

BMKFA EDI Headlines

- In January 2022 Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service carried out a follow up **Employee Culture Survey**. 75 per cent of employees completed the survey. It



featured questions relating to EDI, Respect and Recognition. The results and data provided the Service with an insight to how its employees felt about EDI.

Employees were invited to provide a free text response, where 221 were received and analysed. Of these 15.8 per cent featured EDI.

These responses are helping the Service to explore opportunities and inform future actions. The Employee Engagement Group meet regularly to ensure engagement with employees continues. Listening workshops facilitated by the Employee Engagement Group took place throughout April and May 2022.

- The **People Strategy** which was approved at the October 2020 Fire Authority was refreshed to ensure it was fully reflective of the 2020 – 2025 Corporate Plan. The strategy details the Service’s vision, values, aim and key areas. EDI is one of the five key areas and highlights our EDI objectives. The Service’s People Strategy is intended to be flexible to address how we can most effectively respond to our current and future needs. The strategy features on both our internal intranet and external public facing website.

The October 2021 Fire Authority approved the **employee engagement plan** for the Station Commander - HR Projects to carry out a series of face to face workshops (People Strategy Roadshow) across the service. These took place for all Wholetime employees between November 2021 and April 2022. Support Services Employees and On Call employees had a combination of virtual and face to face workshops.

- **Community Engagement** was progressed through new ways of working including:

- Attendance at the National Apprenticeship Show and careers fairs across the County
- Recruitment engagement event at West Ashland, for previously unsuccessful applicants
- Welfare visits
- Virtual school and uniformed group visits
- Fire and Wellness visits to high-risk occupants



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- Virtual On-Call awareness evenings and interviews, which moved to socially distanced, covid secure interviews when restrictions allowed
- West Ashland Fire Station and the Prevention team took part in a Dementia Friends information session in May 2022, to help raise awareness and understanding of what it is like to live with Dementia.
- **Service policies and procedures** are under regular review to ensure they reflect the community we serve and support employees for example – Pay Policy, Hybrid working guidance note and Flexible working procedures.

- In June 2021 the **Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) Survey** was completed and the Bronze Standard awarded to BFRS for the second year running. The 2022 survey has been submitted and the results due shortly.



- In August 2021 the service were awarded the **Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award** by the Southeast Reserve Forces' and Cadets Association. A youth engagement initiative commenced on 20 January 2022; it runs monthly with both the Army and Royal Air Force Cadets undertaking a programme of activities from Aylesbury Fire Station. BFRS are taking steps towards achieving the Gold Award.



- Our Prevention team has been working closely with our Local Authority partners to receive **Fire and Wellness referrals from sponsor households who have applied to house Ukrainian families seeking refuge**. Sponsor households will receive a visit from BFRS to ensure adequate smoke detection is in place and appropriate fire safety advice is given. This will either be prior to the sponsors matching a suitable family to their household, or after they arrive. To date, over 250 sponsors (housing over 600 refugees) are established in Buckinghamshire, and we are committed to ensuring each household receives fire prevention interventions to improve the safety of all residents.

Another workstream is to include **fire safety information within a welcome pack** for arriving families. This information will give simple advice, such as electrical safety, cooking safely and smoking risks, and is similar to the initiative for the Afghanistan Resettlement Scheme where BFRS provided appropriate information to families arriving in the resettlement hotels within our area.

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As the partnership gathers momentum and more families are expected to arrive, we remain committed to the partnerships to assist and consider any fire safety matters for the people arriving in Buckinghamshire and MK.

- BFRS is proud to provide support to the humanitarian crisis in the Ukraine. In March 2022, **UK fire services came together to donate more than 5,000 items of equipment and fire service vehicles to support Ukraine firefighters.**

Eighteen fire engines, thermal imaging cameras for finding victims, generators, lighting, hoses, rescue equipment, and thousands of sets of PPE are among the items being donated. Every fire service across the UK has stepped in to support these efforts.

At very short notice, BFRS were able to donate portable fire pumps, hydraulic rescue equipment, fire hose, first aid kits and other pieces of equipment. This was delivered to a central logistics site, prior to it being transported to where it is needed.

Further conveyances are planned, and we continue to support where we can. Notably one of our On-call firefighters volunteered to deliver a large amount of kit from around the region to a logistics centre in Kent, utilising one of his own lorries from his haulage company. This assisted greatly in the coordination of the national effort and is credit to the individual who volunteered.



This work is being coordinated by FIRE AID, The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the wider sector, items will be sent in convoy. Financial support is being given by the Home Office.

- The **Replacement Breathing Apparatus (BA) project**, has included the following:
 - Weight reduction of sets from 18kg to 14.5kg, with further work ongoing to try and obtain a new cylinder that will further reduce the weight by up to 0.5kg.
 - Personal facemasks will be issued to all staff, allowing aids to vision to be fitted permanently
 - Larger range of facemask sizes available which allows better face fitting process and for a wider range of hairstyles.
 - Improved adjustable range of sets via backplate adjustment (S, M, L, XL)
 - Improved ergonomics
 - Chest straps now on every BA set to stop slippage off shoulders caused by either those with larger chest or those with higher/larger shoulders

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- Working is ongoing with the supplier to look at options to allow for those with hearing aids to use BA communications more efficiently.
- The **Gender Pay Gap report** detailed the Authority's gender pay gap as at 31 March 2021. Both the mean (average) and median (mid-point) gender pay gaps decreased in 2021, which is positive, and takes the Authority's gender pay gap data below the UK national average for 2021. For 2021, the mean gender pay gap is 13.8 per cent and the median gender pay gap is 9.0 per cent. In comparison to 2020, the mean gender pay gap was 18.8 per cent and the median gender pay gap 15.3 per cent.
- Home Office figures reveal a worrying trend in the number of hate crimes recorded in the space of five years. De Montfort University is the United Nations Academic Impact Hub for Sustainable Development Goal 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions the underlying aim of which is to address all forms of organised crime, instances of violent crimes, hate crime, child abuse, exploitation and genocide including genocide denial. During spring, the Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager completed the **'Strengthening Communities' intensive program** under SDG16 with De Montfort University, working amongst academics, colleagues from Police, the Home Office, Cabinet Office and community safety leads in a series of international seminars, panel discussions and lectures. In this inaugural cohort of 50, BFRS were the only participant working in the Fire and Rescue sector. The program culminated with an awards presentation and reception.
- The **Addressing Inequalities collaboration** was set up originally to address inequalities following the Black Lives Matter movement. The five Fire Services - Buckinghamshire, Royal Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire are working together to demonstrate their commitment to drive the initiatives forward. The Chief Fire Officers from each service have a strong commitment to improve awareness and understanding of racial equality issues in each Fire and Rescue Service.

The aims of this project are that the services across all five counties:

- are better educated in the issues regarding race inequality and injustice
- are safe spaces where people can have respectful and constructive dialogue about racism and all the other prejudices present in society
- will have action plans that support continuous and sustainable improvement that makes the service more diverse and inclusive.

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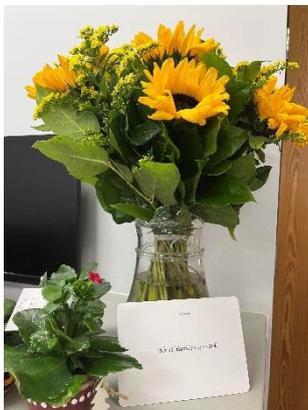
To date a joint video has been published internally, and Black Lives Matter interactive webinar held. The group meet monthly to progress the joint collaborative workstreams and share best practice.

- The **EDI group membership** includes new employees from across the organisation. Members of the EDI group sit on the Senior Management Team, namely the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, Deputy Director of Finance and Assets and the Head of Human Resources. An update on EDI workstreams is given at every monthly formal Senior Management Board meeting.

There is more confidence from group members, who are actively engaging and sharing with colleagues. Group members take ownership of the EDI objectives for example working on the following areas:

- attendance a wide range of **collaboration events** and participating in National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) consultations for Equality of access documents, toolkits on neurodiversity, gender, equality impact assessments and staff networks.  **NFCC**
National Fire
Chiefs Council example
- attendance at a range of **EDI virtual workshops and webinars** are attended by the EDI group and learning, and resources are shared with employees across the service.
- Presenting at the **NFCC lunch and learn event** on International day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia on 17 May 2022

- The **Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme** was launched in April 2022. An EDI group member and the Marcomms team helped to promote the scheme throughout the service. A HEAT elearning package was developed and launched Sunflower lanyards are available to all operational crews and employees that deal with members of the public on a day-to-day basis. This is to support any individual who has a hidden disability who may be unaware of the scheme and would benefit from the support of them having a sunflower lanyard.



Appendix 4

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- In August 2021 the **Banter v Bullying elearning package** was created and launched across the Service its aim is to help employees identify the difference between banter and bullying.
 - Challenging the use of the term 'banter' as an excuse to cover up bullying and harassment.
 - Challenging the use of offensive jokes and language (banter) used by others both unintentionally and intentionally.
 - Promoting dignity and respect within the Service – aligned to our values and EDI objectives and support our service procedures.
 - Empowering employees to stand up for themselves or speak to a representative body before going to formal proceedings.
 - Making the mess room self-policing, for others to step in if they think someone has gone too far or is out of order.
 - Stopping employees going to disciplinary because they have misread their audience.

- The **Change 100 internship programme** is paid summer work placements and mentoring for disabled students and recent graduates undertaken. Talented university students and recent graduates with a disability or long-term condition are matched with employers. Change 100 allows access to a unique candidate we might never have reached otherwise. We are currently liaising with the programme to offer one internship placement in 2022/2023.

- A HEAT elearning package is being developed for **sign language**, with the aim of promoting understanding across the service.

- A **calendar of events** is in place, the EDI group write articles for the “Valuing our Diversity” intranet site and for our social media platforms for example for International Women’s Day, Ramadan, Deaf Awareness week, International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, Easter, and Refuge week.