ensuring skilled mentors are available, with a diverse range of mentors for both women and men.

Priority 3 – ensuring a safe and fair workplace for all staff

During 2023/24, several accomplishments and opportunities have been realised, including:

- Developing the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Portal to make it more user friendly and accessible to all members of staff.
- Establishing a process to support employee wellbeing by implementing wellbeing breaks into the working week for all of our corporate staff.
- Developing the menu on offer to employees within the Fire House Lounge. We have worked with world leading experts in nutrition to deliver healthy eating and nutritional advice.
- Hosting the first Health, Wellbeing and Performance conference since the pandemic at the MKM Stadium in Hull.
- Strengthening our partnership with The Fire Fighters Charity; working closely with leading members of the charity to support the wellbeing of our employees.
- Continuing to develop our Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) process and introducing newly recruited CISM Practitioners into the service.
- Celebrating the benefits of staff forums during Mental Health Awareness Week, fostering a safe space for discussions around personal resilience and support routes.

Additionally, staff forums have played a pivotal role in enhancing workplace culture. The Voices for Women Forum continues to promote and organise regular meetings and events for members and all staff to benefit from. During 2023/24 this included our International Women's Day event.

International Women's Day (IWD) took place on the 8th March 2024. The event is a global day to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. IWD also provides an opportunity to raise awareness about women's equality, calls for positive change in advancing women and lobbies for greater gender parity.

Our IWD celebration this year was a sell out; bringing leaders, managers, and male and female staff together to discuss and agree achievable actions in relation to women's career development at HFRS. The event also supported and empowered allies to take responsibility and help to champion the issues faced by women.

The theme for IWD 2024 was 'Inspire Inclusion'. We designed a full day of thought-provoking speakers and engaging workshops which included personal experiences of going through the menopause as a firefighter and how to develop and thrive as a woman at HFRS. The interactive workshops included content on developing solutions to fears and concerns encountered in our professional lives, how to be an ally to women at work, a taster session on a new Women in Leadership Programme designed by Coaching Focus Group and lastly a chance to have a go at mentoring in a short bite-sized mentoring session.

Menopause Group

Our Menopause Group continues to grow, with new members joining the group from across the organisation. Membership of the group consists of both pre- and post-menopausal women, who are able to share their own personal experiences and provide support to others both inside and outside the group. The group's work is underpinned by our new Menopause Policy, with our Occupational Health team leading on the delivery of menopause awareness workshops at various locations throughout the Service which is greatly assisting in breaking down barriers and encouraging conversations on a previously taboo subject.

The Menopause Group signposts to several resources which provide help, advice and support to both women and men in relation to menopause which includes a new digital application that allows users to record their menopause symptoms on a daily basis to then share with their GP or healthcare professional, various recorded interviews with experts and well know celebrities sharing their own menopause journeys, various podcasts and vlogs and academic papers detailing new areas of research.

Values and Culture Working Group

In March 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published a report on the values and culture of all 44 fire and rescue services in England, drawing on evidence collected through their inspection regime since 2018. HMICFRS made 35 recommendations in the report with the intention of assisting individual fire and rescue services to improve their values, culture, fairness and diversity.

The Service took a proactive approach in response to the report and established a Culture Working Group with the aim of reviewing each of the 35 recommendations and taking the appropriate actions to address any gaps identified in our current provision. Membership of the culture group was representative of the Service and cross-cutting in nature; attended by all levels of staff from across the organisation to ensure diversity of thought and to capture the views and lived experiences of everyone at HFRS. Outcomes for the Culture Working Group to date include but are not limited to the following:

- Ensure staff have several reporting lines, both internally and externally, which can be used to raise concerns in a confidential way.
- Introduced DBS checks for all roles, particularly for front-line staff who have access to vulnerable members of the community.
- Designed and introduced a 360-degree feedback process for all leaders and managers throughout the Service.

Coaching and Mentoring

The Service currently has 16 trained and experienced mentors who are available to mentor employees on a wide range of issues, including career development, health and wellbeing and personal resilience. We have a dedicated page on our intranet for staff seeking a mentor. Detailed mentor profiles assist staff in choosing the mentor who would be the best fit to suit the individual's mentoring needs.

We are also part of a wider NFCC National Coaching and Mentoring Programme. The sector wide initiative provides free trained and experienced coaches and mentors who will be matched to suit the requirements of the individual requiring the coaching or mentoring support. Our involvement and contributions to this sector programme is managed by our dedicated Service Champion for this programme.

We continuously look for staff from all levels and backgrounds with skills in listening, empathy and communication to become new mentors and expand our network.

Safer Recruitment

The recent legislative changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions) now include Fire and Rescue Authorities. Under the amended Act, HFRS is now required to perform at least standard level DBS checks for all staff, volunteers, and representatives. Our HR and Safeguarding team have worked together to implement these changes throughout the Service on a priority basis, with the aim of completing all required DBS checks by the middle of 2024. The Service is fully committed to meeting its legal and moral obligations to safeguarding. DBS checks are a crucial tool for HFRS to make safer recruitment decisions and to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with vulnerable members of our community.

Priority 4 – Continuing to improve our knowledge of our diverse communities and how we engage with them

During 2023/24 we have successfully launched four uniformed Fire Cadet Units in each of the Service's local authority areas, based in Scunthorpe, Grimsby, Bransholme and Goole.

Each Unit is running at, or close to, capacity of 15 young people in three areas, supported by Fire Cadet Instructors who run the weekly 2-hour sessions. In total, the units currently engage with 35 male and 17 female cadets, who together come from a range a diverse backgrounds, ethnicities and different educational needs.

At each unit the Service delivers the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Fire Cadet Award Programme, offering opportunities nationally, regionally, and locally for Fire Cadets who are aged between 13 to 17 years old. The Fire Cadet provision provides a structured programme to assist young people in increasing their skills, aspirations, and build confidence by supporting them to make positive contributions in their local communities, develop social capacity and make positive life choices.

During Firefighter Memorial Day on 4th September 2023 seven of our Fire Cadets were selected to represent HFRS at the Memorial Trusts Firefighters Service of Remembrance at the National Arboretum near Burton-Upon-Trent. Supported by two of our Cadet Instructors, the young people were engaged in stewarding visitors and helping with pre-arrangements for the service. Once the memorial service had ended the group toured the arboretum.

The Fire Cadet scheme also supports the Service's positive action activities, by inspiring young people to consider a career at HFRS and raising their awareness around the breadth of roles, both operationally and corporately, undertaken by our staff.

The Peel Project

The focus of The Peel Project is to work with those suffering deprivation, those who are new to UK or do not speak English as a first language and need support (low-income families who cannot afford to support their children in extracurricular activities). We have continued to strengthen our existing partnership with The Peel Project to develop and build community engagements to create positive outputs which improve the lives of our ethnic minority communities in Hull.

We continue to support the Peel Project's Community Outreach and Engagement work and the Summer Youth Activity Workshops which engage with hundreds of young people over the summer school holidays. This collaborative approach has meant that we have positively engaged with over 900 community members who speak over 20 languages, and for the vast majority of whom this was the first time they had engaged with personnel from the fire service.

We have worked in collaboration with The Peel Project to introduce a 'cultural competency engagement – navigating engagement with Muslim communities' presentation into our recruit Firefighter induction process. The aim of the session is to provide information about the Islamic faith and the local Muslim community in an informal setting where the staff can ask questions and talk about Islam from a local perspective. This has been informative and well received by our new recruits.

Community Handbook

The first edition of our Community Handbook was created in 2016, with the aim of creating an engagement tool for the use of our frontline delivery staff. We liaised with various external agencies, including the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA), and collaborated with Humberside Police to ensure that we developed a resource which was fit for purpose and could be used by ourselves and the Police to assist in community engagement activities. Several other Fire and Rescue Services and agencies have shown an interest in our community handbook, and now use it to support the learning and development of their own staff. Since its first creation, the Community Handbook has been revised and updated to ensure the content is still relevant and covers new and emerging community risks. The Community Handbook was first produced in a printed, hard copy format, but more recently it has been produced in an electronic format on Pagetiger; ensuring this vital engagement and education tool is always available to all frontline staff on either their mobile phones or tablets.

Priority 5 – Identifying the fire and other emergency risks linked to multiple disadvantages and discrimination

Our Risk and Intelligence team continue to develop and enhance our data management and analysis capabilities. Our dedicated analytics team, which includes a skilled Data Scientist, ensures a seamless, data-driven decision-making process, supporting various sections across the organisation, providing vital social data relating to our communities.

We use national data and advanced machine learning models to discern risk attributes and identify unique combinations that indicate a higher risk of fire-related fatalities. These attributes encompass protected characteristics like gender, age, and disability. This intelligence is transformed into household-level risk profiles, driving our proactive prevention initiatives.

We have employed a similar modelling process to develop intelligence for our proactive protection efforts, generating business-level risk profiles for our Protection Inspectors' audit schedules and to support business engagements conducted by our operational crews. This strategic approach advances our goal of ensuring the safety of establishments where the public resides, works, or visits. Individuals with protected characteristics and those facing deprivation or disadvantage benefit from the safety measures implemented in locations such as hospitals, care homes, restaurants, clinics, religious centres and hotels.

Additionally, our subscription to Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OSCI) provides us with the latest community data and analyses. This invaluable resource enables us to create tailored area population profiles. These profiles serve as the foundation for our Station Story Maps. Station story maps have been created to assist crews and prevention and protections teams in planning activities and in understanding the make-up of each station area. These interactive story maps contain information about the station and surrounding area, which includes:

- A summary of the station, the response vehicles and resources available.
- Local demographics about the population and the area such as crime and deprivation, disabilities, community needs, ethnicity and religion.
- Incident analysis showing the types of incidents which most typically occur.
- The fire fatality profile and where it is located.
- The Protection risk and where it is located.

We continue to develop comprehensive dashboards which help us to evaluate our community and assess our activities. As an example, we have one dashboard which shows the ethnicity of people experiencing fires and another for those receiving prevention services from us. In addition, we have a further dashboard which highlights the vulnerabilities our Prevention teams identify during home fire safety visits. We are continually enhancing our data collection system to gain deeper insights, including aligning our data collection with government standards. Through these initiatives, we are committed to improving the safety and wellbeing of all community members.

Forward look: work on PSED priorities during 2024-2025

In the upcoming 2024-2025 period, we will be entering the fourth and final year of implementing our existing priorities aimed at fostering positive outcomes for our communities and employees. During this period, we plan to engage with a diverse range of stakeholders to refresh our objectives.

To give you a glimpse of our planned actions within the five priorities outlined in our PSED action plan for the next year:

Priority 1: Leading by example on equality

- We will actively promote and support new Staff Forums and Groups, including the establishment of a religion and belief group and a race and ethnicity group.

- We will continue to provide our leaders with training in relation to inclusive recruitment and how to conduct meaningful Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's).

Priority 2: Increase diversity throughout our workforce

- Our efforts will continue through targeted attraction campaigns focusing on women, as well as men and women from Ethnic Minorities communities.
- We will continue to embed our new reasonable adjustment and passport process to ensure our disabled staff feel valued, respected, and supported to perform at their best.
- We will work with members of our newly formed Community Interview Panel to gain a greater understanding of the diverse communities we serve and to help shape our future workforce.

Priority 3: Ensuring a safe and fair workplace for all staff

- We will continue to embed our new reasonable adjustment and passport process to ensure our disabled staff feel valued, respected, and supported to perform at their best.
- We will provide training to our leadership teams around the effective and timely management of disciplinaries and grievances.
- We will provide Active Bystander training to all staff to ensure they are able to challenge inappropriate behaviour.

Priority 4: Continuing to improve our knowledge of our diverse communities and how we engage with them

- We will continue to conduct a wider range of robust Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) focusing on community facing activities, project, and proposals. We will monitor how any negative equality impacts are removed or reduced to ensure continuous organisational learning.
- We will provide training and awareness to our teams around cultural competence and how to challenge inappropriate behaviour sensitively and professionally.

Priority 5: Identifying fire and other emergency risks linked to multiple disadvantage and discrimination

- We will continue to utilise new data sources to enhance community engagement and service provision, particularly for groups experiencing multiple disadvantages and discrimination.
- We will continue to evaluate and develop our approach to EDI, ensuring we are able to provide the right services to the communities we serve, whilst developing and supporting a workforce which is fit for the future.