



**Service Policy: PODPOL23
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy**

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Document Control:

Active date	Review date	Author	Editor	Publisher
FEB 2017	APRIL 2025			

Amendment History:

Version	Date	Author	Reasons for Change
1.0	April 2017		New Updated Policy
2.0	April 2018		Annual Review
3.0	April 2019		Annual Review
4.0	June 2020		Annual Review
4.1	April 2021		Annual Review
5.0	April 2023		Updated policy to reflect new ground rules and leadership message
5.1	March 2024		Annual Review

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Initial	Full	Date	Reviewed by	Comments
				No adverse impact identified, the policy is positively supporting protected groups
		10.03.2017		EIA completed
		April 2022		Reviewed in line with policy review and change of directorate
	X	2023		Located on Portal
		2024		EIA Reviewed in with policy annual review

Civil Contingencies Impact Assessment:

Date	Reviewed by	Comments

Related Documents:

Doc. Type	Ref No.	Title	Location
SI	0867	Grievance	Portal
SI	New	Equality and Diversity resources	
SI	0854	Conduct (Discipline)	
Policy	PODPOL09	Bullying and Harassment	

Distribution List:

Name	Position	Department
DAG	All DAG Members	

Sign-Off List:

Name	Position

Target Audience:

All MFRS	Principal Officers	Senior Officers	Operational Crews	Fire Safety	Community Fire Safety	Support Staff
X						

Ownership:

FOI exemption	Yes	URL

required?	No	X	Reason	
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Legislation:

Title	The Equality Act
	The Public Sector Equality Duty 2010

Contact:

Department	Email	Telephone ext.
Strategy & Performance		

POLICY

STRATPOL11 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

1. Policy Introduction and Background:

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) aims to create a culture that respects and values people's differences and secures genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities. This applies to job applicants, employees, volunteers, users of the organisation's services and those who deliver services on behalf of MFRA. This policy is influenced by current legislation; The Equality Act 2010, but it also reflects the intention of MFRA to promote the best practice in this area.

The overall aim of this policy is to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. In order to achieve this, MFRA will endeavour to create an environment in which there is respect for every individual and recognition of their needs and aspirations, regardless of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation or any other factor that cannot be justified.

2. Policy Explanation:

Statement of Commitment:

At MFRA, we consider that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all groups both in employment, and to our fire and rescue services.

We consider diversity to mean celebrating difference and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for MFRA too.

How we embed equality and diversity is through our approach to inclusion. By ensuring that a diverse range of people feel they are part of MFRS and are valued for their contribution, we will deliver even better services to our diverse communities.

Individuals with different cultures, perspectives and experiences are at the heart of the way MFRA works. We want to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people, regardless of their background and make best use of their talents. At MFRA we are guided by our values in everything we do, and recognise that being a diverse and inclusive employer helps us fulfil our responsibility to make a difference in keeping the communities of Merseyside safe and free from fire and other emergencies.

MFRA will seek to develop a work environment where we treat all employees as individuals, fairly and in a consistent way. We work within the spirit and the practice of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting a culture of respect, dignity and listening and actively challenging discrimination, should it ever arise. We will remove unnecessary barriers for our employees seeking opportunities through training and development, promotion and career planning.

We will continue to support our leaders, managers and employees to demonstrate the principles of diversity and inclusion in their everyday activities, roles and functions.

Policy Scope:

The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all employees, whether part time or full time, on a substantive or fixed-term contract, and also to associated persons such as secondees, agency staff, contractors, volunteers and others employed under a contract of service.

This policy is also of particular relevance to Directors, Functional Managers, Line Managers and other employees concerned with recruitment, training & development, promotion, grievance and discipline, conduct and capability and any other procedures and employment decisions which effect staff and the communities of Merseyside.

This policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and also to conduct outside of the workplace that is related to your work (e.g. at meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues), or which may impact on MFRA's reputation (e.g. the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to MFRA).

Equality and Diversity at MFRA:

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. MFRA will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment and victimisation committed against an employee, contractor, volunteer, job applicant or visitor because of a protected characteristic:

- sex (gender);
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership status;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin and cast);
- disability;
- sexual orientation;
- religion and or belief (or no belief); and
- age.
- Socio-economic disadvantage, (Although not one of the 9 protected groups M&RA recognise that Socio-economic disadvantage affects many deprived communities within Merseyside.)

Discrimination on the basis of work pattern (part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working,) and working group (Operational /Non Operational) which is unjustifiable will also not be accepted.

All employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities in MFRA. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

MFRA has developed Ground Rules to assist employees and managers with managing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The Ground Rules apply to all staff at all levels and cover 5 main areas

- Treating others as they wish to be treated
- Respecting individual rights and the right to be different in relation to their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief, culture, age and political views
- Not acting in any manner which might cause them upset, e.g. by not using offensive language, by not abusing their position of trust., by not displaying offensive material, by not making hurtful remarks, by not using nicknames which cause upset, by not causing upset through jokes and banter
- Making it acceptable for all individuals to voice an opinion or share a problem and to listen

and act on any concerns raised

- Welcoming new arrivals and visitors in the workplace, e.g. by properly introducing themselves, by helping new arrivals find their way around, by showing new arrivals how things are done, by not exploiting their newness and lack of knowledge, by listening to what they say if they need help, by being patient with new staff when they are learning

Responsibilities:

Authority:

- The Authority accepts its responsibility as an employer to ensure the implementation and monitoring of this policy and in return can expect all employees to co-operate and fulfil their role in implementing this policy.
- The Authority will remove all forms of discrimination and take positive action to address inequality. It will ensure the organisation will provide suitable equipment, facilities and a working environment that meet the different needs of our employees.

Managers:

- Managers are important in ensuring that this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is implemented across all areas of the organisation. Managers will be expected to:
- Lead by example and ensure all employees apply the principles of this policy.
- Be responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented in their area of service delivery.
- Treat employees with dignity and respect and make sure individuals feel valued and rights are protected under the policy.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion and challenge inappropriate behaviour at all times.

Individuals:

All employees are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and work in an environment that is free from any form of inappropriate behaviour by managers, colleagues, partner organisations, contractors and service users. Employees will:

- Provide members of the community with a good service and treat them with dignity and respect.
- Implement this policy and carry out laid down procedures in their job including treating colleagues fairly without prejudice or discrimination
- Report any suspected discriminatory actions or practices
- Not unlawfully discriminate against job applicants or employees in recruitment, employment, promotion, conditions of service and training
- Not harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against people because of any areas referred to in this policy
- Not instruct or put pressure on others to discriminate unlawfully
- Not victimise people because they have made a complaint or provided information on harassment or discrimination
- Seek guidance from an appropriate person – e.g. Line Managers, Diversity and Consultation Manager, HR Manager or Trade Union – if in any doubt about any aspect of the policy

Service delivery to our communities:

We will focus on continued improvement in providing a service to our diverse communities. We will build a closer and more effective relationship, consult and involve to provide a service that meets their needs using all available resources and be accountable for our actions. We will take steps to help staff understand the diversity of the communities they work with.

We will continue to develop our Integrated Risk Management Planning process to identify and prioritise our services for those most at risk and publish our progress.

Training and information will be made available to ensure that this policy is understood and implemented. Breaches of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will not be tolerated and disciplinary action will be taken if this occurs at all levels of the organisation.

Resolving Issues:

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be investigated in accordance with the appropriate MFRA procedure. MFRA will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably by MFRA as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under MFRA's Discipline and Grievance Policy.

3. Policy Implementation:

We will:

- Publicise and promote our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Provide communication for all our staff to ensure they understand their rights and responsibilities under the policy.
- Work with internal and external staff networks to highlight lived experience, best practice & a vehicle for change
- Make sure the Policy is incorporated into the leadership message & leadership behaviours, learning and development activities, staff wellbeing, culture and decision-making process, through the use of Equality Impact Assessments where required
- Look to increase the diversity of the workforce through positive action across all occupations through the Positive Action Strategy
- Use every opportunity to highlight the five Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) which sets out five ethical principles to help govern behaviour for the purpose of this policy in particular, principle five & the need to continually focus against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.
- Make sure that local services meet the needs of local people in Merseyside through our wider work on knowing our communities.
- Engage and consult our staff and our communities and where appropriate involve them in decisions that we make to improve service delivery (and matters that affect staff)
- Work in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to successfully deliver improved access to our services for all the diverse communities and those most at risk. We will address any form of discrimination in employment practices and service delivery.
- Ensure that Ground Rules are considered alongside the organisation's core values. By respecting these values, we can create an environment that allows all our employees to enjoy their work and reach their maximum potential.

The Service Instructions used to underpin this Policy are:

PODPOL09	Bullying and harassment
SI 0867	Grievance
SI 0854	Conduct (Discipline)
SI 0877	Resources to support managers and staff to implement the Equality & Diversity Policy
	Ground Rules
	Leadership Message & Leadership Behaviours

Positive Action Strategy
ED&I Assurance Framework/Equality Impact Assessment Guidance
The Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) (Principle 5)

All Policies can be found on the [Website](#)

POLICY