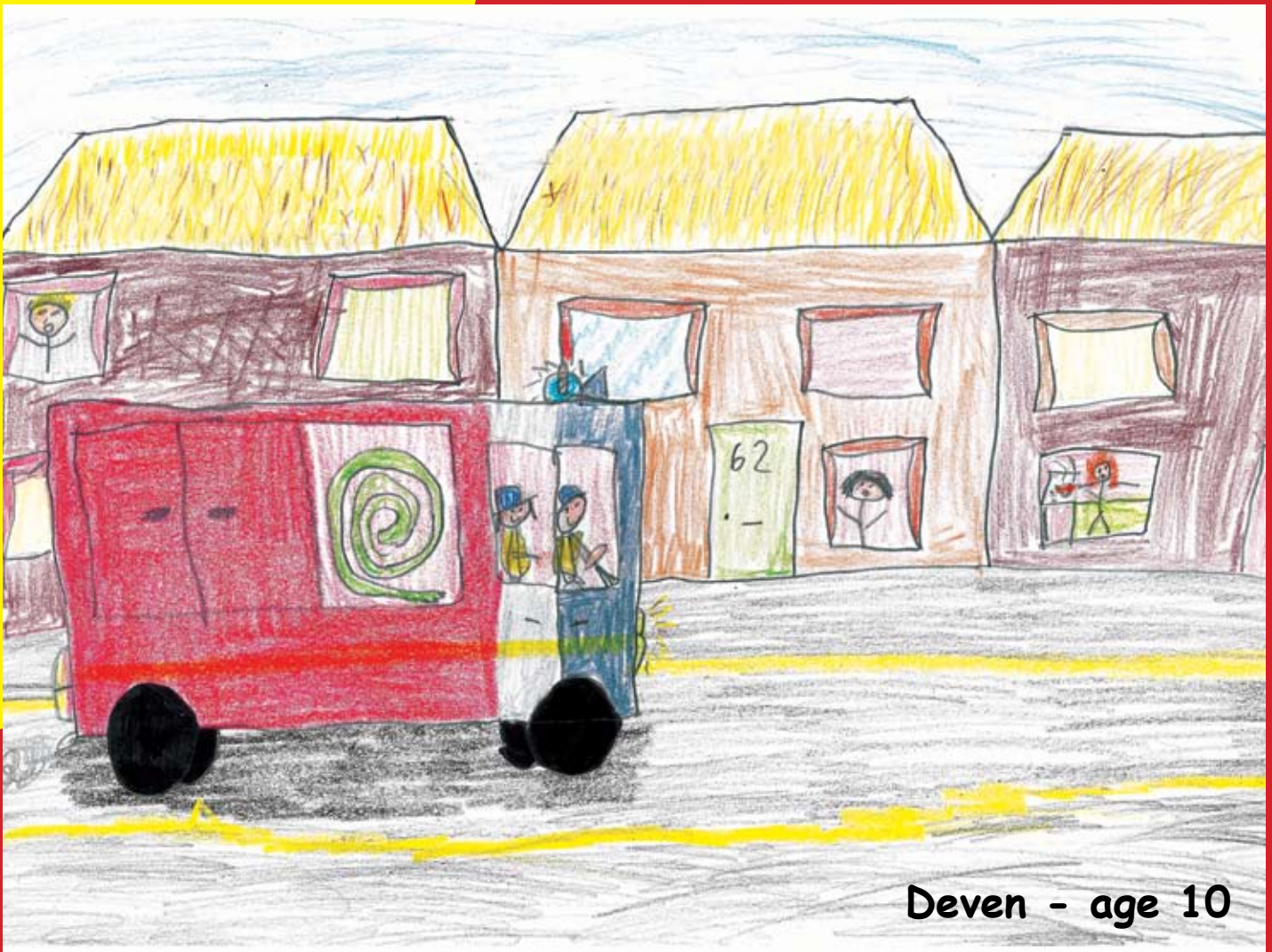


# **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE Single Equality Scheme 2009 - 2013**



Deven - age 10

**Protecting, Preventing, Responding**

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service wish to thank Ruskin Junior School, Wellingborough for their fantastic contribution to this our First Equality Scheme. All the illustrations in this document have been created by the children from Ruskin Junior School.

**Front page - Deven - age 10**

**Back page - Katryna - age 7**

**Page 4 - Aimee - age 9**

**Page 5 - Lauren - age 10**

**Page 6 - Millie - age 8**

**Page 10 - Monir - age 10**

**Page 11 - Keely - 9<sup>1/2</sup>**

**Page 13 - Joshua - age 8**

**Page 15 - Tai - age 10**

**Page 16 - Courtney - age 8**

**Page 19 - Hannah - age 10**



# **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

## **Single Equality Scheme**

This equality scheme is about getting people to consider the need for equality when planning, delivering or monitoring their services.

The scheme outlines the work that will be needed to develop this common understanding and approach to employment and service provision.

### **Contents**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1 Foreword</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2 Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 Our Vision and Values</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4 Our Aim/Our Objectives</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5 Enforcement/Procuring Goods</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6 Age</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7 Disability</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8 Faith, Belief and Religion</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>9 Gender</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>10 Sexuality</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>11 Transgender</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>12 Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>13 Flexible Working</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>14 Equality Impact Assessments</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>15 Dealing with Complaints</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>16 Developing Staff/Consultation</b>	<b>21</b>
 <b>Appendix A - Action Plan</b>	 <b>23</b>



## **FOREWORD**



We are pleased to introduce Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's (NFRS) first equality scheme, which will be effective from April 2009. The duty to promote equality places an enormous responsibility on all public authorities, including NFRS and it's a responsibility which we are committed to.

NFRS are already taking positive steps to embrace the duty placed on us, not only as an employer, but as a service provider to the communities of Northamptonshire.

This scheme helps to illustrate our commitment to eliminating discrimination, promoting equal opportunities and developing good relations with our communities.

It will ensure that we develop robust policies and strategies that recognise and respond to the diverse and differing needs of our communities as we work towards achieving our key priorities as a service.

There is a legal duty to produce a scheme under race, disability and gender, clear duties are highlighted within these strands. The scheme fulfils a legal duty for race, disability and gender, however, the fire and rescue service wish to demonstrate commitment to all strands of diversity so this scheme covers sexual orientation, religion and age.

We are determined that fairness and equality must be integrated through our service and in the way we deliver our service to the community.

Our equality scheme sets out our aims and practical ways in which we plan to meet our duties. This is a working document and will be reviewed and revised every three years.

Martyn Emberson

Chief Fire Officer

## **About Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service**

NFRS provide emergency fire and rescue cover, fire safety legislation enforcement and community fire safety advice for the residents and visitors of Northamptonshire. We are a county council fire authority.

The Chief Fire Officer, Martyn Emberson, is head of Protective Services, which encompasses; fire and rescue, trading standards, emergency planning, the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) and the community safety team. The service sits within the customer and community services directorate of Northamptonshire County Council (NCC).

This service is funded by the public through allocation from central government and local council tax. NFRS operates with an annual budget of approximately £23.7m (2006/07), equivalent to approximately £36.40 per head per annum of population in the county.

Employing over 600 staff, services are delivered through 22 fire stations across the county and three support/management office buildings.

The service has 28 fire appliances and 10 special appliances (support vehicles, e.g. water bowser, aerial appliances, incident command vehicle, etc). Emergency calls come through the fire control centre that mobilise appliances and officers to incidents on a pre-determined attendance.



## INTRODUCTION

NFRS aims to support a society where our origins do not determine our destiny, where the dignity and equal treatment of the individual is unfailing and where the disadvantaged are protected and empowered.

We have developed a single equality scheme which incorporates all the responsibilities that we must meet as both an employer and service provider. This single scheme reflects our obligations under race disability and gender equality duties as well as the other strands of equality legislation – sexual orientation, religious belief and age.

The equality scheme is about getting people to consider the need for equality when planning, delivering or monitoring their services. Equality means different things to different people. It is important that all staff throughout the service understand and implement the same approach. The scheme outlines the work that will be needed to develop this common understanding and approach to employment and service provision.

Our equality scheme demonstrates not only our commitment to all strands of diversity but also illustrates how we intend to deliver appropriate and accessible services through our three-year action plan. This explains the processes by which we will achieve this in sustainable and embedded ways.



The scheme sets out how the service will meet its obligations under equality legislation, but more than that, how it will make a real and positive difference to the lives of all those who are affected by the services work.

As a fire and rescue service we produce an Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) document which is about improving public safety, reducing the number of fire incidents and saving lives.

Integrated risk management has shifted the focus in planning to put people first, looking at the risks arising from all fires and other emergency incidents, and at the options for reducing and managing them. Our equality scheme embeds within the IRMP ensuring equality and diversity is overarching and inclusive in all we do.

This equality scheme has a range of drivers:

- Northamptonshire County Council, Equality Scheme.
- Fire and Rescue National Framework 2008/2011.

**Aimee - age 9**

- National Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008/2018.
- Regional Fire and Rescue Equality and Diversity Strategy.
- Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Equality and Diversity Strategy.
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
- Equality Act 2006 - clarifies what our general duty to equalities is.
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission shall exercise its functions under this part with a view to encouraging and supporting the development of a society in which:

- People's ability to achieve their potential is not limited by prejudice or discrimination;
- There is respect for and protection of each individual's human rights;
- There is respect for the dignity and worth of each individual;
- Each individual has an equal opportunity to participate in society; and
- There is mutual respect between groups based on understanding and valuing of diversity and on shared respect for equality and human rights.

NFRS is totally committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and the population of Northamptonshire.

An equality scheme is effectively a realistic action plan that outlines a public service approach to:

1. Promote inclusion.
2. Promote good relations between all.
3. Promote equality of opportunity.
4. Eliminate discrimination.

As a public body, legislation requires us to comply with three duties to promote equality in the areas of disability, gender and race. These duties include the requirement to develop and put into place equality schemes outlining what we will do to promote disability, gender and race equality.

We wanted to go beyond our legal responsibilities and produce a single equality scheme that included all areas of equality covered by our remit. As well as disability, gender and race, our single equality scheme therefore also covers age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. We believe we should aim to apply the same high standards to everything that we do.

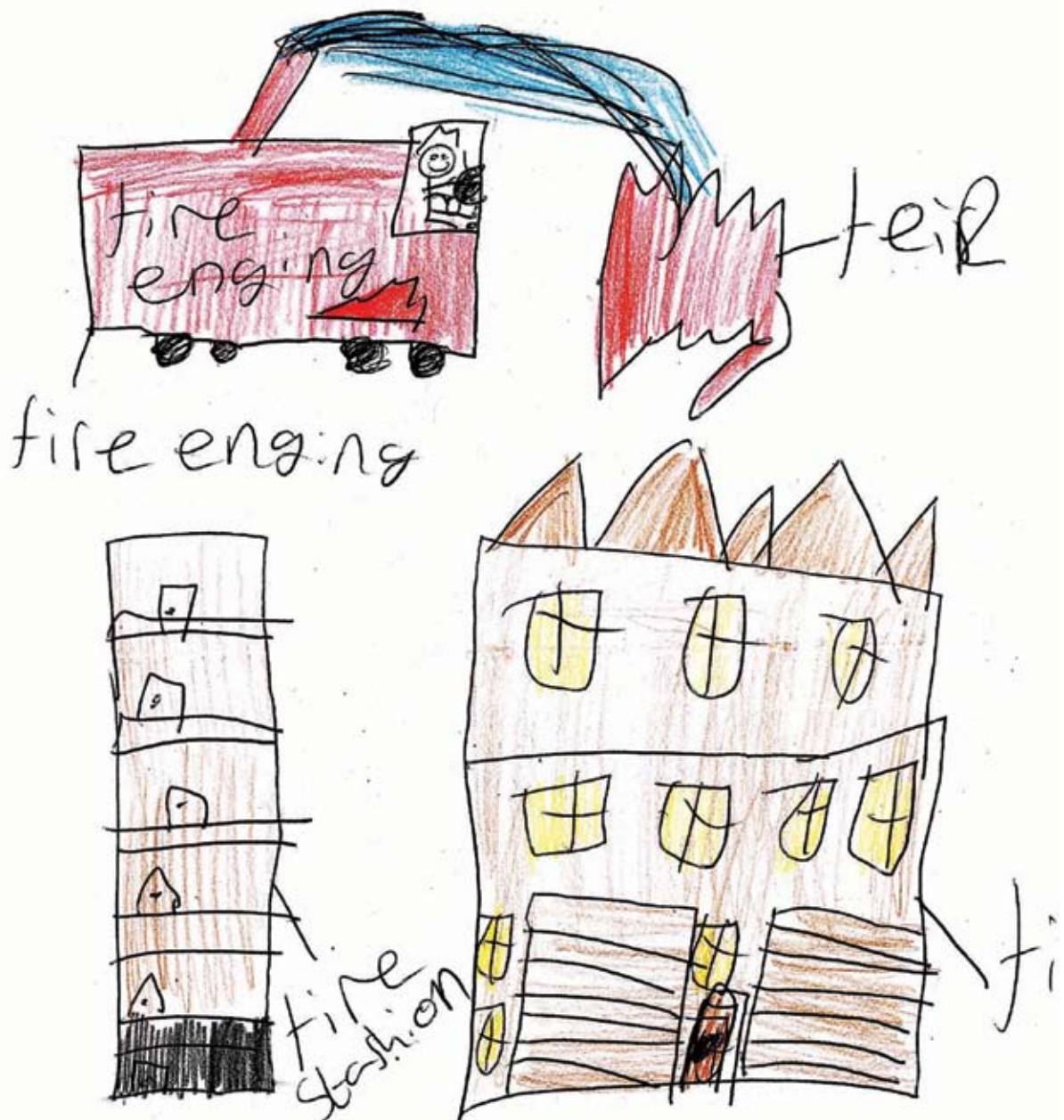


**Lauren - age 10**

This is not about increasing paperwork and regulatory burden and it is certainly not about 'tick box' exercises. This is about taking practical steps to promote equality and human rights. It is about our employment practices, how we provide or buy services, how we work in partnership with others and how we include equality in everything we do.

We are currently working towards the 'achieving' level of the equality framework for local government.

More information regarding our commitment to equality can be found on our internal intranet, within the current IRMP, in our service core values, on the internet, in the national framework, and national, regional and local equality and diversity strategy.



Millie - age 8

## OUR VISION AND VALUES

It is our vision to create a safer community in Northamptonshire built on equality, dignity and respect, with people secure in all aspects of their diversity.

To achieve our vision we will have to demonstrate professionalism, dedication and responsiveness. All of our staff are expected to behave in accordance with national and local values.

Our local core values are:

- Improvement.
- Service to the community.
- Diversity.
- People.

Our values describe how we work and the standards that apply to all our services. Paramount to the diversity agenda is our value of respect. We believe that if everyone treats each other with due civility and respect then discrimination should be eliminated.

## OUR AIM

It is our aim to:

- Improve our service to the community.
- Improve our organisation and personnel.
- Enhance our preventative, protective and intervention work within our communities.
- Maximise capacity providing value for money.
- Develop a competent workforce, living our values.

### Our Key Objectives:

As part of NCC we share their key objective of the county equality scheme. This is to ensure that all our customers and colleagues are treated equally in terms of their access to all our services and that they feel confident in their right to expect fair outcomes.

Our objectives are to:

- Promote understanding of the importance of equality and diversity.
- Encourage good practice in relation to equality and diversity.
- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Promote awareness and understanding of rights under the equality enactments.
- Enforce the equality enactments.
- Work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination.
- Work towards the elimination of unlawful harassment.

## ENFORCEMENT

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) has the power to take legal action if public authorities fail to meet their duties. It can also seek a judicial review of an authority if it is not meeting the general duty.

We must:

- Review the terms and conditions we use to procure goods.
- Include in every contract that the contractor must comply with anti-discrimination provision.
- Specify where relevant the evidence the contractor may need to provide to the authority to demonstrate its compliance with equalities legislation.
- Monitor, where relevant the way contracts are fulfilled, in respect of equalities.
- Ensuring that equality considerations are reflected and given due weight, in the specification/ criteria for selection and award of the contract, and in the contract conditions with European Commission (EC) and United Kingdom (UK) procurement rules.
- Ensure that contractors fully understand any equality requirements of the contract.
- Train all staff involved in procurement work, to fully understand the provisions of equalities legislation and the relevance of the various equality duties in their work.

Contractors themselves must not discriminate, but they do not have the same legal obligation to promote equality of opportunity. So public authorities must build relevant equality considerations into the procurement process to ensure that all of their functions meet our legal requirements.

So, to comply with their duty under the Act, local authorities should make sure that public money is not spent on practices that lead to unlawful discrimination, but is used instead to support and encourage equality of opportunity and good community relation.

### Procuring Goods and Services

Procurement is an important and essential function for us and in line with relevant legislation we are committed to promoting equality and diversity within our procurement strategy. We must consider equality of opportunity and take the promotion of good community relations into account when procuring goods, venues, and services from external providers.

## AGE

Our Goal:

“To ensure provision of a fire and rescue service that encompasses all age groups within the workforce and community that effectively meet their needs without discrimination”

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006: Prohibits discrimination on grounds of age in employment and training and provide greater rights for employees with regard to requesting to work beyond the normal age for retirement

All have knowledge and skills which would be of benefit to the service regardless of age. A key consideration must be that we do not limit our access to these groups through unjustifiable and under recognised age orientated restraints.

NFRS is totally committed to establishing an environment for both employees and the community we serve that supports and encourages people of all ages to deliver their full potential.

## Actions:

- Developing further links through community safety with, for example: Age Concern, Youth Clubs, Connexions, Disability Groups, and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) work on services for older people
- Continue work within schools, colleges, and children excluded from education and youth clubs.
- Ensure all fire safety initiatives are accessible to all.
- Promoting equality for all prospective colleagues and the community on the grounds of age.
- Work within the county councils policy for the employment of retired people.
- Complete Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) to detail the areas where age must be respected, following steps to address these points wherever possible.
- Devise an action plan and agree to the monitoring of the scheme.

## DISABILITY

### Our Goal:

“To provide a fire and rescue service and working environment that is welcoming and appropriate to people living with a range of disabilities”

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995: States it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in relation to employment, education and the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises
- Disability Discrimination Act (Amendment) Regulations 2005: All employers and service providers must make reasonable adjustments to physical features on their premises to overcome barriers to access

We intend to fulfil our duty under section 49A (1) duty of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Under section 49A public authorities are under a general duty to promote disability equality. This means that a public authority shall, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to:

- The need to eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act.
- The need to eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities.
- The need to promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons.
- The need to take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.
- The need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons.
- The need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

A person living with a disability is defined under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as someone who has a “physical or mental impairment which has substantial or long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

This definition covers a variety of physical, sensory and mental disabilities. Examples include sight impairments and learning difficulties as well as less obvious conditions such as; diabetes, epilepsy, dyslexia etc.



Monir - age 10

We are committed to removing barriers which take little or no account of people who have impairment. NFRS recognise it is not the person with the disability in the Northamptonshire community that is a problem, but the barriers that we fail to recognise. Our policies and practices must reflect such recognition.

Our Specific Duties:

- Publish a disability equality scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general duty and specific duties
- Involve disabled people in the development of the scheme

The Scheme should include:

- Consultation with disabled people
- The authority method of equality impact assessing.
- Arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment.
- Arrangements for putting gathered information to use, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of the action plan.

Actions

- Review and correct access to service buildings.
- Improve all buildings resources for those with disabilities, such as: hearing loop, seating etc.
- Developing further links through community safety with disability groups. Provide equality training ensuring inclusion of disability strand
- Equality and Diversity Officer to advise service on disability legislation.
- Ensure working environment is tailored to staff that have disability needs.
- Monitor employment data across disability strand.
- Guarantee consultation and involvement with disabled people in the development of policies, practice and procedures which may have an impact upon them.
- Complete EIA's to detail the areas where disability must be respected, following steps to address these points wherever possible.



## FAITH, BELIEF AND RELIGION

Our Goal:

“To provide a fire and rescue service and working environment that is appropriate and welcoming to people whatever their faith, belief or religion”

- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003: Regulations apply to discrimination on grounds of religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief within employment and training

Faith, belief and religion are important elements of many people's lives. Northamptonshire is representative of a range of such views and we must be aware of, respectful and understanding of how to avoid causing unnecessary offence.

Our respect can be demonstrated via our recognition, for example, that differing cultures have expectations of us in relation to our understanding of their diet, dress, family make up, and holy days and events. It is essential that we deliver an inclusive fire and rescue service to everyone within the community.

In relation our workforce we must respect the different faiths and beliefs that are represented and where necessary, make the appropriate arrangements to accommodate them.

We will take all reasonable steps to achieve compatibility where faith, beliefs and religion may appear to be incompatible with operational requirements. We must take additional care to avoid discrimination and exclusion against existing team members or members of the community in relation to their faith, beliefs and/or religion. Should discrimination or exclusion of any form be identified, a zero tolerance procedure will be adopted. Should malicious or false accusations be made, the complainant will be dealt with in a serious manner and in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

We also take into account that some people do not have a faith or may be undecided in relation to these issues. Such people should be treated with equal respect.

Actions:

- Developing further links through our outreach worker within the diverse culture surrounding beliefs, faith and religion.
- Community safety advice to be provided to all different places of worship using various communication tools and media.
- Faith, belief and religion awareness training to be provided to workforce.
- Information to be made available to workforce in relation to holy days, events and cultures.
- Regionally set employment equality targets for work force profile for faith and belief.
- Complete EIA's to detail the areas where faith, belief and religion must be respected, following steps to address these points wherever possible.
- Devise an action plan and agree monitoring of scheme.

## GENDER

Our Goal:

"To develop a working culture that will see the removal of all barriers that prevents both sexes from making a full contribution to Northamptonshire fire and rescue service". The gender equality duty is a legal obligation which came into force in April 2007. It was introduced by the Equality Act 2006, which in turn amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.

Equal Pay Act 1970: Gives an individual the right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment and performing equal work of equal value

Sex Discrimination Act 1975: Applies to men, women and children. The act prohibits sex discrimination against individuals in areas of employment, education and the provision of goods, facilities and services and in the disposal or management of premises.

The Sex Discrimination Act allows positive action, but does not allow positive discrimination. The term Positive action means the encouraging people from an under-represented group to apply for jobs, training or promotion. This is lawful practice. (Equal Opportunity Commission - The Gender Equality Duty).

The Equality Act 2006: Created the Gender Equality Duty for the public sector. The Gender Equality Duty requires public authorities to promote equality between women and men and eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment. This means the public sectors employers are required to develop policies, design services and have employment practices with the different needs of women and men in mind.

The Sex Discrimination Act provides clear guidelines as to what is acceptable and appropriate in terms of our recruitment and employment practices.

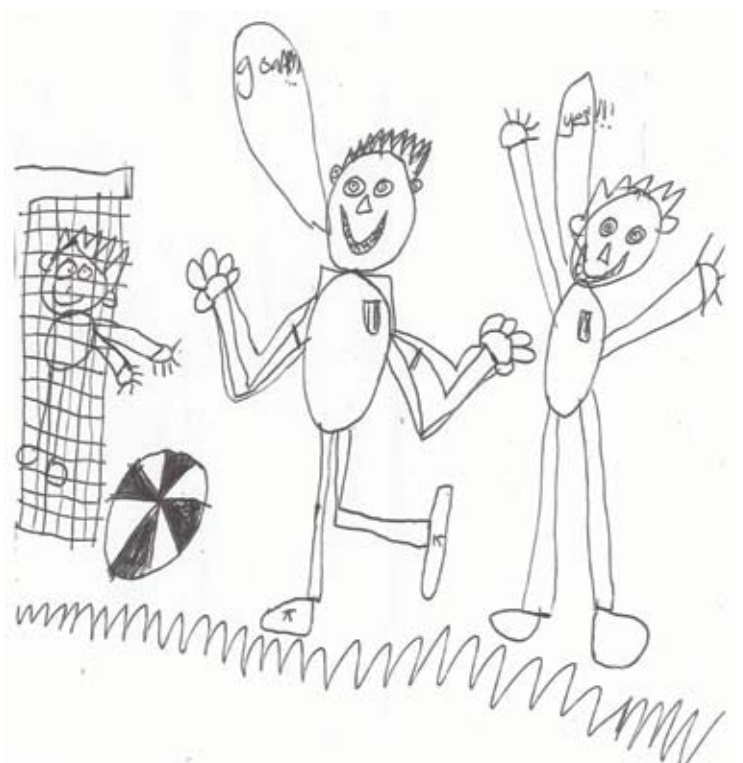
Our commitment to the development of an open and honest culture will also serve to ensure that all team members view any form of sexism with intolerance. There is also a clear message being delivered to the wider community in our commitment to these principles - as we treat each other, so will we translate our principles into our service delivery.

General Duty:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.
- To promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Specific Duty:

- Include gender issues within the equality scheme identifying the gender equality goals and actions to meet them, in consultation with employees, unions and stakeholders.
- Monitor and review progress.
- Produce an action plan.
- Consider objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.
- Conduct and publish gender impact assessments on all major functions and policies relating to gender issues.
- Gather information on the effect of its policies and practices on men and women, in employment, services and performance of its functions.



**Joshua - age 8**

- Use the information to review the implementation of the scheme objectives.
- Review and revise the scheme at least every three years.
- Report on progress on gender equality annually.

Actions:

- Facilitation of regular meetings of the Networking Women in the Fire Service (NWFS).
- Implementing the NCC policy on adoption leave.
- Monitoring of activities resulting from adoption of flexible working policy.
- Review guidance and policies around the duties and return to work of pregnant operational staff members.
- Positive action to be directed at women to promote awareness and how they can enhance their career and the service.
- Regionally set employment equality targets for workforce profile for gender.
- EIA's to detail the areas where gender must be respected; following steps to address these points must be made wherever possible.
- Devise an action plan and agree monitoring of scheme.

## SEXUALITY

Our Goal:

“To ensure appropriate provision of service to Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual (LGB) people that is supportive of colleagues and builds confidence in our service delivery to such groups within the community”

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003: Unlawful to discriminate against or harass a job applicant or employee on grounds of their sexual orientation (sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, opposite sex or same sex and opposite sex).

Civil Partnership Act 2004: Allows same-sex couples to make a formal, legal commitment to each other by forming a civil partnership providing them with the same rights and responsibilities as the opposite sex couples who enter into a civil marriage.

Within the regulations, sexual orientation is defined as:

- Orientation towards persons of the same sex (lesbian and gay men).
- Orientation towards persons of the opposite sex (heterosexual).
- Orientation towards persons of the same sex and the opposite sex (bisexual).

Sexuality is a personal and private issue that should be considered with the utmost sensitivity. Many individuals choose to keep this issue private and this is a fundamental right which we should all treat with respect. If an individual discloses their sexuality to us, we should not disclose it further without their consent. It is also important that we do not make and act on assumptions relating to a person's sexuality.

If we are to build trust and confidence both internally and externally we must recognise that homophobia can be particularly concerning and therefore we should be prepared to tackle such an issue positively. Part of our commitment to developing an open and supportive culture will enable team members and members of the community to report issues of homophobia to us comfortably and confidently.

Actions:

- Develop specific awareness training around issues relating to LGB people.
- Regionally set employment equality targets for work force profile for sexual orientation.
- Development of partnerships and access to appropriate representative groups, using the dedicated equalities adviser, both within the service and within the community.
- Positive action initiatives to encourage job applications from the LGB population of Northamptonshire.
- Complete EIA's to detail the areas where sexuality must be respected, following steps to address these points wherever possible.



**Tai - age 10**

## TRANSGENDER

Our Goal:

“To ensure appropriate provision of service to the transgender community, developing a working environment and organisational culture that values and actively supports all employees and the community we serve”

Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999: Protection of those who have undergone, who are currently undergoing or intend to undergo gender reassignment on the grounds of sex, in matters of pay, employment and training.

Gender Recognition Act 2004: Allows transsexual people to apply for full legal recognition in their acquired gender. The Act also defines an individual's gender history as protected information, prohibiting employers from disclosing it.

Transgender people face distinct issues that are both complex and sensitive. We need to raise awareness within the service to ensure that we offer appropriate support and service to all such individuals.

We acknowledge that transgender is not identified as a separate equality strand however we acknowledge the separate issues this community face. The service recognises that there is lack of understanding and awareness around transgender and will promote awareness within the delivery of equality and diversity training.

If an individual discloses their sexuality to us, we should not disclose it further without their consent. It is also important that we do not make and act on assumptions relating to a person's sexuality. Should discrimination, exclusion, malicious or false accusations of any form be identified, a zero tolerance procedure will be adopted. Should a complaint be made it will be dealt with in a serious manner and in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

## Actions:

- Ensure that within delivery of equality and diversity training transgender is acknowledged and awareness given.
- Positive action initiatives to encourage job applications from the transgender population of Northamptonshire.
- Complete EIA's to detail the areas where transgender must be respected, following steps to address these points wherever possible.

## RACE/ETHNICITY

### Our Goal:

“We aim to reflect the diversity of Northamptonshire communities within our workforce, to further promote good relations by the provision of a fair and equitable fire and rescue service to all black, eastern European and ethnic groups”

Race Relations Act 1976: It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably than another on grounds of race, colour or nationality. Prohibiting discrimination in areas of employment, education and the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises.

Race Relation Amendment Act 2000: This act outlawed discrimination and victimisation in all public authority functions. It also placed a general duty on specified public authorities to promote race equality.

Section 71 (1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment ) Act 2000 required a range of public authorities to publish their own race equality scheme that would detailing the arrangements put in place by the Authority. The scheme should demonstrate how, in carrying out its functions, the Authority would have due regard for the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; and
- Promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Eastern Europeans are a new and ever growing community within Northamptonshire and we aim to have this reflected in our workforce. We are driven to ensure this community is contacted by the NFRS outreach worker with established links maintained and new ones made.

### General Duty:

The aim of the general duty is to make the promotion of race equality central to the work of public authorities and in carrying out its function, have due regard to the need:

- To eliminate unlawful racial discrimination.
- To promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.



**Courtesy - age 8**

### Specific Duty:

- Prepare and publish a race equality scheme.
- Assess and consult on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality.
- Monitor its policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality.
- Produce an action plan.
- Publish the results of such assessments and undertake consultation.
- Ensure equal public access to information and services which it provides.
- Train staff in connection with the duties.

### Actions:

- Monitoring of our equality scheme. Reporting feedback of progress and development to the NCC corporate equality group.
- Positive action to encourage more job applications from members of ethnic minority groups. The removal barriers and promotion of equality to be ensured throughout the recruitment process.
- Further development of partnership working within hard to reach areas and communities. Outreach worker to maintain and establish links and relationships, incorporating the use of translators or interpreters.
- Review of internal reporting system for external and internal racist incidents.
- All policies, programmes and service delivery have an EIA.
- Annual equality and diversity training to be delivered.
- All new employees to be given equality and diversity training as part of their induction to the service.
- Regionally set employment equality targets for work force profile for race/ethnicity.
- Formation of diversity action group/Forum to be maintained.
- To ensure access to all information can be done so in any required language
- A rolling programme of cultural awareness to be delivered by our outreach worker.
- Annual collation of results in relation to; numbers of staff by reference to racial groups in relation to staff in post, applicants for employment, training and promotion. Results to be collated on those in receipt of training, benefit or detriment suffered as a result of performance assessment procedures, those involved in grievance and disciplinary procedures. Findings to be analysed to find links to inequality.

Our Goal:

“To develop a working environment and organisational culture that actively supports and values a range of working patterns amongst all service members and promotes a healthy work/life balance:

Part Time Workers Regulations 2000: Ensures all part time workers are entitled to equal terms and conditions of employment as full time workers.

NFRS as an organisation and its workforce gain a range of benefits from the introduction of flexible working arrangements. Flexible working patterns are viewed as being a part of the process that will enable us to develop a more open and encouraging organisational culture, judging people by what they contribute and achieve, rather than by the hours they work. Increased and improved productivity and aspects of morale have been viewed as positive outcomes from such measures.

The above are some of the reasons why flexible working patterns are seen as important in terms of our organisational development but we are also required by law to consider requests relating to flexible working:

Staff with young children are able to request flexible hours of working and parents of children under 5 years old are entitled to take statutory leave, although unpaid.

Our responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act as a ‘reasonable adaptation’ may be to enable a person with a disability to work from home or have flexible working hours arrangements in place (where practical) to enable them to receive regularly hospital treatment. We will also give careful consideration to all posts being made available for part-time working.

Another commitment from us is that of providing a working environment that facilitates all team members to balance their work and other responsibilities e.g. home and/or leisure, where it is not causing an adverse effect upon our operational effectiveness.

We believe that only by appropriately valuing and demonstrating our value for all team members will we be able to expect the very best from them. We view the achievement of this as being crucial in providing the best possible fire and rescue service for the community of Northamptonshire.

Actions:

- Endorsing and encouraging a working environment that enables support networks for all team members to develop.
- Complying where operationally viable with the NCC work/life balance policy and active consideration being given to flexible work patterns in line with terms and conditions nationally.
- Review of current provision of career breaks, part-time working and post sharing procedures.
- Continually review our part-time and flexible working systems.

The undertaking of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) enables NFRS to improve the services provided to the community of Northamptonshire and the working lives of our staff. They allow us to assess the impact of our policies and services, helping us to eliminate or mitigate against any adverse effects these may have on our employees and the communities we serve.

### Purpose and Process

The purpose of (EIA) equality impact assessment is to ensure that all policies, practices, provisions and criteria are fair to all groups of people. NFRS has a legal obligation to ensure that it does not discriminate against a particular group or individual due to gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

NFRS have decided to take a 2 stage approach to EIA:

- Initial Screening
- Full EIA

This decision was made as it enables NFRS to efficiently and effectively consider the impact of new and amended policies and procedures.



**Hannah - age 10**

### Initial Screening

The purpose of Initial screening is:

- To identify any immediate changes that are required to policies, practices, provisions or criteria in order to eliminate any adverse effects on particular groups.
- Identify any adverse effect on the diversity strands and as a result if a significant effect is highlighted then a full EIA will be completed.

The NFRS commitment to equality and diversity means that all our policies will be screened in relation to the use of gender-neutral language, jargon-free plain English, recognition of the needs of disabled people, promotion of the positive duty in relation to race and disability and avoidance of stereotypes.

### Full EIA

The purpose of full EIA is to ensure that a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, procedure or regulation is carried out to determine whether it has an adverse impact on identifiable groups of people. A policy can adversely affect different groups of people in different ways, and the aim is to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

### Training

We will put into place an impact assessment training programme for all employees responsible for policies and functions. The training programme will be delivered by the equality and diversity officer.

The programme will cover the following areas:

- A general knowledge of the Race Relation Act and background.
- Principles and purpose of impact assessment.
- The Impact Assessment Screening and full template forms (FB158, FB159) and how to complete them.
- Purpose and importance of monitoring.
- How to implement monitoring procedures.

### Consultation

We believe in engaging with our communities to seek to improve the service that we deliver and our practices in promoting equality in employment.

Comments regarding how our services are delivered or how our employees conduct themselves are valuable as part of our monitoring process. As part of this commitment we have established a range of consultation mechanisms, which we will engage in meeting the requirements of the impact assessment process.

Our impact assessment template includes a requirement to detail the proposed consultation activity. The consultation exercise will be undertaken by the equality and diversity officer or outreach worker.

Groups that will be used for consultation are:

- The Black and Ethnic Minority Members Section (BEM) of the Fire Brigade Union (FBU).
- Fire brigades Union (FBU).
- Retained Firefighters Union (RFU).
- Unison.
- Networking Women in the Fire Service.
- NFRS Equality and Diversity Action Forum.
- Local forums, support groups and services.
- National organisations.
- Individuals whom an adverse impact has been identified.

### Monitoring

Monitoring is a vital component of the EIA Process.

Monitoring specific areas of our activity and service delivery can provide us with crucial information as to whether all aspects of our community experience the same treatment or level of service and thereby enabling us to identify areas that need improvement or overhauling.

Monitoring helps to identify:

- **Levels of usage** - gives an indication of under or over representation from particular ethnic groups.
- **Levels of satisfaction** - ensure groups from all backgrounds are aware of the service we provide.

- **Levels of relevance** – enables us to evaluate if NFRS policies and services meet the real needs of our diverse communities.
- **Levels of appropriateness** - to ensure that our services and policies are culturally sensitive.

## DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

We are fully committed to implementing the actions set out in the equality scheme. We recognise that we may get things wrong or that people may be dissatisfied with the way we are carrying out our duties. We therefore intend to make sure that people in our communities know that they have a right to complain about how we are discharging our duties and are given the information in the required formats about how to do this.

NFRS has a corporate complaints procedure which allows service users to make complaints, compliments and suggestions on any aspect of its services or policies.

We will also ensure that details of our complaints procedure are widely publicised using appropriate formats.

### Publishing Assessment, Consultation and Monitoring Results

Public authorities must set out in their equality scheme their arrangements for publishing the results of any assessments, consultations and monitoring they carry out to see whether policies have an adverse impact on equality.

We will also report on our progress in relation to the equality scheme, what actions we have succeeded in and on progress undertaken.

NFRS will publish an annual summary report which will include the following information obtained through the implementation of this equality scheme:

- Details of all policies which had an EIA and the results of these assessments
- Equality training
- Positive action
- The internal equality and diversity action forum
- Bullying and harassment
- Community engagement

## DEVELOPING STAFF

Skills and knowledge are fundamental to better services, preventing fires and saving lives. We recognise that to deliver our commitment to community development and community empowerment NFRS staff require to enhance existing and develop new skills and knowledge about communication.

We will continue to develop our staff to make sure they understand value and respect difference. In addition, we will continue to work with our diversity action group and unions to add value to our equalities commitment.

We will deliver a programme on equality and diversity to all staff. In particular, as part of its commitment to equality, a programme of cultural awareness training will be created.

We are currently revising our approach to training on equalities to ensure it is business driven, directly relevant to organisational objectives and practically effective.

### Consultation

The authority will involve trade unions and staff groups in the development of equality action plans and copies of our scheme will be available at all our fire stations and offices and our staff will be encouraged to become involved and provide feedback on the implementation of the scheme.

The scheme has a completed EIA and has further been consulted on by appropriate structures, community services and corporate leadership. The scheme will be monitored internally by the NFRS Equality and Diversity Action Forum which is chaired by the equality and diversity officer. The group consists of core members across the service representing various groups and includes senior management.

Appropriate structures are in place to monitor progress of the scheme. Overall, the Scheme will be monitored internally by the NFRS Equality and Diversity Action Forum.

We also have representatives from the Fire Brigades Union, including representatives from the Black and Ethnic Minority Members section (BEM), UNISON, the Retained Firefighters Union (RFU) and Networking Women. The group's role also includes giving specific equality and diversity guidance on issues and developments as appropriate as well as initiating ideas on how to further embed equalities.

# Glossary

- **BEM-Black Ethnic Minority:**

Is the phrase that is currently most commonly used by community and equality organisations. Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue use of this phrase is with the understanding that “Black/ Minority Ethnic” or “BME” also includes minority ethnic groups in England who are White (i.e. those recorded under any of the “White” groups other than “White British”).

- **EDAF-Equality and Diversity Action Forum:**

An internal forum made up of staff across the service to promote the equality and diversity agenda.

- **EIA- Equality Impact Assessment:**

An equality impact assessment (EIA) is a tool for identifying the potential impact of a services policies, services and functions on its community and workforce. It can help the service provide and deliver excellent services to local communities by making sure that these reflect the needs of the community. EIAs offer an opportunity for the service to think carefully about the impact of their work with local people and other members of staff. They can then take action that will promote equality for all.

- **FBU-Fire Brigade Union:**

The Fire Brigades Union represents firefighters at all levels within the Fire and Rescue Service across the UK – in fire stations, control rooms or other departments.

- **IRMP- Integrated Risk Management Planning:**

A document which is about improving public safety, reducing the number of fire incidents and saving lives it looks at the risks arising from all fires and other emergency incidents, and at the options for reducing and managing them.

- **NCC-Northamptonshire County Council:**

Like most English shire counties, Northamptonshire has a two-tier structure of local government. The county has an elected county council based in Northampton, and is also divided into seven districts each with their own district councils.

- **NWFS- Networking Women in the Fire Service:**

NWFS is an independent voluntary group of people who aim to contribute to making the Fire and Rescue Service a place where women and men can work together harmoniously and professionally.

NWFS has sought to influence the equality agenda, engaging with the major players in order to have the voice of all women in the Fire and Rescue Service heard.

- **NFRS- Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service**

Your Local Fire and Rescue Service.

- **Outreach:**

Is the term given to the efforts by individuals in an organisation or group to connect its ideas or practices to the efforts of other organisations, groups, specific audiences or the general public.

- **RDS- Retained Duty System:**

Firefighters who respond to calls on a need-only basis - and are often fully employed in other occupations.

- **RFU-Retained Firefighters Union:**

The Retained Firefighters Union (RFU) represents serving personnel within the Retained Duty System (RDS). The RFU is an independent trade union under the Trade Union & Labour Relations Act 1992.

- **Transgender:**

Transgender is the state of one's "[gender identity](#)" self-identification as woman, man, or neither.

- **Unison:**

UNISON is Britain and Europe's biggest public sector union with more than 1.3 million members. Their members are people working in the public services, for private contractors providing public services and in the essential utilities. They include frontline staff and managers working full or part time in local authorities, the NHS, the police service, colleges and schools, the electricity, gas and water industries, transport and the voluntary sector.

- **WDS-Whole-time Duty System**

Firefighters whom fulfil this role on full time basis.



# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN

## Appendix 1

Action to be taken	How we will measure success?	When will we do it by?	Manager Responsible
Review terms and conditions we use to procure goods.	In line with national/legal requirements	June 2009	Procurement Manager
Train all staff involved in procurement work, to fully understand the provisions of equalities legislation and the relevance of the various equality duties in their work.	All staff recognised and trained	June 2009	Procurement Manager
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) all fire safety talks.	Completed EIA	Sept 2009	Deputy of Prevention
Set up fire safety talks in various foreign schools.	Delivery of talk	Sept 2010	Head of Prevention
Set up a directory of all fire safety presentations and talks. Add to it every year.	Document produced-hard copy and electronic	Sept 2010	Deputy Head of Prevention
Provide an awareness day on age.	Day held	July 2010	Equality and Diversity Officer
A member of the equality and diversity action forum is appointed as an age representative.	Individual appointed	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer
Fire safety talks to reach excluded children.	Record of talks	Sept 2010	Head of Prevention
Review and correct access to service buildings and EIA - Improve all buildings resources for those with disabilities, such as: hearing loop, seating etc.	Completed EIA and report	Sept 2009	Procurement Manager and Equality and Diversity Officer
Provide equality training ensuring inclusion of disability strand.	Training package	Sept 2010	Equality and Diversity Officer
A member of the equality and diversity action forum is appointed as a disability representative.	Individual appointed	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer
Carry out equality impact assessments on policies and activities to identify and reduce any adverse impact for disabled people.	Completed EIA	April 2009	Policy writers/ Department Managers
Undertake an audit of the provision of equipment to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to provide sufficient equipment for disabled employees.	Completed audit	July 2009	Health and Safety Manager
Carry out a population profile and risk analysis for disabled people in our communities.	Completed profile	April 2011	Outreach Worker
Any published material offering advice and guidance is available in suitable style and format.	Policy on this service	April 2011	Policy and Service Information Manager, Outreach Worker & Equality and Diversity Officer
Arrangements are in place to communicate information effectively to meet the needs of all members of our community.	Evidence of research and actions taken to address this	April 2011	Outreach Worker & Equality and Diversity Officer

Action to be taken	How we will measure success?	When will we do it by?	Manager Responsible
Train at least one member of staff a watch in basic sign language.	Training completed	Sept 2011	Equality and Diversity Officer/ Training Manager
Train at least one member of a watch the most spoken foreign language of that area-basic words/communication.	Training completed	Sept 2011	Equality and Diversity Officer/ Training Manager
All training venues and materials to be assessed for disability – EIA.	Completed EIA	April 2010	Health and Safety/Training Manager
Review recruitment and selection, and occupational health policies and procedures, to ensure equality and diversity best practice is fully embedded.	Review completed	April 2011	HR Manager/Equality and Diversity Officer
Incorporate recruitment of disabled people as a key theme within positive action plan.	Positive action plan	April 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer /Training Manager
Review all recruitment advertising and literature to ensure they are consistent with the needs of our target groups.	Production on correct document and advertising	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer /Training Manager
Undertake an audit of our workforce to identify staff who have a disability and evaluate results.	Report evaluating results	April 2011	Equality and Diversity Officer /HR Manager
Monitor all aspects of employment from application to exit, including complaints. Analyse management information to identify trends and take appropriate action.	Reports written and delivered to management	April 2012	Equality and Diversity Officer /HR Manager
Invite community groups to share their experience and thoughts on how we can service the community best to the equality and diversity action forum.	Meeting held	April 2011	Equality and Diversity Officer/ Outreach Worker
Consult all diversity strands in the delivery of training packages.	Consultation/EIA document	April 2010	Equality and Diversity Officer/ Outreach Worker
Information to be made available to workforce in relation to holy days, events and cultures.	Evidence of where evidence can be found	Sept 2009	Outreach Worker
Faith, belief and religion awareness training days to be provided to workforce.	Training packages/record	April 2011	Outreach Worker/Equality and Diversity/Training Manager
Community safety advice to be provided to all different places of worship using various communication tools and media.	Evidence of delivery	April 2011	Prevention Manger/Outreach Worker
Devise a guidance booklet and cultural awareness on faith and beliefs.	Evidence of booklet	April 2012	Outreach Worker
Agree a policy and guidance on gender reassignment.	Policy	April 2012	Equality and Diversity/HR Manager
Monitor return rates of women from maternity leave.	Annual report	April 2010	HR Manager
Analysis of career development patterns for part time staff and those with caring responsibilities.	Appraisals	April 2011	HR Manager/Dept Managers
Host a women's day/men's day.	Day held	July 2012	Equality and Diversity Officer

Action to be taken	How we will measure success?	When will we do it by?	Manager Responsible
To educate our staff on gender equality.	Training programme	Sept 2011	Equality and Diversity/Training Manager
Set objectives for achieving equal pay for men and women. Develop and monitor an action plan to support these objectives.	Plan in place	April 2011	Equality and Diversity/HR Manager
Develop working relationships with schools to change the perception of careers for women in the fire and rescue service. Integrate this in the positive action plan.	Positive action plan/report on the outcomes	April 2011	Equality and Diversity/Training Manager/Outreach Worker
Creative advertising to attract women to operational roles.	Evidence of the advertising	April 2010	Equality and Diversity/Training Manager
Develop a positive action plan to increase the number of women who work in operational roles.	Plan	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer/ Training Manager
All staff to understand the standards of behaviour expected at work. Staff should also learn how to challenge inappropriate behaviour effectively.	Training package/record	April 2010	Equality and Diversity Officer/ Training Manager
Review the harassment complaints procedure.	Evidence of update/review	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity/HR Manager
Develop a working relationship with organisations which represent the unique interests of men, of women, and of trans people.	Evidence of partnerships	April 2011	Outreach Worker
Identify gender equality representative.	Individual in place	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer
More women hold senior management positions.	Relevant statistics	April 2013	Equality and Diversity/HR Manager
Carry out EIA on policies and activities to identify and reduce any adverse impact for men and women.	Evidence of EIAs	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer
All new members of staff to be inducted into equality and diversity.	Training record/package	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer
Develop specific awareness training around issues relating to LGB people.	Training record/package	April 2010	Equality and Diversity Officer/ Training Manager
EIA's to detail the areas where sexuality must be respected, following steps to address these points must be made wherever possible.	Evidence of EIAs	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer
Identify a sexual orientation equality champion.	Individual appointed	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer
Encourage staff members to share their sexual orientation for monitoring purposes.	Up to date records	April 2013	Equality and Diversity/HR Manager
Positive action initiatives to encourage job applications from the LGB population of Northamptonshire.	Positive action plan	April 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer/ Training Manager
Identify a transgender equality champion.	Individual appointed	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer

Action to be taken	How we will measure Success?	When will we do it by?	Manager Responsible
Positive action initiatives to encourage job applications from the transgender population of Northamptonshire.	Positive action plan	April 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer/ Training Manager
EIA's to detail the areas where transgender must be respected; following steps to address these points must be made wherever possible.	EIA records	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer
Monitoring of our equality scheme. Reporting feedback of progress and development to the NCC corporate equality group annually.	Annual report/business plans	April 2010	Equality and Diversity Officer
A rolling programme of cultural awareness to be delivered by our outreach worker.	Training record	Sept 2009	Outreach Worker
To ensure access to all information can be done so in any required language.	Policy written	April 2011	Policy and Service Information Manager, Outreach Worker and Equality and Diversity Officer
Annual collation of results in relation to; numbers of staff by reference to racial groups in relation to staff in post, applicants for employment, training and promotion. Results to be collated on those in receipt of training, benefit or detriment suffered as a result of performance assessment procedures, those involved in grievance and disciplinary procedures. Findings to be analysed to find links to inequality.	Annual report	April 2010	Equality and Diversity/HR Manager
Review of internal reporting system for external and internal racist incidents.	Report system updated/in place	April 2011	Equality and Diversity/HR Manager
Further development of partnership working within hard to reach areas and communities. Outreach worker to maintain and establish links and relationships, incorporating the use of translators or interpreters.	Record of partnerships	April 2010	Outreach Worker
Positive action to encourage more job applications from members of ethnic minority groups. The removal barriers and promotion of equality to be ensured throughout the recruitment process.	Positive action plan/recruitment stats April 2013	April 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer/ Training Manager
Identify a race equality champion.	Individual in place	Sept 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer
Deliver training on EIAs.	Training recorded	July 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer
Review the NCC Fire web page.	Web pages updated	April 2012	Service Information Manager/ Department champions
Have a section under equalities in the weekly bulletin.	Bulletin updated	April 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer
Dedicate a section of the service newsletter to equalities.	Newsletter produced	April 2009	Equality and Diversity Officer
Maintain the function of sessional workers.	Still in post	April 2013	Head of Prevention
Maintain equality and diversity action forum.	Forum still has function	April 2013	Equality and Diversity Officer



Katryna - age 7