



# Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service

## Equality and Diversity Strategy 2017/20



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## Foreword

As the Chief Fire Officer of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS), I have great pleasure in introducing our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2018 - 2021.

Currently the Fire and Rescue Service is going through a period of significant change, change that we must embrace if we are to prosper as a Service that continues to keep both our firefighters and the people of Cumbria safe. Central to this change is the theme of EDI. By embracing this concept we will ensure that the Service has access to the widest possible pool of talent to deliver our services in the most effective manner to our diverse communities across Cumbria.

Our vision is that in dealing with EDI we go beyond just legal compliance. We have a diverse community and workforce where respect, fairness and inclusion are integral to our culture and values. These must be upheld in everything we do, from recruiting and developing talented employees through to delivering a professional service to our communities.

Steve Healey

Chief Fire Officer

## Introduction

This Strategy outlines our approach to EDI. It summarises a significant number of documents produced at a national level that provide guidance to Fire and Rescue Services with regard to EDI, whilst also recognising that as part of Cumbria County Council (CCC), the Service operates within the Council's broader Equality Framework.

EDI is of the utmost importance in both our outward facing service delivery activities and inward facing responsibilities as an employer. This Strategy will provide the foundation for the Service to deliver against the aspirations within the Local Government Association's (LGA) Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework (revised 2017). In doing so, the Strategy recognises that the EDI agenda is not static. We will ensure that the Strategy is regularly reviewed, and members of staff are held to account for the delivery of actions.

The Strategy will provide direction to our service delivery activities, ensuring that we direct our resources in a risk-based, intelligence led way, to the most vulnerable and in need within our community. It will ensure that we are full and active partners in delivering health and wellbeing strategies and in dealing with poverty, health inequalities, social deprivation and social exclusion, helping to build stronger, safer and more resilient communities.

Within Cumbria, all back office functions that support the Fire and Rescue Service are delivered by the County Council. This Strategy will be applicable to the Fire and Rescue Service but also have cognisance of wider Equality and Diversity work being carried out within the Council to ensure there is a reduction of duplication and that any training material is consistent.

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

CFRS is part of the county council in Cumbria. The Council, as part of its Equality Duty, publishes a set of Equality Objectives to which each department must have regard. In developing this Strategy, the Service has reviewed those objectives, which are:

- Providing equality of opportunity through access to services for all, and delivering services which meet the needs of our customers.
- Fostering good relations by understanding the communities we serve, and creating meaningful engagement.
- Eliminating discrimination through the review of our operational and work place policies and procedures.

The Council is currently revisiting the way it develops its Equality Needs Analysis, and is developing an overarching Equality and Diversity Strategy to encompass the entire organisation. CFRS will actively take part in the development of work streams, to ensure that the direction of travel outlined in this Strategy is delivered.

A number of different definitions exist for EDI. Throughout this Strategy we will adopt those accepted by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

- Equality is defined in law (Equality Act 2010) and is about ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably, on the basis of their specific protected characteristic, including areas of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity and age.
- Diversity is about promoting and fostering everybody's right to be different, about being free from discrimination, valued as an individual, and having choice and dignity with a right to your own beliefs and values. 'Diversity' is a word that means 'varied and different'. Diversity, therefore, is about more than equality. It is about creating a culture which values individual differences and encourages people to be themselves at work.
- Inclusion refers to an individual's experience within the workplace and in wider society, and the extent to which they feel valued and included.

We want people to bring themselves to work without the need to hide their sexuality, mental health state, quirks and individual traits. Therefore we want to promote behaviors which seek to include all in conversation, in opportunities, in offering an opinion, and in being listened to.

Using the definitions above, as a Service we will work to a set of principles that demonstrate the seriousness with which EDI is treated. These principles are the same as outlined in the recent memorandum of understanding signed between the LGA and the NFCC:

- We recognise that in order to provide the most effective service to the public, the Fire and Rescue Service as a whole should reflect the diversity of the community it serves.
- The employment of specific groups within the Service, such as firefighting personnel should also meet this requirement.
- A more diverse workforce is needed at all levels up to and including senior managers.
- The Service is a team of proficient staff who all contribute to the activity of the Service.

- Every role makes an essential contribution to preventing fires, saving lives and keeping the public safe.
- Every employee is entitled to equal treatment regardless of race, religion or belief, disability, marital status, age, gender, including gender identities, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation and expressions, or membership of a trade union.
- No one should be bullied or harassed at work.

## The National and Local Context

The Equality Needs Analysis for Cumbria provides a wide variety of information about the EDI issues we face in the county. This section of the Strategy summarises the current picture and draws out the key areas that the Service can contribute to in line with its stated objectives.

**Migration:** Overall trends suggest that the rate of overseas migration to Cumbria has slowed since 2009. However, evidence from Children's Services shows an increase in demand for social care and schools and education relating to numbers of migrants who have settled and formed families. In 2011 the Council conducted a survey of over 800 migrants which provided a snapshot of issues relevant to service managers, this can be found on: <http://www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk/Population/equality.asp>

**Black and Minority Ethnic People:** Although Cumbria has among the fewest numbers of people from Black and Minority Ethnic people in England; the rate of increase has been above the national average. The percentage has increased from 1.8% in 2001 to 3.5% in 2011. Looking at the Council's workforce the latest percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic people is 2.45% which is in line with previous years. Within CFRS this figure is 0.3%.

**Disability:** In the 2011 Census the total percentage of disabled people in the county was higher than the national average at 20.3% compared to 17.9%. The highest proportion of disabled people is in Barrow with 24.7% of the population, and the lowest is Eden at 18%. Working age disabled people in the Census range from 15% in Carlisle to 30.4% in Barrow. The latest percentage of staff declaring a disability is 1.61%. Within the CFRS the figure is 0.3%, although this will be impacted upon by the majority of staff within the service being operational and having to meet certain physical standards.

**Age 65+:** In the 2011 Census the total percentage of people aged 65+ was higher than the national average at 20.6% compared to 16.4%. The highest proportion of people aged 65+ is in South Lakes 24.2% and the lowest is in Carlisle at 18.5%. As with Disability, most Council services will need to consider the implications of changes for people aged 65+, and in some cases for people aged 75+ and 85+. The latest Council figures show 8.57% of the workforce is aged over 60. Within CFRS, the age profile of the operational workforce is changing, due to the recent increase in the retirement age to 60.

**Age younger people:** In the 2011 Census the total percentage of people aged 0-15 in Cumbria was 16.7%. The main change from 2001 is the decline in numbers of people below 15 years old as a proportion of the population. In Barrow this trend has been fastest, and in Carlisle the slowest.

This information shows that both Cumbria's population and the Council's workforce, including within the Fire and Rescue Service is becoming more diverse, and reflects changing population trends across the UK.

We can compare the make-up of CFRS, with the demographic make-up of Cumbria as a whole. The following tables compare these two data sets:

Sex	Frequency	CFRS Figure*	Cumbrian Figure
Female	61	9.0%	50.2%
Male	616	91.0%	49.8%

\* Including CFRS support from the Council, the proportion of female staff is approximately 19%

Considered Disabled	Frequency	CFRS Figure	Cumbrian Figure
No	512	75.6%	79.7%
Yes	3	0.4%	20.3%
Blank/Not Known	162	23.9%	0.0%

Religion	Frequency	CFRS Figure	Cumbrian Figure
No Religion	44	6.5%	20.3%
Other Religion	3	0.4%	0.9%
Christian	104	15.4%	71.9%
Blank/Not Known	526	77.7%	6.9%

Religion	Frequency	CFRS Figure	Cumbrian Figure
No Religion	44	6.5%	20.3%
Other Religion	3	0.4%	0.9%
Christian	104	15.4%	71.9%
Blank/Not Known	526	77.7%	6.9%

Ethnicity	Frequency	CFRS Figure	Cumbrian Figure
Caribbean	1	0.1%	0.0%
Chinese	1	0.1%	0.2%
Blank/Not Known	129	19.1%	0.0%
Other White	2	0.3%	1.7%
Pakistani	1	0.1%	0.1%
White - British	542	80.1%	96.5%
White - Irish	1	0.1%	0.3%

Relationship Status	Frequency	CFRS Figure	Cumbrian Figure
Civil Partnership	1	0.1%	0.02%
Divorced	29	4.3%	9.5%
Married/Co-habiting/Long Term Relationship	342	50.5%	50.8%
Blank/Not Known	139	20.5%	0.0%
Separated	7	1.0%	2.0%
Single	157	23.2%	29.1%
Widowed	2	0.3%	8.4%

Sexuality	Frequency	CFRS Figure	Cumbrian Figure Estimate
Bisexual	2	0.3%	0.8%
Hetrosexual	174	25.7%	93.2%
Gay	0	0.0%	6.0%
Blank/Not Known/ Declined to Specify	501	74.0%	0.0%

The differences between the Cumbrian population and the make-up of CFRS demographic will be explored to identify any reasons for this and to consider what actions, if any, need to be taken.

## Delivering The Strategy

In delivering against this Strategy, a benchmark exercise has been carried out using the tools developed in partnership between NFCC and the LGA. This looks at Equality and Diversity across the areas of:

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and service commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services
- A skilled and committed workforce.

This allows the Service to rate itself against the three categories:

- Developing
- Achieving
- Excellent

The benchmark exercise has resulted in the Action Plan attached as shown in Appendix A. This Action Plan will be updated on a regular basis, reported on to the Service Management Team (SMT) and used to hold action owners to account. The Action Plan will be a public document available to all.

The delivery of the Strategy will take into account the wider Equality and Diversity framework within the Council. The diagram at Appendix B highlights the links to this framework.

As well as the benchmarking exercise, CFRS is committed to delivering those actions set out in the national memorandum of understanding that the NFCC have committed to. These are:

- We will raise awareness of the role of positive action and the law around it in addressing diversity in recruitment and progression.
- We will undertake training on identifying and countering the effects of unconscious bias and take steps at institutional level to counter those effects.
- We will undertake inclusive leadership training for Managers.
- We will monitor the number and proportion of applications from women, BME and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) individuals and monitor the numbers and proportions at stages of recruitment to identify barriers to recruitment.

CFRS will not tolerate in any form, bullying, victimization, discrimination or harassment. In order to ensure that we capture any evidence of this occurring we will

- Ensure that mechanisms are in place for current members of staff to raise any concerns they may have.
- Conduct exit interviews with all employees and record, monitor and act upon any evidence from these interviews.

In addition to the actions highlighted above, and those in the Action Plan, the Service recognise the intrinsic link between EDI and the wider safeguarding agenda.

- We will ensure that all Service personnel undertake training in both Adult and Children safeguarding, as well as Prevent, Modern Slavery and any other safeguarding areas of concern.

In delivering on this strategy, CFRS recognises how important it is that its staff feel valued and their experiences are used to shape the Service going forward.

In supporting the delivery of this Strategy, CFRS will introduce the concept of diversity champions across the Service to represent all staff in the development and delivery of Service policy. An illustrative role profile is shown at Appendix C.

Members of the Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) will take responsibility for different strands of EDI, as shown below. The Service has added 'rurality' to the 9 protected characteristics within the Equality Act, due to the influence it has on decision making within Cumbria.

Area of Diversity	DLT Lead
Age; Disability	Chief Fire Officer
Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Pregnancy and Maternity; Sex	Area Manager – Risk Management
Religion and Belief; Race	Area Manager – Prevention, Protection and Reform
Sexual Orientation, Rurality	Area Manager – Operational Response and Training

A CFRS Equality Board will be established, and consultation undertaken with members of staff to help ascertain the best way of Equality and Diversity Issues being raised at the Board.

- We will ensure that all staff have access to a variety of networks that represent the different strands of diversity.
- We will engage with national networks and organisations to ensure where applicable that the services we deliver are accredited against recognised standards.
- We will ensure that there is a communications plan in place so that staff are aware of the work that is ongoing, the support they can access and how they can contribute to the development of the EDI agenda within the Service.

The themes explored in this Strategy are similar to those highlighted in the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services Circular NJC/8/17, which summarises the results of a comprehensive engagement with all Fire and Rescue Services. Broader actions highlighted in that circular will also be included in the Action Plan attached as Appendix A.

# Monitoring and Reporting on the Strategy

Quarterly reports will be provided to SMT on progress against the Action Plan.

Delivery against the Equality and Diversity Agenda and the creation of a representative work force is the responsibility of all staff within the Service. A copy of the Action Plan will be made available on CFRS SharePoint site so that it is accessible to all employees.

The Service will engage with the Cumbrian Strategic Independent Advisory Group, which represents diverse communities in Cumbria to ensure that expert advice is sought when required when developing Equality Diversity and Inclusion documents.

## Conclusion

This Strategy seeks to draw together in one place the approach the Service is taking towards delivering on EDI. It recognises that whilst there is a long way to go, the Service has identified areas for development and is taking positive steps to improve. Successful delivery of this Strategy will increase the level of awareness amongst the public, Members and Officers regarding EDI, and will make the Fire and Rescue Service an inclusive employer that delivers for all the people of Cumbria.

