


BMKFA Headlines

Please find below the achievements against the 2022 – 2023 objectives:

- **Change 100 Internship** - The 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 not accessed before. We worked to secure an internship in 2022 however this fell through at source. We are working on an internship for Resource Management Team who will join us in Summer 2023.
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- **EDI Champions training for EDI group** - In October 14 employees undertook face to face EDI training: EDI group members and colleagues from across the service.
 - **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Review, consultation and implementation** - One of the HMICFRS recommendations was that *“The service should ensure it has robust processes in place to undertake equality impact assessments, implement and review any actions required”*. The guidance and template for these have been reviewed and consulted on to ensure they reflect current best practice and embedding equalities throughout everything. These are now embedded and part of the business-as-usual governance process. Over twenty five EIA’s have been completed to date.
 - **Individual training toolkits for example Hidden Disabilities, Sign Language - HEAT eLearning** packages are continuing to evolve and develop for example the Equality impact assessment and Deaf awareness, Bullying v’s Banter, Hidden Disabilities, Equality and Diversity in the workplace. Following review, our overall response to EDI packages was not where we would like it to be. The review demonstrated this was due to how the packages were set up on the system. Each package has been re-assigned to engage with the entire workforce.
 - **Create interest groups** - Female Firefighters are able to raise their concerns around facilities, welfare, uniform, etc. Meetings took place in December, January, March and April and actions fed into the EDI group and officers to

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progress as business as usual. A women's network meeting took place in February. Collaboration has taken place with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service who have confirmed they are happy for us to join with them for LGBT and Women's networks. Work continues to develop and agree the format.

- **EDI Calendar** - A calendar is in place, and is reviewed annually, the EDI group write and support others from across the service to write articles for the "Valuing our Diversity" intranet site and for our social media platforms for example in the past year articles have been written on International Women's Day, Ramadan, International youth day, World humanitarian day, Adults with dyslexia, Diwali, International men's day, International day for the elimination of violence against women and girls, International migrants day, World religion day, Autism Sunday and Palm Sunday.

The service continues to grow our calendar and raise awareness across the service of the wider events recognised across the world stage.

- **Community engagement to increase the diversity of the service** - New ways of working include:
 - Attendance at the National Apprenticeship Show and careers fairs across the County.
 - Attendance at National Careers Transition Pathway event for armed forces service leavers
 - Welfare visits
 - Virtual and face to face school and uniformed group visits
 - Fire and Wellness visits to high-risk occupants
 - Virtual and face to face On-Call awareness evenings and interviews.
 - Several successful have a go events, for Wholetime and On-Call recruitment.
 - Recruitment and community engagement with our local Mosques both in High Wycombe and Aylesbury.
 - Community engagement through our open station drop-in sessions for armed forces veterans' groups.
 - Coffee mornings for retired Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue employees.
 - Eid in the Park at High Wycombe.

A toolkit for events was established which can be utilised in the future. Attendance was scheduled for the Milton Keynes Pride Event in September 2022 however, out of respect, following the tragic passing of our Monarch Officers did not attend the event.

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As a result of our recruitment activities the applicant diversity has increased. From 2016 to 2023 female employees have increased by 4.6%, there have been more females starters, and fewer female leavers. By monitoring the recruitment stages, we have been able to identify areas to focus more support, for example reviewing our role related testing, has resulted in a slight improvement in success for candidates with protected characteristics. Work, analysis and engagement are ongoing to ensure further improvements and a more diverse workforce.

- **Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI) Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE)** - In June 2022 the Survey was completed, and the Bronze Standard awarded to BFRS for the third year running. Meetings took place with stakeholders ahead of 2023 benchmarking where we hope to secure the Silver award for 2023 / 2024.



- **Addressing Inequalities Five Shires collaboration** - The collaboration Buckinghamshire continues to work collaboratively with the other four Fire Services - Royal Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, and Warwickshire working together to demonstrate our 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.

The group meet regularly to share best practice.

- **Focus on ensuring our current employees have what they need to carry out their role effectively.**
 - 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. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is one of the five key areas and highlights our EDI objectives. Each year a review of the previous year is undertaken and presented to the authority with the

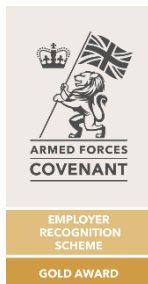
third-year report due in October 2023. The previous 2021 / 2022 reviews are noted and linked in the main cover paper.

The Service's People Strategy is intended to be flexible to address how the Service can most effectively respond to our current and future needs. The strategy features on both our internal intranet and external public facing website.

- **Service policies and procedures** are under regular review to ensure they reflect the community we serve and support employees for example – Pay Policy, Code of conduct, Whistleblowing, Supporting employees with mental or physical disabilities in the workplace, Supporting employees experiencing domestic abuse, Equality impact assessments, Job evaluation guidance, Recruitment and selection procedure.
- The service was awarded the **Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award** On 6 October 2022, the Chairman along with Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Group Commander attended the prestigious Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award presentation onboard HMS Warrior, Historic Dockyard, Portsmouth. The Chairman received the Gold Award Certificate on behalf of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority on the Gun Deck, which was followed by a sunset ceremony performed by the Band of The Royal Marines.
- Engagement continues with our youth initiative which 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. Plans are progressing to expand over two other locations in High Wycombe and West Ashland, the desire is these will be live before December 2023.
- In the last 2022 EDI year two review, the **Replacement Breathing Apparatus (BA) project** that boasted seven more equal and inclusive enhancements to the current BA equipment has entered its final stages of distribution. Berkshire FRS is now live with Buckinghamshire going live in April, lastly followed by Oxfordshire predicted to be in June.
- The **gender pay gap** is based on data at the snapshot date of 31 March 2022. The mean gender pay gap in 2022 decreased by 0.4 percentage



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points to 13.4 per cent (13.8 per cent in 2021), and 6.0 percentage points from the first year of reporting (19.4 per cent in 2017). This is positive and takes the Service 1.5 percentage points below the UK average gender pay gap of 14.9 per cent for 2022. The Service has identified a number of key areas of activity to lower the gender pay gap. The Service's action plan on addressing the gender pay gap is detailed in the Gender Pay Gap Report.

- 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. The People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance Member attends regularly. An update on EDI workstreams is given at every monthly 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 at wide range of **collaboration events** for example National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) Culture conference enabling an inclusive fire and rescue service.
- 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.
- **Collection of EDI data**, the collection of equality data from our workforce is essential to help identify where to focus our resources. It allows us to assess the value of diversity strategies, measuring progress and maintaining transparency. A review was undertaken, benchmarking against what other organisation collect and best practice the data fields were consulted on, amendments made and agreed. The data is used to ensure a diverse and fair organisation, to understand our staff better. Reports are run and analysed on a monthly basis; they show 17% of the workforce have updated their data between February and April 2023; and this has resulted in an increase in the amount of completed data fields. Work is ongoing with employees on the importance of updating their information.

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- **DBS Update**, our procedure has been reviewed and updated to ensure appropriate and robust checks are being in place and maintained, this is currently undergoing governance. 339 DBS have been undertaken to date.