



Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022/23



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Executive Summary

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service recognises, that discrimination and inequality exists within society and as a public service we will play our part in creating an inclusive and safe community across Cumbria including its visitors.

As society becomes increasingly diverse expectations on public services are changing. Cumbria is seeing increasing ethnic and religious diversity, a more visible Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) population and an increase in the number of people aged over 65 and people who have a disability. There is also increasing social awareness around mental health and neurodiversity, which is changing social attitudes to inclusion. In terms of gender there are still significant challenges to achieving equality and changes to the Gender Recognition Act reflect wider changes in how we think about gender.

The strategy sets out an overview of the current position of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service regarding the wider equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda. The strategy considers how a commitment to and understanding of EDI will support our EDI objectives and priorities, within the framework of the Core Code of Ethics.

The purpose of the strategy is to:

- Complement the Code of Ethics.
- Complement the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).
- Ensure legal compliance by ensuring that all our functions (processes, policies and strategies) can demonstrate that due regard has been given as required by the Equality Act 2010.
- Support and understand appropriate service delivery that is tailored to risk and evidence.
- Support our staff to reach their full potential and feel satisfied and fulfilled.
- Ensure that in our recruitment, development and progression of all personnel, we will ensure that we are equipped to actively promote opportunities with information and local knowledge.
- Ensure that we engage with all our communities to understand their needs.

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service will ensure that the decisions made by the Service continue to meet the equality duties and have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Service will ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is integral to the delivery of CFRS services, as set out in the equality objectives and priorities set out below.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Objectives and Priorities

Inclusive and Safe Communities



Aspiration

To aspire to a strong positive and inclusive culture in CFRS that best positioned to meet the challenges we face in the future serving the diverse communities of Cumbria and keeping them safe.

CFRS EDI Objectives

In delivering the EDI work across the Service

- CFRS staff have clear information about Cumbria's diversity profile to inform decision making based on the needs of the community.
- Communities of Cumbria and those underserved are involved in shaping CFRS services.
- CFRS work reflects the needs of our diverse communities including those underserved and can demonstrate outcomes in addressing structural discrimination and inequalities.

- Workforce outcomes for people who share a protected characteristic demonstrate the benefits of a proactive approach to Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion.

Priorities

Understanding our Communities

Aim:

CFRS needs to acquire and use information about the make-up of the local community, understand their needs and views and how they impact on the service policies and practices and the services we deliver are relevant and fit for purpose.

Key Priorities:

- Understanding our communities – source data and information on both local and tourist communities, to inform the work of the service.
- To inform equality analysis process.
- Community engagement

Inclusive Services – (Response, Protection and Prevention)

Aim: CFRS are committed to ensuring diverse communities in the county receive services that meet their needs.

Key Priorities:

- Equality analysis for all functions
- Prevention and Protection – understanding the evidence and risks
- Data collection and analysis

Valuing our People (Diverse and Inclusive Workforce)

Aim: CFRS are committed to an inclusive organisation, ensuring all our people both in service and in the community are respected and have fair and equal access to opportunity and have due regards to advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between people whatever their roles.

Key Priorities:

- Equality analysis for all functions
- Recruitments, selection, progression and retention
- Positive action programme
- Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Victimisation
- Data collection and analysis – understanding our workforce
- EDI training and development
- Development of the staff networks

To embed the CFRS equality objectives and priorities within the delivery of all CFRS plans and supporting strategies.

Implementation

The multi-layered way EDI supports our purpose is that it is considered in all our decision making, planning and service delivery.

The strategy identifies links between practice and outcome by recognising those at most risk. It establishes how we understand the needs and gain access to those most at risk in the most effective way. 'One size fits all' does not apply when delivering messages, services or resources to those most vulnerable.

Equally, as an employer, we need to understand that the workforce have varying communication styles, skills and needs, and as such the Service will facilitate a selection of tools and styles in order to support the workforce to reach their full potential and work as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Our EDI work extends beyond the protected characteristics as listed within the Equality Act, as we include socio economic factors, rural isolation and our On-Call workforce, as a significant contributor to risk and demand, particularly when it exists alongside the tourists who visit the county.

Implementation of the EDI strategy requires that an equality analysis is undertaken in the exercise of the services functions and the service has due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The strategy provisions are to ensure that EDI remains as business as usual for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service; however, we aim to go beyond the legal framework and be an organisation and workplace which is connected in a common objective of making Cumbria the safest and inclusive place to be, both for residents and visitors and to embed the CFRS Equality Objectives and Priorities within the delivery of all CFRS Plans and supporting strategies.

Inclusion within our working practice indicates that our objectives are about everybody and our work is proportionate to needs and risks. By being able to monitor and evaluate our actions to inform our direction.

Currently there remains an absence of statistical data – locally and nationally - on multiple inequalities and a lack of data that would describe the connection between different Protected Characteristics and outcomes. While sex and age are recorded, data on ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability and the multifaceted human features of risk are rarely recorded and or analysed. The absence of statistical data and analysis leads to some of these resultant barriers, which include:

- Communication and language
- The Impact of tourists
- Lack of information on entitlements and services
- Organisational accessibility
- Working conditions
- Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Victimisation
- Recruitment, Selection, Progression and retention
- Understanding our underserved communities

We will remain mindful of these inequalities and their impact on our Service.

Progress will be reported, as appropriate to the Senior Leadership Team and Programmes Board.

Our People

EDI awareness and training has been part of our induction programme for some time. Our continuation of this training includes a localised package and face to face awareness raising sessions.

We are continuing to develop mechanisms to support staff and have developed with staff a number of staff networks, these include; Neurodiversity, LGBTQI+, Women and Ethnic Minority staff networks, these are at an early stage of development and led by staff in those groups.

We continually review our recruitment, progression and retentions initiatives, which informs our Positive Action work. This is an area that the Service is continuing to develop and will be a significant priority throughout the delivery of the strategy and beyond, based on the evidence.

We will establish an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Panel, membership will include; representatives from internal and external stakeholders and community groups. This group will provide scrutiny and drive the EDI objectives and priorities forward.

Our suite of strategies, policies and procedures, the Core Code of Ethics and most importantly our people will continue to drive our Service, its culture and our delivery.

Accountability Framework

Component	Role	Executive/ Advisory
Chief Fire Officer	Owns delivery of the EDI Strategy	Executive
Senior Leadership Team	Execution of EDI Strategy (Setting priorities, resourcing, and targets)	Executive
Managers	Lead on EDI issues relating to their areas of business and responsibility	Executive
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Subject matter expert advises CFO and the Senior Leadership Team on strategic EDI matters	Executive
Programme Board	To have an overview and monitor EDI implementing across the Service	Executive
Service Delivery Group, Cluster Managers and Workforce Development Group	To manage the implementation of EDI across the service	Executive
EDI Panel	Monitor and provide scrutiny on the delivery of the EDI objectives and priorities Representatives internal and external stakeholders and community.	Advisory
EDI Task & Finish Groups	Established by SLT when necessary – typically of benefit when exploring new or costcutting initiatives Project teams drawn from those with specific and other members of staff with interest/skills	Advisory
Staff Networks	Support network for staff in the service and advise the service where necessary	Advisory

Accessible Formats

If you require this document in a different format, in braille, easy read version or in other languages, please contact us on cfrs.edi@cumbria.gov.uk

For More Information and how to get involved, please contact us on cfrs.edi@cumbria.gov.uk

Glossary

Equality is about everyone having the same chances in life and getting the same access to the services they need.

Diversity is about understanding and respecting people's different needs and aspirations. We cannot achieve equality without addressing diversity.

Inclusion is about how well the contributions, presence and perspectives of different groups of people are valued and integrated into an organisation.

Discrimination is when a person is treated worse than another person on account of an aspect of their identity. Discrimination can take place at work, in the community, when travelling, when accessing public services, or as a consumer.

