

Introduction

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) is fully committed to Equality and Diversity. The Authority recognises that fairness and inclusion is fundamental to everything it does, to achieve its vision of making Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live work and travel.

The Authority believes that a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the local working population will create a stronger, more enriched and well-informed organisation, able to meet the expectations of a modern Fire and Rescue Service. This is a key aspect of our People Strategy. The Authority's philosophy is to embed Equality and Diversity in everything it does internally and externally.

The Authority recognises that having a diverse flexible workforce, which better reflects the community it serves, can enhance performance as well as improve its service to the community.

Under the Equality Act 2010, public sector organisations are expected to use this understanding to demonstrate 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by, or under, the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The aim of the PSED is to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of public authorities so that they tackle discrimination and inequality, and contribute to making society fairer.

The Equality Duty covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The duty applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The Equality Framework for Fire and Rescue Services (Revised 2017) provides a structured approach to best practice EDI. The Authority plans to benchmark itself against this framework.

Introduction: Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Objectives 2016 – 2020

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 that came into effect in 2017 require public sector organisations employing over 250 staff to carry out gender pay gap reporting. In accordance with the Regulations, the Authority is required to annually publish six pieces of prescribed data about the pay and bonuses of male and female workers within the organisation:

1. Mean gender pay gap in hourly pay
2. Median gender pay gap in hourly pay
3. Mean bonus gender pay gap
4. Median bonus gender pay gap
5. Proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment
6. Proportion of males and females in each pay quartile

This data must be published 'within the period of 12 months beginning with the snapshot date' (Regulation 2(2)). The snapshot date for public sector employers is 31 March each year.

BMKFA Headlines

- All 39 apprentices recruited are under 34 years old; 82 per cent are under 30 years old. This bodes well for our age profile in the future, when they join the establishment at the end of their apprenticeship (Chart 2 Appendix 1)
- 25 per cent of the apprentices recruited in Cohort 2 were female, compared to the previous year's 9 per cent.
- The Authority endorsed the submission of a pledge, and were the first Fire and Rescue Service to be accepted by the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ADCN) in February 2018.
- Overall females account for 19.3 per cent of the workforce (Chart 14 Appendix 1), 59.1 per cent of support staff a 7 per cent increase from 2016 (Chart 34 Appendix 1).
- The mean gender pay gap is 19 per cent and the median gender pay gap is 10.61 per cent. Whilst both gender pay and equal pay deal with the disparity of pay within the workplace, it is important to note that the gender pay gap is different from equal pay. Action plans are in place to work towards reducing the gap.
- 2017/18 saw the first year since 2010 that female operational firefighters attended a promotion process and were successful in entering the development pool and securing a supervisory manager position.
- A cross directorate Well-being Group set up in partnership with the representative bodies.