

# **Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority**

## **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report April 2017 to March 2018**



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Sidoo Kale waxaa heli kartaa iyadoo far waaweyn ah.

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# Contents

Foreword	5
Welcome	7
Aims of this report	9
Governance and Performance Management	10
Our Equality Objectives 2017 – 2020	11
Delivery of our Equality & Diversity Action Plan 2017 – 2020	24
Events and Awards	37
Looking forward	41
Conclusion	42

## Foreword

I am pleased to introduce our annual equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) report for 2017/18. This report provides a detailed account of how we have progressed against our ED&I strategic objectives and action plans during the last year.

In 2017 we set ourselves ambitious goals by developing a new set of Equality Objectives. We understand that equality, diversity and inclusion are integral parts of who we are and what we deliver, so our services and employment practices must be fair and accessible to all.

Our key ambitions for the past year were to:

- Deliver a Gender Pay Gap report and develop practices to address pay gaps
- To continue with our Knowing our Communities project, ensuring we are engaging with diverse communities in an inclusive way
- Deliver a Positive Action strategy to increase the number of underrepresented groups in our workforce
- Ensure we are delivering Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) proportionately to our diverse communities in our Home Safety Strategy

I am proud of the fact that in 2017/18 we published our first Gender Pay Gap report which benchmarked us a better than the national average and that this year's report has also put us ahead of the national benchmark, but with an improvement on last year. I am also proud of the work our staff put into the delivery of ED&I in their everyday working lives from attending Liverpool Pride, to being a Fire Proud Ally, to supporting International Women's Day, to being a Diversity Champion and being mindful of inclusion in their everyday decisions. They are all helping to keep the spirit of ED&I very much alive in times of challenge and competing resources.

Our challenge going forward is to address any imbalances through the delivery of our People Strategy in relation to Positive Action and the attraction of underrepresented staff groups into senior roles across the organisation, but specifically in operational roles.

As we deliver our strategic ED&I objectives, we will continue to implement significant changes in areas such as:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion training and education; ensuring staff are equipped to deliver against the ED&I agenda in providing services inclusively to the public of Merseyside
- Delivery of the People Strategy and specifically embedding ED&I into leadership training and recruitment, to ensure our leaders and managers are fair and inclusive in their approach to supporting and developing staff from all groups and celebrating and embracing difference.
- Delivery of our Staff Engagement strategy; ensuring that ED&I is evaluated clearly throughout and address any issues that may raise.

Our challenge continues to be how we monitor the outcome of these changes, ensuring they uphold equality, diversity and inclusion, at the same time maintaining our mission to keep the public of Merseyside safe from the risk of fire and other emergencies.

I am confident that we will continue to make improvements and maintain the right balance between using our resources efficiently and effectively and building a better and stronger more inclusive MF&RA.

**Phil Garrigan, Chief Fire Officer**  
**Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service**

## Welcome

As Lead Authority Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority with responsibility for Community Risk Management (Cllr Peter Brennan) and People (Cllr Jan Grace) our roles extend into supporting and scrutinising Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (DC&I) related work throughout the Service in two ways:

- Ensuring that the diverse communities of Merseyside are provided with services that support their needs. This is discussed throughout the report in relation to the Knowing our Communities and Engaging with Diverse Business projects.
- Ensuring that our staff and volunteers are treated fairly and their diversity is respected and celebrated, that staff are fully supported in the performance of their duties and that they in turn treat each other and the wider community with dignity and respect when carrying out their duties.

In order to carry out our roles effectively we will help scrutinise performance against the ED&I Objectives that the Authority has set itself and its ED&I action plan, and support initiatives, events and projects that help the Authority continue to embed ED&I throughout the organisation.

All Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority members will continue to make a commitment to improve staff engagement across the organisation, through station visits and through informal conversations organised for staff representatives from all departments of the Service.

We do hope you find this report useful. We would welcome any feedback with respect to the report and we are keen to develop further partnerships with organisations to improve outcomes for the people of Merseyside with respect to fire, safety and rescue. For more information or to initiate talks please do not hesitate to contact us at

**Authority Lead Members for Equality & Diversity 2017/18**

**Cllr Peter Brennan and Cllr Jan grace**



## Aims of this report

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority is pleased to publish this report as a reflection on the work delivered across the organisation in pursuit of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) excellence. This report presents the public and other stakeholders with many success stories about the work we do on a day to day basis to ensure that the services we deliver provide our diverse communities with confidence that we are addressing their needs.

This year's report provides an overview of:

- Progress made for the first year of our new Equality Objectives 2017 - 2020
- Highlights from the delivery of our Equality & Diversity Action plan 2017 – 2020
- A Summary of our Equality Analysis of Workforce and Employment Data report as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.
- Our Gender Pay Gap reporting as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018

This report also demonstrates our commitment to meeting the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in relation to:

1. Publishing, at least annually, information to demonstrate our compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the PSED.
2. Preparing and publishing one or more specific and measurable objectives that helps to achieve the aims set out in the PSED.
3. Publishing equality information and the objectives in a manner that is accessible to the public.

ED&I is driven by a comprehensive and well monitored Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action [Plan](#), underpinned by an Equality & Diversity Policy. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out on policy and strategic documents and when these are approved by the Authority they are published on our website [www.merseyfire.gov.uk](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk) with Authority papers. Each area of the organisation also develops ED&I priorities in relation to their plans and this ensures that ED&I is

consistently considered and is embedded as part of organisational planning and development.

This report also provides an internal reflection on the ED&I work that has been delivered. As an employer it is important that we are embedding ED&I to achieve fairer outcomes for our employees and that we work towards reflecting the diverse communities we serve.

## **Governance and Performance Management**

From 2013 to 2018 the delivery of the ED&I Action Plan was led by the Diversity and Consultation Manager, co-ordinated through our Diversity Action Group (DAG) and scrutinised through our strategic Equality Group (SEG). DAG is made up of departmental representatives (and is supported by the Authority Lead Member for ED&I) and meets quarterly to discuss and monitor progress against the action plan objectives. The DAG is also critical in reviewing equality impacts in relation to MF&RA's services, policies, and projects through a robust Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

Performance against the Equality & Diversity Action Plan has been scrutinised at by the Strategic Equality Group (SEG), chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and made up of Senior Managers representing all departments of the organisation, and ultimately by the fire & rescue authority. We are reviewing this approach in 2018.

The Diversity and Consultation Manager also holds regular equality engagement meetings with the Representative Bodies (trade unions and staff associations), to ensure that they are aware of the ED&I developments and have an opportunity to contribute to the consideration of the ways in which ED&I influences the provision of fire and rescue services.

MF&FA Members have received EIA training to support their scrutiny role and help them make significant decisions on changes to services provided by the Authority.

Equality & Diversity performance reports scrutinised by the Fire & Rescue Authority are made public via the MF&RA website:

[www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspx/pages/fire\\_auth/authorityContent.aspx](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspx/pages/fire_auth/authorityContent.aspx)

## **Our Equality Objectives 2017-2020**

As part of our commitment to delivering services and employing staff in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, and in line with the responsibilities placed on the Authority by the Act, we have established five Equality Objectives that are both inward looking (staff related) and outward looking (community and service delivery related)

The reviewed and updated objectives below better demonstrate how we show due regard to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

The following sections outline our progress in relation to meeting our objectives.

### **Equality Objective 1 – Create a strong cohesive organisation that is positive to rising to the future challenges we face:**

This objective measures the diversity of MF&RA's workforce, which aims to better represent the makeup of communities, and staff will work to encourage applications from underrepresented groups when carrying out any internal or external recruitment. Progress so far includes:

There were 999 staff employed at MF&RA, as at the end of 2017/18, compared to 991 in 2016/17.

- There were 632 Operational posts, representing 63.2% of the total workforce population.
- 335 staff were in Support posts, representing 33.5% of the total workforce population.
- 32 were Fire Control staff, representing 3.2% of the total workforce population

When reviewing the gender equality data by position the following observations are made:

- Overall females make up 24.8% (248) of the total staffing at MF&RA, a slight increase on the 22.2% seen during 2015/16.
- Support staff have an approximate 50% split between male and female. There are more females in the lower paid roles – including staff working grades 1-5 (65.8%, 54 out of 82)<sup>1</sup>. Within medium pay bands (grades 6-11) 46.4% (98 from 211) are female<sup>2</sup>
- Uniformed/operational staff had a gender split of 92.1% (582) male and 7.9% (50) female
- Fire Control staff have a gender split of 9.4% (3) male to 88.9% (29) female, which is a slight increase in male staffing. Due to the traditional nature of Fire Control work, this is generally in line with sector averages, as Fire Control is normally a female dominated occupation
- 46.9% of the total staff employed at MF&RA are aged 46 and over
- 4.2% of staff had declared a disability (lower than the UK average population at 20%)
- 93.9% of the total staff population at MF&RA were White British/White other, 4.7% of staff are Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) –lower than the Merseyside average at 5.5%<sup>3</sup>

### **Gender Pay Gap**

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 came into force on 31st March 2017. The regulations stipulate that organisations that employ more than 250 people must publish a report on their gender pay gap. There is a slight difference in the regulation for public sector organisations, in so much as we must publish an annual “snapshot” of our gender pay as at the 31st March each year in our annual report.

### **Calculations for MF&RA as at 31/03/2018**

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<sup>1</sup> Grade 1, with a starting salary of £15,014 pa, to £20,138 at the top of grade 5.

<sup>2</sup> Grade 6, with a starting salary of £20,661 to £33,437 at the top of grade 11

<sup>3</sup> For details of our ongoing positive action campaigns, please see our Looking forward section on page 39.

Gender pay gap figures are based on a total of 940<sup>4</sup> staff in scope for this gender pay exercise, 712 (75.7%) were male and 228 (24.3%) were female.

### Mean gender pay gap

This measure is the difference between the mean (average) hourly rates of pay for Male and female full pay relevant employees

Staff group	Male hourly pay £	Female hourly pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap %
All staff	£15.16	£13.39	-£1.77	-11.7%
Operational Staff (inc Fire Control)	£15.29	£13.49	-£1.80	-11.8%
Support staff	£14.69	£13.34	-£1.35	-9.2%

Across the organisation, the mean gender pay gap is -11.7% or £1.77 per hour. For just operational personnel the gap is -11.8% and for Support Staff the gap is narrower at -9.2%.

### Measure 2. Median gender pay gap

This is the difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male and female full-pay relevant employees

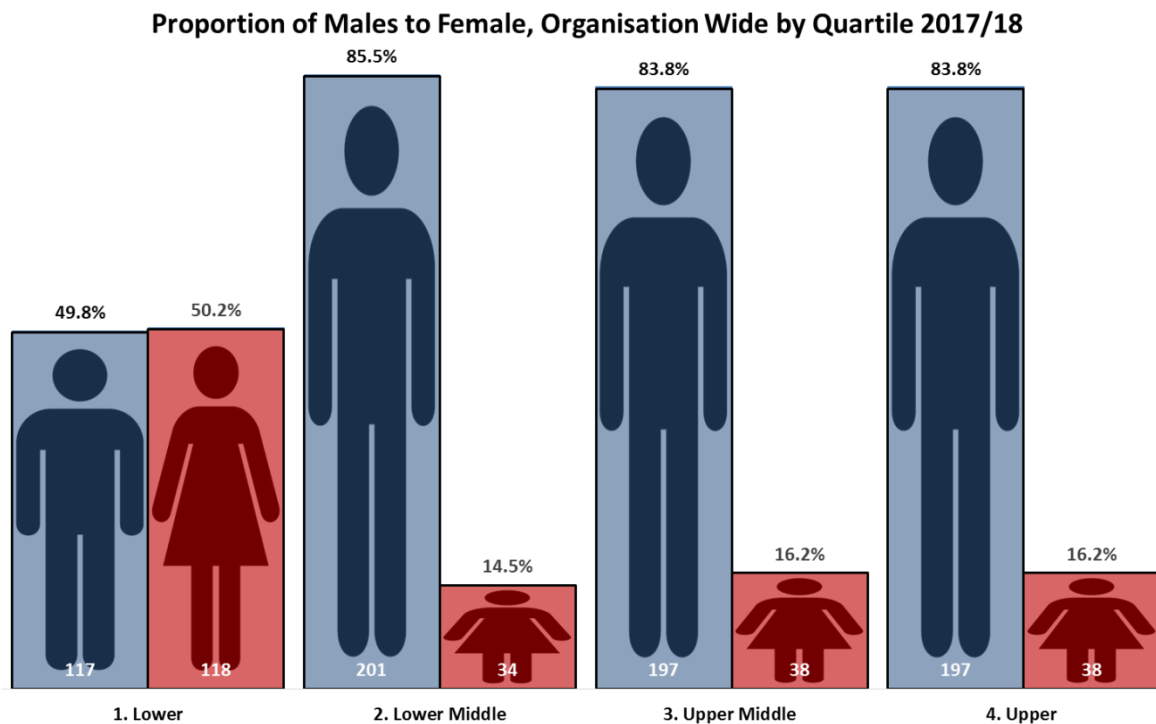
Staff group	Male hourly pay £	Female hourly pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap %
All staff	£13.97	£13.42	-£0.55	-3.9%
Operational Staff (inc Fire Control)	£13.97	£13.95	-£0.02	-0.1%

<sup>4</sup> A number of employees weren't included in the Gender Pay Gap Figures because they were not "Full Pay Relevant". This means that for some reason, detailed below an individual did not receive a full month's salary for the reporting period.

- Staff who joined the service part way through the pay period
- Staff who left the service part way through the pay period
- Staff in receipt of childcare vouchers
- Staff on maternity leave
- Staff with deductions for unpaid leave / jury service
- Staff with deductions for half/no pay due to sickness

Support staff	£13.67	£12.41	-£1.26	-9.2%
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The difference between male and female staff is much narrower, with a -3.9% difference at a MF&RA level, a 0.1% difference for operational staff and -9.2% difference for support staff. The UK median Gender Pay Gap using Office for National Statistics data shows the average pay gap for all employees was 9.1% during 2017<sup>5</sup>.



A copy of our full Annual Workforce Equality Analysis report including our Gender Pay Gap Analysis can be found on our website. [\(insert link\)](#)

<sup>5</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/understandingthegenderpaygapintheuk/2018-01-17>

## **Equality Objective 2 – To ensure that people from diverse communities receive equitable services that meet their needs.**

By understanding the needs of people from different protected groups and carrying out engagement with and monitoring of those groups, we can ensure that people are fully supported to reduce fire and rescue related risk.

Progress is as follows:

We carry out home fire safety checks with at risk people (most often those aged over 65).

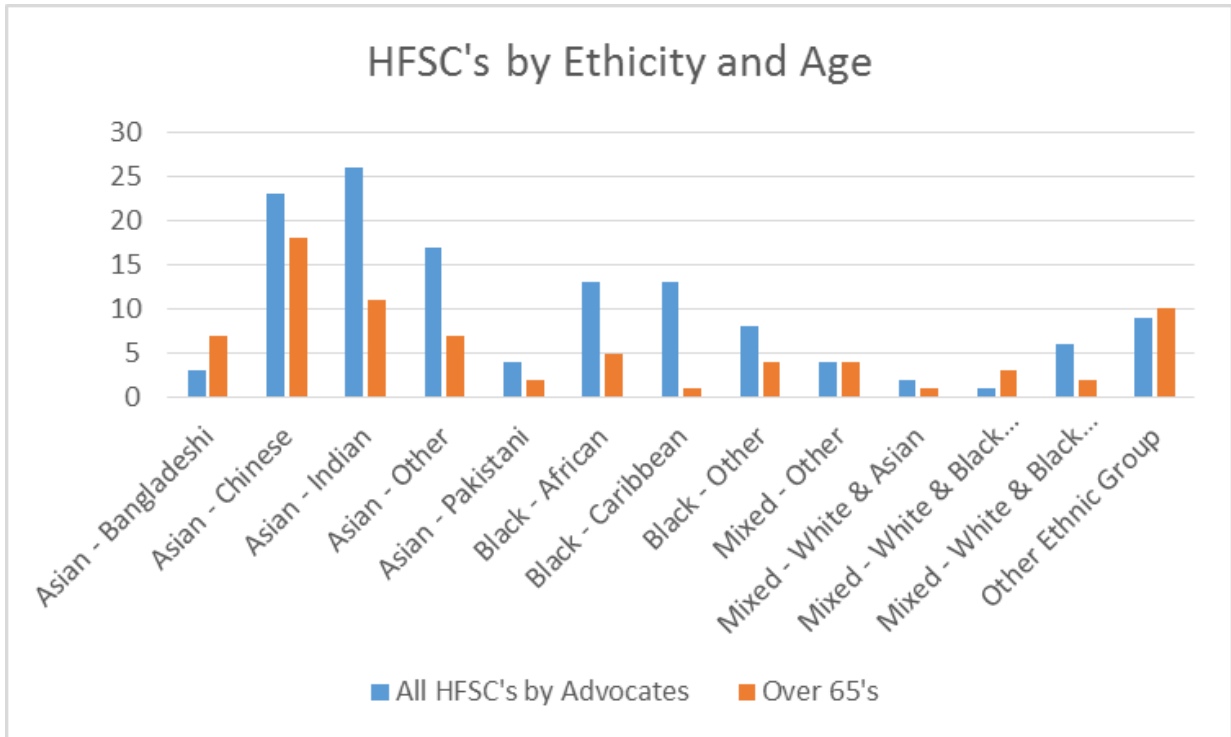
### **HFSC Equality Monitoring data**

- 1.2% of HFSCs were delivered by community safety advocates to over 65's across Merseyside in the BAME communities. This compares well to the overall over 65's BAME population which is currently 1.6% in Merseyside.
- Our operational crews have also delivered HFSCs to over 65's of which 0.63% were to the BAME community.
- During 2017/18 the occupier's ethnicity was not recorded on 19.4% of occasions when delivering HFSC's.

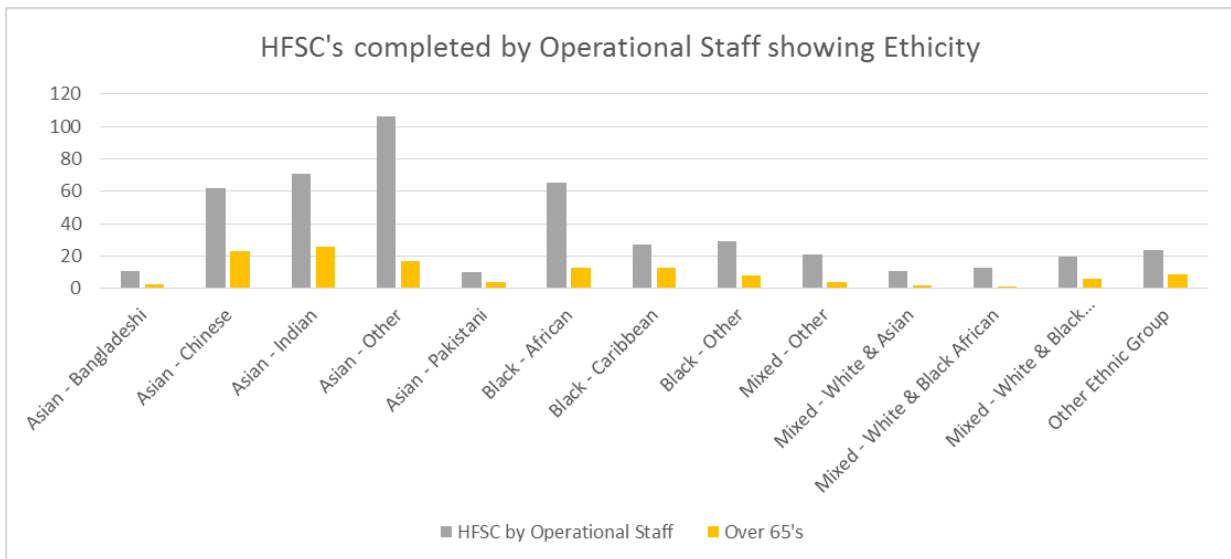
The figures are benchmarks for the first year of the new ED&I Objectives and will be monitored annually. Our ED&I Action Plan focuses on increasing the amount of ethnicity and religion data during HFSC visits.

The charts below show that during 2017/18 our community safety advocates carried out a total of 9,697 Home Fire Safety Checks across Merseyside. The chart below shows that of those 9,697, 299 or 3.08% identified themselves as BAME, and of those 75 or 1.22% were for people over 65.





The chart below shows that of the 36,859 HFSC's carried out by operational staff, 470 or 1.28% were to people who identified themselves as BAME. Of those, 129 or 0.63% were to people over the age of 65.



## HFSC Satisfaction Survey

We have begun to carryout HFSC satisfaction surveys, and these will be analysed to gather information about any Equality & Diversity issues or impacts in relation to service delivery to protected groups.

### **Prince's Trust equality monitoring data**

We offer 12 week Princes Trust development programmes. 116 young people attended Princes Trust programmes during 2017/18 of which 86 completed the survey:

- 67% were male and 32% were female (one student did not identify their gender)
- 17.2% were from a BAME background
- 9% identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB)
- 36% said they had a disability or long term health condition.
- The average age of students was 17

This shows that there is a high level of diversity amongst the students who attend the programmes. It should be noted that all those students who responded to the feedback survey (86), stated they would recommend the programme to others.

### **Fire Cadet's equality monitoring data**

We operate fire cadet groups for young people aged 13 to 18.

- 12% were from a BAME background
- 23.5% declared having a disability or long term health condition.
- The average age of cadets is 14.

**Objective 3 – Reducing fires and other incidents amongst the vulnerable protected groups. By better understanding the impacts for diverse communities in terms of fires and other incidents we can measure whether there are any disproportionate outcomes for relevant protected groups.**

Progress is as follows:

#### **Accidental fires in the home**

As of 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018, there were a total of 915 accidental dwelling fires in the home across Merseyside in 2017/18. It is highly likely that this will be the lowest count of incidents on record. The incidents tend to take place in the most deprived areas of Merseyside with 48% (418) taking place in the 1-10% most deprived deciles. Some of those are also areas with the most diversity in terms of ethnicity and religion.

During 2017-18, there were 4 accidental fire dwelling fatalities and despite each death being a tragedy, this is the lowest figure achieved in the history of the Service, with no deaths occurring in Sefton, Knowsley and St Helens.

More detailed information on the fatalities in accidental dwelling fires can be found on our website in the following report; Analysis of Fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

**Objective 4 - To ensure that staff are better equipped to deliver their roles whilst:**

- **Showing due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.**
- **Advance equality of opportunities for underrepresented groups**
- **Foster good relations between people who share protected groups and those who don't.**

Progress is as follows:

## **Bullying and Harassment claims, Disciplinary and Grievance data**

There have been a total of 33 disciplinary proceedings during 2017/18, of which:

- 31 involved male members of staff
- 2 female.
- Ethnicity was 32 White British
- Irish and 1 from another White Background.

There have also been a total of 19 grievances. The people involved had the following characteristics:

- 17 involved male members of staff
- 2 were female.
- 17 were White British/Irish,
- 1 was Black/Black British
- 1 was Other Mixed Background.

Comparing these figures with the previous year (2016/17), there has been an increase in the number of disciplinary proceedings by approximately 33%, however there has been a large decrease in the number of grievances submitted which has reduced by 37. This is because 23 out of the total of 53 grievances were from individuals who had come together to make 2 collective grievances. The grievances will be monitored for any significant trend and will be reviewed with sufficient data.

## **Employment Tribunals**

2 (joint) claims were registered at tribunal in relation to equal pay, these were withdrawn by the claimants before the employment tribunal hearing.

A further National (All Fire & Rescue Authorities) Sex Discrimination Claim is ongoing in relation to pension issues and is partly agreed but subject to appeal by Fire & Rescue Authorities. The Employment Tribunals will be monitored for any significant trend and will be review when sufficient data becomes available.

## **Equality Objective 5 – to continue to aspire to achieving excellence, or equivalent in a Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework**

Taking part in assessment helps us to benchmark and continuously improve in relation to the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda and provides an external viewpoint on our progress in relation to our equality objectives.

Progress as follows:

### **FRS Equality Excellence Framework review 2017/18**

A self-assessment desk top exercise was completed prior to the Framework being revised during 2017 (Which has resulted in the framework being in development phase for some time). The Diversity and Consultation manager is reviewing the current arrangements for the Framework along with other frameworks and benchmarks including the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI), to establish the best framework for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority in the future, especially considering any outcomes from Fire & Rescue Service inspection in late 2018.

Looking at all aspects of ED&I across the Service, there are a number of areas where we benchmark and seek assessment to ensure the services we offer are of the highest standard.

- Our Youth Engagement teams have been reassessed against the Matrix Quality Standard for Information, Advice and Guidance. This assessment against the Matrix Standard provides a nationally recognised formal accreditation of information, advice and/or guidance services delivered against three key areas; Leadership and Management, Resources and Service Delivery, and provides improvement and development ideas to support the Service moving forward. The Standard also considers how guidance and support is tailored to meet diverse student's needs,

- In our ongoing commitment to staff mental health and wellbeing, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority have signed the “Time to Change” – Mind Blue Light pledge. The pledge is an indicator of our commitment, supported by a robust action plan setting out what we will do to ensure we meet the pledge across the whole organisation. Our pledge includes:
  - Support from all senior managers
  - Clear visible campaigns promoting Blue Light Mind and mental health issues
  - Creating our Blue Light Champions who can help and support colleagues and be there as a point of help and support
  - For all MFRS staff to be trained in Mental Health First Aid or Mental Health First Aid Lite
  
- As well as our Time to Change pledge we also undertake the Workplace Wellbeing Charter. The Charter is about encouraging organisations to make a real commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of their workforce, while also making the organisation an employer of choice for prospective employees.

For more information about the Time to Change – Mind Blue Light Pledge visit [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk). More information about the Workplace Wellbeing Charter can be found at [www.wellbeingcharter.org.uk](http://www.wellbeingcharter.org.uk)

- MF&RA carried out a self-assessment to become a Disability Confident Employer. The Disability Confident scheme aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing disabled people. It is voluntary and has been developed by employers and disabled people’s representatives. The self-assessment requires employers to consider two themes; “Getting the right people for your business” and “Keeping and developing people”.

The Disability Confident scheme supports employers to make the most of the talents disabled people can bring to the workplace. Through Disability Confident, thousands of employers are:

- challenging attitudes towards disability
  - increasing understanding of disability
  - removing barriers to disabled people and those with long-term health conditions
  - ensuring that disabled people have the opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations
- 
- We have also benchmarked our ED&I Objectives, Action Plan and policies against National Fire & Rescue Service best practice
    - National Joint Council Key Indicators (circular 06/16)
    - National Joint Council Circular with 26 key recommendations
    - Her Majesties' Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services key line of enquiry which include ED&I measures
    - Fire and Rescue Services Framework

All contribute to ensuring our plans, objectives and outcomes are meeting best practice.

Our Annual Workforce Equality Analysis report can be found on our website and it provides a more detailed breakdown on staff diversity. We produce this data annually to help us monitor the trends relating to the number of staff in different protected groups across all groups and levels of the organisation. The information also assists senior officers when developing Positive Action to encourage more diverse groups to apply for roles where they are most under represented. The data also assists the organisation with completing its duty to have due regard to the needs of different groups when developing employment practices and fire and rescue services. This is done through our Equality Impact Assessment process

## **Delivery of our Equality & Diversity Action Plan 2017 - 2020**

The Equality & Diversity Action Plan was first introduced in April 2013, to help MF&RA progress its long term Equality & Diversity objectives, to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and to reflect the fact that Equality & Diversity was embedded and delivered across all areas of the Organisation.

Our latest plan was developed for 2017-2020 and is aligned to the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan and E,D&I Objectives.

This section of our Annual Report provides highlights of some of the exceptional work undertaken by our staff and volunteers during 2017-18;

### **Fire Safety Reassurance Campaign following the Grenfell Tower tragedy**

Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in June 2017, MF&RA carried out a significant number of campaigns across Merseyside to provide fire safety advice and guidance to residents of tower blocks. We knew that there would be a number of residents who would not speak English, so translation packs were developed by the Diversity team to provide fire safety officers with effective means of communicating in the most commonly used languages spoken across Merseyside: French, Arabic, Polish, Cantonese, Urdu, Kurdish, Chinese (simple), Romanian, Spanish, Tamil and Czech. A sentence was also added to the reverse of the English language leaflet in the common languages above, directing residents to the MF&RA website for more information in their own language. Further support was provided to Community Risk Management staff on how to use the Language Line translation service to assist with providing fire safety advice on a face to face basis. The Service will be setting up a small translation group in the future to assist with any large campaigns and providing fire safety guidance in different languages

### **Translation and reaching our communities**

As part of a reassurance campaign delivered by our Community Risk Management team following a fatal fire in Kensington, and after consulting with Liverpool City



Council, Private Sector Housing Licensing Manager, an additional section was added to our leaflets which were to be delivered to properties in the area to provide tenants with information about the Landlord Licencing Scheme. It was decided that the additional information would also be include the information in Romanian, due to the large population living in the area.

### **Supporting vulnerable members of our community**

At MF&RA our Advocates working in the Community Risk Management Prevention team deliver a wide range of help and support to members of the community across Merseyside, including Home Fire Safety Checks, Safe and Well visits, Stop Smoking advice, and sign-posting to other agencies for help and support in the home. Below are a few examples of how our Advocates and other members of our prevention teams have been able to support vulnerable members of our community to ensure they are safe from the risk of fire in their home.

- **Supporting Deaf community members through sign language**

We have a number of Community Safety Advocates who are able to deliver advice to the public using British Sign Language (BSL). A Vulnerable Persons Advocate in Liverpool, stepped outside her normal role by carrying out a BSL referral for a Home Fire Safety Check. The Advocate in question, Ellie Williams would not normally carry out the BSL referrals, as these would be carried out by a colleague, Sarah Hannett. Sarah was on annual leave and as she knew that Ellie had recently completed her BSL level 1 asked if she would be able to carry out the visit. Following the visit feedback was received from the property owners to say that Ellie had been very helpful and had provided them with all the fire safety information that they needed. This flexibility means that we can offer a wider range of services to vulnerable people.

- **Safeguarding Referral**

Our Information Assistant, received a call from a man in Liverpool to enquire if he could obtain information regarding an incident outside his home. He explained that he was registered blind and was concerned about living at the property. After the call it became apparent that the gentleman was feeling very vulnerable living

at the property due to people continually knocking at his door and window, and rubbish being left outside. A neighbour said they had seen people climbing up the drainpipe and taunting the occupier. Sue asked if they had referred the taunting to the Police, and advised that they hadn't as yet. She suggested to them to contact the Police raising their concerns.

Also as a result of Sue's concerns the decision was taken to treat this incident as a safeguarding referral, and to arrange a home fire safety check and target hardening of the property against any further anti-social behaviour and hate crime.

Our Arson Reduction Advocate Sagal Jama and Sarah Hannett, our vulnerable Persons Advocate, attended the property and found that the fire had damaged the drainage internally and externally. The gentleman told our advocates that he couldn't have a guide dog due to the property being so small but he felt that a guide dog would provide him with independence and security. Our staff realised that the environment and accommodation that he lived in was making him extremely vulnerable and due to the nature and location of the fire it was decided that they would refer him to the Daisy UK Hate Crime Team.

Following on from our Sue's original call, Sarah and Sagal's visit and the work carried out by Daisy UK Hate Crime Team, they have been able to work with local social housing providers to identify a new property for the gentleman. The move has allowed him to get a guide dog which will provide him with the independence and security he felt he had lost.

- **Safety Workshops for Syrian Families**

Syrian refugee families living in Wirral attended Birkenhead Community Fire Station for a workshop run by MF&RA in partnership with Merseyside Police and Refugee Action. Twenty five adults and seven children attended the event, listening to presentations on fire safety, crime prevention and how to report hate crime. The session was interpreted into Arabic and families were able to raise questions about issues and problems affecting them.

Jen Spencer-Welsh, Prevention Hub Manager for Wirral said:

“The session enabled us to provide key safety messages, as well as break down perceived barriers between the uniformed services and the refugee community”

### **Ramadan 2017**

In May, ahead of the Ramadan period, the Authority held a targeted fire safety campaign, providing residents and businesses with tailored fire safety advice in the Princes Park ward of Liverpool, where 40% of the population are BAME. It is also known that there is a large Muslim community within the area.

The advice provided included:

- **Cooking safety tips**, especially as cooking takes place after sunset for Iftar and before dawn for Suhoor, so there may be an increased risk of fire.
- **Bukhoor, Incense, and Shisha Candle Safety**; these can help create a nice atmosphere, but they can be a fire hazard.
- The importance of **GET OUT, STAY OUT and PHONE 999**.

The afternoon campaign saw advocates and fire crews delivering 59 home fire safety checks, engaging with 25 Muslim families, delivering 38 bespoke leaflets, including delivery to properties where Muslim families are known to live.

### **Collaboration Project with Merseyside Police**

As part of an ongoing commitment to developing collaborative ED&I and community engagement opportunities with Merseyside Police, MF&RA has been instrumental in the development of two new initiatives, detailed below. We have a number of key projects which are specifically targeting vulnerable communities and delivering staff education and cooperation. The following outlines the progress made.

- **Merseyside Autism Attention Cards**

The Merseyside Autism Attention Card can help people with autism to alert emergency services to their condition so that they can be treated in a way that is most appropriate. MF&RA has agreed to carry out an HFSC for anyone with an

attention card. More work will take place to provide advocates and fire crews with further guidance and education on the impact that autism might have on people's approach to fire safety and evacuation from a fire.

For more information or to receive an application please contact Cheshire Autism Practical Support (CHAPS) by;

Telephone on: 0344 850 8607

Email: [admin@cheshireautism.org.uk](mailto:admin@cheshireautism.org.uk)

Or visit the website at: [www.cheshireautism.org.uk](http://www.cheshireautism.org.uk)

- **Dementia Pledge**

The second initiative is the Dementia Pledge which was signed by MF&RA, Merseyside Police and NWS at the Joint Control Centre in Bootle. The Pledge is part of a national emergency services programme. Our commitment is to deliver more training and guidance to staff over the next twelve months, and forty prevention staff from MF&RA attended Liverpool Museum for their award winning House of Memories training, specifically designed to support people with dementia. This training will support staff who are delivering home safety initiatives to vulnerable communities across Merseyside. Fire Service Direct (FSD) our home fire safety call coordinating centre, were included in the training as it is important to recognise and understand appropriate techniques for communicating with people with dementia effectively; this becomes especially difficult over the phone.

- **Diversity Calendar Collaboration**

As part of ongoing Blue Light Services Collaboration project, MF&RA developed the Diversity Events calendar for 2018 in partnership with Merseyside Police and North West Ambulance Service. The calendar shows many images of diversity in action across the three services. The calendar is designed to show key religious and cultural events taking place, to help staff plan events and campaigns at appropriate times during the year to help support our diverse communities.

Other collaboration projects have focused on diversity and inclusion both within the blue light services and for the diverse communities of Merseyside. Many of the projects are detailed throughout this report.

- **Merseyside Police Staff Support Network event**

MF&RA staff attended a Merseyside Police Staff Support Network event at in March. The event enabled our Diversity and Consultation Manager and a number of Diversity Champions to learn more about how other sectors run successful staff diversity networks in supporting underrepresented groups. An outcome of the event provides MF&RA staff with an open invitations to attend any Police staff network in the future and it was agreed on deliver of joint diversity events such as Black History Month and Pride.

## **Youth Engagement**

Our Youth Engagement teams continue to ensure that activities and programmes are fully inclusive for all young people. They endeavour to make modifications to enable children and young people from different protected groups to take part in all activities and have the same opportunities as their peers to move their lives forward. The Youth Engagement recruitment strategy actively invites children and young people who need additional support and this consideration is included when staff are planning and putting together their programmes.

Reasonable adjustments are part of the programme policies and are made for those students with disabilities or mental health conditions in relation to all aspects of the programme e.g.

- By finding alternative ways that evidence can be submitted to examining bodies, such as the use of videos for those students whose first language is not English.
- Taking a holistic approach to the qualifications offered on the Princes Trust Programmes and identifying alternative qualifications which can be tailored to suit the student.
- Making adjustments to the residential course to ensure that all team members are able to participate.

- Alterations to uniform for members of our Fire Cadets

As part of continuing work to support the children and young people who participate in our youth engagement programmes, all relevant staff are receiving a programme of specialist training e.g. Mental health first aid training and transgender awareness. This ensures that staff feel equipped to support, advise and guide participants from a diverse range of backgrounds. Opportunities for children and young people across Merseyside to access additional support are made available in several ways, including centric learning which supports students to help them control their own learning/development experience.

One of our aims is to help and support participants to move forward by returning to education or gaining employment. One of our volunteer Fire Cadet Instructors, who has been with our Wirral Fire Cadets for over 12 months now, was previously a student on a MF&RA Beacon Project. Whilst on this course, he gained the Most Outstanding Student Award and then continued to support MF&RA by mentoring students on numerous MF&RA youth programmes over the course of a number of years. Tom is now 19 years old and currently works as an apprentice primary school sports teacher.

Tom is a very valued volunteer and commits himself to work two hours every week to support our fire cadets. In addition, he supports numerous Cadet social action events on weekends. He is a popular volunteer, and attends regular planning meetings and always participates fully to ensure the Fire Cadets are supported and can develop in the best way they can. Tom is a perfect example of how a student who has previously worked with MF&RA, has used his success and experience to give back to other students. He is a fantastic role model and an ambassador for MF&RA.

### **Tackling Hate Crime**

Hate crime statistics for Merseyside are on the increase with 2731 cases being reported yearly. A hate crime or incident is any incident that may or may not be a criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate.

The prejudice or hate can be based on a number of factors including:

- Disability (including learning disabilities)
- Race/ethnicity
- Religion or belief (including no belief)
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity.

MF&RA has a strong role in supporting anyone who is subject to hate crime through the following:

- All community fire stations act as Safe Havens. These can be accessed by people who feel under threat, including those subject to hate crime.
- There are more than 70 third party hate crime reporting centres across Merseyside, which include all of our community fire stations. At each centre, staff are trained to help victims get advice and support in a safe and secure environment. They can help people contact the police or Stop Hate UK and report any incidents of hate or abuse.
- Carrying out Home Fire Safety Checks and target hardening properties where there may be a risk of fire being used as a hate crime. This will involve making the property or person more resistant to the potential of fire. There are many ways in which we can do this including:
  - Ensuring smoke alarms are fitted through the property
  - External doors are good quality, secure and have minimal gaps
  - Fitting letterbox flap locks
  - Fitting fire retardant letterbox bags
  - Ensuring bins and combustibles are away from the property
- Referrals for further support to organisations such as Daisy UK<sup>6</sup>.
- Hate crime incidents are logged to help MF&RA build a picture of ongoing issues against particular properties, this is then monitored and reported on at Strategic Hate Crime Boards across Merseyside.

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<sup>6</sup>[www.Daisyuk.com](http://www.Daisyuk.com)

As part of the national hate crime awareness week in October 2017, the Street Intervention Team (SIT), in conjunction with Liverpool City Council, held a number of sessions with students across Liverpool to raise awareness of hate crime. The events were successful in helping students to gain a greater understanding of what hate crime is and how it can affect individuals and their lives. Leaflets were issued to the public during the week. Merseyside held its own hate crime awareness week in February and Merseyside Police and MF&RA worked together to promote awareness through media campaigns and a dedicated blue light services Hate Crime event, which was held at Our Lady & St Nicholas Church in Liverpool City Centre . The event involved victims of hate crime describing their stories, students from Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts (LIPA) performing a short story about hate crime and young people and the choir from Daisy UK entertained the congregation with songs for peace and harmony.

### **Celebrating International Women's Day**

Following on from the success of the coffee and conversation morning held at MF&RA headquarters to celebrate International Women's Day in 2016, a second event was held in 2018. This provided an opportunity to celebrate how women and their achievements have contributed to our society, culture, politics, and charity work across Merseyside. There was practical input from staff in MF&RA People & Organisational Development department who provided attendees with advice and guidance about the policies that help achieve a good work life balance. The theme of the event followed the national IWD campaign **#pressforprogress**.

Approximately 60 people attended the event including, MF&RA and Merseyside Police staff, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Members, partner organisations, Fire Cadets from Archbishop Blanch School and our guest speakers, who shared their inspirational stories about their role and how they support women and communities in Merseyside.

As part of this year's event, "Small change – Big Impact", jars were issued to attendees to gather small change which when added together will make a big impact to different charities that support women both locally and nationally.



Attendees said they enjoyed and learned from the range of presentation styles, subjects and speakers from different backgrounds and experiences.

### **Knowing our Communities**

As part of our ongoing project; “Knowing our Communities”, MF&RA has engaged a Faith and Culture Advisor to help us gain access to different faiths and cultures mainly Asian, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh. Islam awareness training has been delivered to over 106 members of staff, Authority members and colleagues from Merseyside Police to help them gain a greater understanding of the Muslim faith, beliefs and practices. The sessions held were delivered in our local mosques, to help gain experience of what happens there and provided an opportunity to observe lunchtime prayer.

Feedback from those who have participated included:

*“A very useful day where the presenters (including the imam) were very open and honest. The course has dispelled many of the myths seen in the media”.*

***Merseyside Police.***

*“Very good course. It helped with the course content that it was delivered in a local mosques, as you were able to get a better understanding, knowledge and experience of the religion, beliefs and culture”.* ***Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service***

*“Very useful insight, resolves any misconceptions”.* ***Member of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority***

Our Culture and Faith Advisor brings a lot of experience in community engagement and community cohesion work and his excellent inter-personal skills coupled with his commitment to work in this field has assisted us in making contact with key members of the Muslim Communities and Mosques across Merseyside. This relationship led to a meeting held at the Al-Rahma Mosque in Liverpool where representatives from MF&RA including the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, our Diversity and Consultation Manager, members of our Prevention and Protection teams and our Recruitment team met with 12 Muslim community leaders and Imams to discuss how MF&RA could work more closely with the Muslim community. Discussions were centred around business

fire safety, fire prevention and recruitment. Through these new contacts we are able to circulate targeted fire safety information (using Friday prayers), career opportunities and key community messages across the whole Muslim community of Merseyside, and we will be continuing to develop this relationship with further engagement and projects over the coming year.

### **Engaging Diverse Businesses (EDB)**

Engaging Diverse Businesses is a National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) project which was established by MF&RA in 2015. The project is now part of the NFCC Protection Strategy 2018 – 2020 action plan. The project seeks to engage with business owners from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds to help break down barriers to deliver fire safety messages and actions. The project is making good progress and a draft research report has been developed which will assist fire & rescue services nationally (and other regulatory bodies) to understand how diverse business owners respond to Health & Safety and Fire Safety legislation requirements. The second phase of the project is underway, with the development of an educational toolkit with examples of resources and notable practice. To date, five case studies have been developed with fire & rescue services across the country. The next stage is to promote the project outcomes at future fire & rescue service conferences, including the Institute of Fire Engineers and Asian Fire Service Association in November 2018.

### **Positive Action Update**

Our Positive Action team continue to promote the wide range of career opportunities available in MF&RA. Our popular “Have a go” days are held at our Training and Development Academy for people considering a career as a firefighter. The MF&RA Positive Action team have also arranged open days at Kensington and Aintree Fire Stations to give people an idea of what life is like on station and speak to fire crews to decide whether this is a career for them.

We continue to meet with stakeholders in the community, e.g. Wirral Change, LJMU, University of Liverpool and the Chinese community, to promote our employment opportunities and run workshops. Information for two roles, one with our Corporate Communications team and the other for our Fire Control vacancies have been circulated to Muslim communities to help promote MF&RA as a career choice. This

has seen an increase in members of the Muslim community attending these events to gain a greater understanding of the role of a Firefighter.

### **Operational Response staff engagement**

As part of the ongoing work to support staff engagement with our operational response staff, focus groups have taken place to help understand what operational staff think about working on station and how staff view difference, diversity and unconscious biases.

The work is part of an ongoing operational response staff engagement project which will continue with further focus groups in 2018/19 and will also use staff survey results in 2018 to assist with developing engagement practice to help build future ED&I training that meets the needs of our staff.

### **Access Audit**

As part of our ongoing delivery of improvement programmes identified from our Access Audit, the Diversity Team, Estates and ICT teams have been working together to ensure that Service Headquarters is accessible to all visitors. A visibly enhanced access button has been installed at the entrance to reception, and the disabled parking bays at the front of the building repainted to ensure that visitors to Service Headquarters can access the building easily.

Analogue hearing loops have been installed in the community rooms of all PFI (Private Finance Initiative) fire stations and are tested regularly. Appropriate signage and instructions on how to use the loops is being updated and will be displayed in the relevant rooms.

### **MF&RA Volunteers**

We currently have 33 volunteers and expect to have more joining during 2018/19.

The diversity of our current volunteers is as follows:

- 3 have disclosed a disability
- 26 are male and 7 female
- 1 volunteer is aged 66+

- 4 volunteers are aged 16-21 and the majority are within age range of 22-30 and 31-40.

Our aim is to ensure that all our volunteers are able to join in the campaigns they wish to participate in. During 2017/18, volunteers have taken part in various campaigns such as arson reduction, high rise /Protection campaigns (following the Grenfell Tower fire), reassurance campaigns, careers fairs, Restart a Heart campaign, Bonfire season, road safety campaigns aimed at over 65 year olds and homeless campaigns led by the Whitechapel Centre.

We are currently working with One-Vision housing to offer a de-cluttering service. The programme will see the MF&RA volunteers help tackle issues of hoarding over a long period of time. Acting as friends, they will continue to visit residents to ensure that homes remain free of clutter and tackle any further hoarding issues should they arise.

### **Mental Health First Aid.**

Over 160 firefighters and non-operational staff have completed the Mental Health First Aid or Mental Health First Aid Lite course, this is a significant contribution training all our staff over the coming years. This will help staff to:

- Gain a wider understanding, for themselves and others, of some issues surrounding mental health
- Gain a greater understanding of how and why positive and negative mental health affects business
- Work more effectively with people experiencing mental health problems

By the end of the course participants will be able to:

- Identify the discrimination surrounding mental health problems
- Define mental health and some mental health problems
- Relate to people's experiences
- Help support people with mental health problems
- Begin developing a business case for promoting positive mental health in the workplace.
- Look after their own mental health



## Events and Awards

### **Prince's Trust Graduate Crowned Young Achiever of the Year.**

In our Annual Report last year we shared the story of two of our Prince's Trust graduates John and Saad who had both been nominated for a regional award by their Prince's Trust team leaders. We are pleased to report that Saad, who fled his home in Syria in 2014, was awarded the Young Achiever of the Year award at the regional ceremony held at the National Football Museum in Manchester. The award recognises young people who have overcome adversity to transform their lives.

### **National Positive Practice in Mental Health Awards**

Positive Practice in Mental Health (PPiMH) is a national user-led collaborative of seventy five organisations, including, NHS Trusts, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Police Forces, third sector providers, front line charities and service user groups. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service was shortlisted for National Positive Practice in Mental Health Awards in the following categories:

- Mental Health in the Emergency Services
- Mental Wellbeing of Staff

MF&RA won the national Mental Wellbeing of Staff award, and received a Highly Commended award for the Mental Health in the Emergency Services at the event held in Blackpool.

Additionally, following the success of MF&RA being the first fire service in the UK to win a 'Highly Commended' Award at last year's Positive Practice in Mental Health Awards, the PPiMH Collaborative Members have asked MF&RA to be the first fire & rescue service in the country to both join the national collaborative and also lead in the Mental Health and the Emergency Services sector.

The then Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan, said "I am really pleased MF&RA won the National Positive Practice in Mental Health Award for our work in ensuring we put the mental wellbeing of our staff at the heart of everything we do. It has been a true partnership between the Service and our representative bodies – without

whose support this wouldn't have been achieved. Special Thanks go to Occupational Health Officer Kelly Patterson and Group Manager Mark Thomas for their unswerving compassion and leadership.”

### **#Iwill ambassador**

Adam Cousins a Fire Cadet at Bootle and Netherton Community Fire Station, is one of 50 young people from across the UK who has been selected as a #iwill ambassador by the charity Step Up to Serve. The 200 inspirational young ambassadors are aged between 10 and 20, and are leading fantastic social action in their communities. They come from a variety of backgrounds across the UK, but all have one thing in common – a passion that drives them to find time to help others. From mentoring their peers online, to coordinating a charity fundraiser or enhancing their local area, every one of these #iwill ambassadors is making a difference.

Adam an aspiring firefighter has said “For me it’s helping my community however I can and supporting others. I love taking part in new experiences, learning new skills and getting the chance to put my Fire Cadet skills into practice by working as part of a team. As an ambassador I have learned about road safety, created my own presentation and I have spoken to young people at a number of different colleges to help them realise the dangers of the road. I intend to help more with road & water safety campaigns. As being an ambassador I still volunteer at MF&RA Heritage & Education Centre and will continue to help with fundraising events. Being involved in the community is extremely important and I hope to continue to get more people involved and hope they can get the same opportunities I have had with both MF&RA and the #iwill campaign.”

### **Pride 2017 – “International Love”**

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority staff, apprentices and Authority Members, along with family, friends (and a few family pets) attended the Liverpool Pride event in July. All those attending started the day with breakfast at our Liverpool City Community Fire Station, before walking to St George’s Plateau to join the main march. The breakfast event was hosted by our FireProud LGBT Staff Network, and our FireProud Allies.

Students from our Prince's Trust Team four, based at Kirkby Community Fire Station, also attended the event year along with team leader Alison Caulfield. The students who attended really enjoyed the day and giving their full support to Pride this year.

***“Pride to me means equality for all, no matter what gender, sexual reference or anything. Happiness for all.”* Matty**

***“The reason I was happy to attend Pride was because it was respect for everyone of any gender and sexuality, everyone was happy.”* Paul**

***“Pride to me is equality. To have the freedom to be who you are without judgement. It's to love everyone no matter what. It's to be accepted for who you are. Everyone is different and it should be embraced.”* Meg**

Many departments are involved in the organisation of MF&RA's attendance at Pride and this is often done voluntarily.



## Looking Forward to 2018/19

In 2018/19 our ED&I team will be working to further embed ED&I excellence into the organisation. ED&I remains a key focus for the organisation and good progress has been made in recent years. We will continue to do this in the following ways:

- We will complete our work with training and development of staff to embed ED&I into training programmes.
- We will continue to work in collaboration with partner organisations to maximise the opportunities for effective community engagement with shared at-risk groups. This will enable us to continue delivering effective diverse community engagement with limited resources to ensure that MF&RS knows and understands its communities and can respond with appropriate services.
- We will take part in Merseyside Police forums to ensure we engage with as many community representatives as possible to help us develop and deliver services that meet the needs of our communities.
- We will contribute to the development and delivery of Fire & Rescue Service standards, peer review and inspection in relation to ED&I.
- We will investigate the concept of unconscious bias in conjunction with the inclusive leadership work we are undertaking as part of our People Strategy. We will investigate the benefits of such training in relation to different staff groups/levels and develop our own bespoke programme as part of our ongoing commitment to staff engagement.
- We will review staff network/diversity champions to support diverse groups within the organisation and the diverse communities in Merseyside.
- We will continue to support Positive Action for recruitment and progression to increase the number of underrepresented applicants in various areas of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service including, increasing the number of men within our Fire Control, and Recruitment of bi-lingual Business Safety Advisors.

## Conclusion

It's really pleasing to see the outcomes from our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion related activities and strategies and the impact they have on our staff and the diverse communities of Merseyside. I hope that you have enjoyed reading this report and now understand more about how we ensure that we are considering the needs of different groups, fostering good relations between different equality groups and ensuring that there is equality for all in our services and employment practices.

Whilst we are pleased with our progress being made, there is still more to do. The ongoing projects around Knowing our Communities, Engaging with Diverse Businesses, Positive Action programmes, diversifying our workforce and ED&I training are all longer term strategies which will help will help us to continue to deliver and help to ensure we support our communities and staff.

If you would like to learn more about our work, or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Diversity and Consultation Manager:

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