



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

People and Culture

Professional Standards Fairness, Inclusion and Respect Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

At Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS), we are committed to creating an inclusive workplace and delivering services where all individuals feel respected, valued and able to contribute. We recognise that inclusion underpins both organisational performance and public trust. By understanding the diverse needs and experiences of the people we serve and work alongside, we aim to deliver services that are responsive, inclusive and of the highest quality.

Human rights form the foundation of this policy. In line with the Equality Act 2010, HFRS has a duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

While our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 form a foundation, we aim to go beyond compliance and actively foster an inclusive culture and sense of belonging. HFRS has established Equality, Diversity and Inclusion priorities to address local needs in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). These priorities are delivered through an annually refreshed action plan. This policy also supports the Service's wider Professional Standards framework by setting clear behavioural expectations and providing a basis for addressing unacceptable conduct.

We undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to understand and address the potential impact of new or revised policies, practices and functions. This ensures that equality considerations are embedded in decision-making across the organisation.

We are committed to engaging with our staff, communities and partners, and to using lived experience and feedback to inform our decisions and continuously improve our services. We will also use data and insight to monitor progress, identify inequalities and drive improvement, reporting transparently on our performance to build trust and confidence in the Service.

This includes monitoring recruitment, progression, retention and pay gap data to identify and address inequalities.

Through this approach, we aim to strengthen trust and confidence in the Service and ensure our services are fair and accessible to all.

Core Code of Ethics

HFRS has adopted the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services. The Service is committed to the ethical principles of the Code and strives to apply them in all we do; therefore, those principles are reflected in this Policy.

National Guidance

Any National Guidance which has been adopted by HFRS, will be reflected in this Policy.

This policy aligns with:

1. NFCC Core Code of Ethics
2. NFCC People, Culture and Leadership Development Framework
3. HMICFRS expectations regarding culture, inclusion and values
4. Relevant Home Office and public sector equality guidance

2. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

HFRS has both a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 and an organisational commitment to ensure that it does not discriminate, either directly or indirectly, in the delivery of its services, the exercise of its functions, or in its treatment of staff. This applies to all protected characteristics, including race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, gender reassignment, and marriage and civil partnership.

HFRS also has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants, employees, and service users. Discrimination can take several forms, including direct, indirect, associative, or perceptive discrimination, and includes any failure to make reasonable adjustments where these are required.

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This policy sets out HFRS's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and how we meet our legal responsibilities while embedding fairness and respect in everything we do.

Everyone who comes into contact with HFRS has the right to be treated with dignity, fairness and respect. This includes councillors, members of the public, partners, visitors and all members of our workforce, including employees, apprentices, volunteers, contractors and agency workers.

This commitment applies to all individuals regardless of protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Sex
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

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We also recognise that people may experience disadvantage or discrimination beyond legally protected characteristics. We value all aspects of diversity, including background, experience, identity, and ways of thinking, and are committed to creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels they belong and can thrive.

HFRS promotes an inclusive culture where diversity is valued and where individuals feel respected, supported and able to achieve their full potential. We are committed to eliminating discrimination and ensuring fairness in both employment and service delivery. Through this, we aim to build a workforce that reflects the communities we serve and strengthens trust and confidence, improve workforce experience, and ensure equitable outcomes for the communities we serve.

Who must comply with the Policy?

This policy applies to all individuals working for, representing, or engaging with HFRS including:

- All employees of HFRS.
- Anyone delivering services on behalf of HFRS e.g. contractors, volunteers, partner organisations and people on work experience/apprenticeships.
- Any visitor to HFRS premises, and or user of HFRS facilities or equipment.

When does this policy apply?

This policy applies at all times, including during work activities, interactions with colleagues, partners and the public, and in any setting where individuals are representing HFRS.

What does this mean in practice?

All individuals are expected to treat others with dignity, fairness and respect and to behave in line with the Core Code of Ethics.

HFRS takes a robust and proportionate approach to addressing discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation in any form. This includes but is not limited to, behaviour related to protected characteristics or any other aspect of an individual's identity, background or experience.

Everyone has a responsibility to challenge inappropriate behaviour and to support a culture where concerns can be raised safely and acted upon.

HFRS is committed to creating psychologically safe environments where individuals feel able to speak up, challenge and contribute without fear of negative consequences. Any inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and addressed in line with Service policies and procedures. This includes addressing behaviours such as exclusionary practices, inappropriate language and subtle or indirect behaviours that may exclude, disadvantage or undermine others – often termed as microaggressions, whether intentional or not.

Breaches of this policy may be managed through the Service's Professional Standards, grievance or disciplinary procedures, depending on severity and circumstances.

Roles and Responsibilities

Humberside Fire Authority (HFA)

HFA provides **strategic oversight and assurance** of equality, diversity and inclusion by:

- setting EDI as a strategic priority and holding the Service to account for performance and progress
- ensuring the Service delivers fair, inclusive and effective services that meet the needs of all communities, particularly those most at risk
- promoting a positive organisational culture aligned with the Core Code of Ethics
- ensuring transparency through scrutiny of equality data, performance and reporting
- supporting HFRS to be an employer of choice, where people are treated fairly, with dignity and respect

Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)

SLT is responsible for **strategic leadership, direction and assurance** by:

- setting the strategic direction for EDI and embedding it within organisational priorities and decision-making
- ensuring compliance with the PSED and Equality Act 2010, while driving continuous improvement
- providing oversight of EDI governance, performance, risks and progress
- ensuring robust use of data, insight and lived experience to identify inequalities and inform strategy
- Scrutinising and approving key EDI reports (including PSED and pay gap reporting) and assuring the Fire Authority
- ensuring EIAs are embedded in strategic decision-making
- developing inclusive leadership capability and accountability at all levels
- acting as visible organisational champions for EDI

Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)

CLT has **ownership for delivery and embedding EDI within services and functions** by:

- translating strategy into action through delivery of PSED objectives and associated plans
- embedding EDI into service delivery to ensure services are accessible, inclusive and responsive
- ensuring EIAs are completed, applied and monitored within their areas

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- using data and feedback to track outcomes, address inequalities and improve performance
- ensuring effective contribution to EDI governance, including managing risks, actions and progress
- promoting fair access to recruitment, development and progression opportunities
- reviewing practices within their functions to prevent bias and discrimination
- ensuring staff understand expectations and that issues are addressed consistently through appropriate processes
- learning from feedback, complaints and inspections to improve outcomes
- modelling inclusive leadership and championing EDI within their areas

All Managers

Managers are responsible for **day-to-day leadership of inclusive behaviours and people management** by:

- fostering inclusive team environments where individuals are treated with dignity and respect
- creating psychologically safe workplaces where individuals feel able to speak up
- addressing inappropriate behaviour promptly, including discrimination, bullying and harassment
- supporting staff development by recognising and removing barriers to inclusion and progression
- implementing reasonable adjustments and seeking appropriate advice where needed
- reinforcing expected standards of behaviour and individual responsibilities
- contributing to local delivery of EDI actions and EIAs
- considering the needs of diverse communities in operational and service decisions
- escalating risks, issues and learning through appropriate channels
- leading by example in line with the Core Code of Ethics

All Individuals

All individuals have a **personal responsibility** to:

- treat others with dignity, fairness and respect
- act in line with the Core Code of Ethics
- challenge or report inappropriate behaviour where it is safe to do so
- contribute to a respectful, inclusive working environment
- demonstrate awareness of diverse communities in their interactions
- support a culture of openness, learning and continuous improvement

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [Equality Impact Assessment](#)
This policy is informed by the Equality Act 2010 and the PSED, alongside relevant human rights and employment legislation.
- National Guidance Reference
This policy reflects the relevant National Fire Chiefs Council NFCC Guidance, including the Core Code of Ethics and national inclusion frameworks.

**If anyone requires any further guidance / information regarding this document,
please contact Organisational Development**